

Adult English Language Learners
Improve Acquisition of Personal Information

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FACULTY APPROVAL

Adult English Language Learners

Improve Acquisition of Personal Information

Approved for the Faculty

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to determine the level of improvement gained by beginning level English language and literacy students who were enrolled at one community college in eastern Washington. The project examined the outcome of pre-knowledge and post-knowledge questionnaires on how students improved their ability to produce correct personal information when requested to do so. The results showed Specially Designed Academic Instruction In English methods improved student scores. Conclusions showed the SDAIE methods were successful, however, a revision of the questionnaire should enhance improvement scores.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

The United States of America was a country formed and populated by immigrants. The original inhabitants of the land that later became the United States of America were referred to as Native American. The land had been inhabited by the Native Americans for many centuries. Immigrants had relocated from Great Britain and spoke the English language. English became the common language of the United States as more and more immigrants from Great Britain arrived. From all corners of the world the arrival of immigrants continued during the next four centuries.

Not all of the new arrivals spoke English. The immigrants brought languages from geographically diverse parts of the world. The United States of America became known as a melting pot. Linguistic and cultural diversity became a predictable feature of the country. Language, culture and celebrations were adopted from the immigrants to form a rich tapestry of multiculturalism as the country and the population grew and prospered.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries large numbers of immigrants arrived by ship in New York harbor. Europeans fleeing political unrest or famine formed enclaves within cities and sought jobs or began small businesses based on the needs of their common cultures. In the largest cities these enclaves were known by the country of origin for different groups as was

Chinatown and Little Italy. Boston was known for including more Greeks than lived in Athens during the early 1900s.

Educators became concerned with the large numbers of non-English speaking children growing up in these enclaves without formal educations. The concern was that the children of immigrants would not be assimilated into the mainstream if they did not have education. The purpose of the intercity schools was to pull together the immigrant families and to educate the children in English.

Other immigrant families took up farming or industries in geographic areas where the language brought from the old country became the majority language for a specific town, or collection of towns. Education was delivered in the language of the immigrants, as were church services. The German language was one of the most frequent majority languages in rural farming communities. Scandinavian languages were also prevalent among certain farming communities. Chinese laborers were brought to the western United States for the purposes of building railroads. Chinese immigrant labor was needed for expanding the western states. In addition to railroads, many Chinese immigrants worked in the gold mines as successive gold rushes occurred. As the expansion of the West slowed, the laborers traveled to China to marry and returned to the U.S. with the plan of raising families.

Often, the children of the immigrants were the first English speakers in the immigrant families. Later, growing numbers of immigrant adult populations relied on adult education programs to acquire the basic literacy and language skills needed to participate fully in the larger community. The majority of the

English language and literacy programs were offered by the community college systems across the nation.

The problems associated with educating immigrant children in English persisted to present times. English as a Second Language classes began in large cities and by the close of the twentieth century even small towns found they needed to offer English as a Second Language classes for a growing population of immigrant families. According to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) “approximately one in five individuals age five and older spoke a language other than English; approximately one in ten was foreign-born” (Capps, Passel, Perez-Lopez, & Fix, 2003,p.).

Statement of the Problem

Adult students entered English as a Second Language classes with a wide variance of education and acquired knowledge gained from diverse life experiences. The life experiences of students within a given classroom had been created by a multitude of differing backgrounds and lifestyles. Teachers of English language learners often assumed that literate students had the ability to report personal information such as name, address, birth date, place of birth, name of employer, etc. in their native languages and merely needed to learn to translate personal information into a format that was expected when the need arose to complete a written form in English. Teachers anticipated the challenge of providing preliterate students with instruction in order for the completion of English personal information forms.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to determine the level of improvement gained by beginning level English language and literacy students. This special project focused on students who were enrolled in beginning level classes in the Adult Basic Education Department's *English as a Second Language* program at one community college in eastern Washington.

The basis for assessing the level of improvement was the outcome of two questionnaires. Improvement was measured by the use of pre-knowledge/post-knowledge written questionnaires that requested personal information. How students improved in their ability to produce correct personal information was measured when requested to complete the same written questionnaire form following the first level of participation in an English for Speakers of Other Languages classroom.

Delimitations

The student population involved in the study attended the beginning level English for Speakers of Other Languages class. There were 23 adult students who completed the quarter of study. The class met mornings four days a week from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at an off-campus site of an eastern Washington community college. The English for Speakers of Other Languages classes were within the department of Adult Basic Education for the State of Washington. The twenty-three students were between 18 and 77 years of age.

The students, both men and women, entered the class with a variety of educational backgrounds. Some had received no schooling in their native

country. Numerous students had attended only some elementary grades. Other students had completed one year or more of college before leaving their native countries. Several students were preliterate, with no ability to read or write in a first language. Most of the students had families, spouse and children. Most students held jobs and worked afternoon and evening shifts or night shifts. The students were migrant field workers, fast food servers (mostly bussing dirty dishes), or worked at local meat-packing companies or at food-processing plants. Some adults were self-employed by selling from a street corner or a kiosk. A few students were unemployed. The students' goals were to gain language and literacy in English as a pathway to a job or to a better job. Most of the jobs held by students in level 1 English As a Second Language classes did not pay living wages. Most employed students were required to work more than a 40-hour work week in order to earn wages to support a family. Adult female students with few English skills occasionally cleaned houses. Other students had not been successful in finding any employment due to their lack of English skills.

The students in the classes spoke many languages. Students on either side of any one student in level 1 possibly did not speak the same language as that student. Most students entered the English classroom as a monolingual speaker from a foreign country. Some students entered a level 1 class having attained multilingual skills and now needed to add English as an additional language.

Assumptions

The author was qualified as an instructor in teaching English to Speakers Of Other Languages and held an active teaching certificate from Washington State, which was endorsed with English to Speakers of Other Languages, Bi-lingual language, and Spanish language qualifications, all designated as K-12. The instructor was trained to deliver student testing using the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, the standardized test required currently by the Office of Washington State Adult Basic Education. Additionally, the instructor was trained in the student placement and evaluation process using Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System placement testing included oral, listening, reading, and writing sections.

The pre-knowledge questionnaire was given on the first day the students entered the level 1 classroom. In the weeks that followed, lessons were planned and presented specifically to increase student knowledge and practice of oral and written delivery of personal information.

Research Question

Would an explicit teaching approach, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, improve students' ability to respond correctly with their personal information in written English as measured by a pre-knowledge and a post-knowledge questionnaire?

Significance of the Project

Irwin Kirsch, an Educational Testing Services researcher, highlighted three global forces that had the potential power of a perfect storm to devastate our way of life. First was the inadequate literacy and numeracy skills among vast segments of our student and adult populations; second was a massive demographic shift driven by the highest immigration rates in a hundred years; and third was the transformation of our nation's job structure, requiring higher levels of skills from an increasing percentage of workers (Kirsch, 2007).

Immigrants and refugees entering the United States of America were requested from their first day on American soil to orally supply first and last name along with birth date and name of country of origin. Requests for spelling of these names required knowing the English alphabet and the English names for numbers. Dealing with immigration officers was not always simple but most newcomers made it through that first interview with help from the interviewer. In successive interviews, that might not be the case. Need for the English alphabet and English numbers was a daily challenge. Simple oral language was needed.

Immigrants to the United States experienced increasing requests to complete paperwork that listed personal information. At each step of acclimation to the American culture, immigrants were asked to give personal information on a written form: driver's license applications, automobile registrations, Department of Social and Health Services applications, medical and dental offices, bank account applications, social security applications, job search applications, rental agreements, etc.

Procedure

Adult students entering an English as a Second Language class were requested to write personal information on a questionnaire designed by the instructor. The questionnaire required first and last names, current street address, city, state, zip code, phone number, birth date, place of employment, and name of native country. The completed, or partially completed, questionnaires were later assigned a score by the instructor. There were 10 items necessary as each name was assigned a separate point. The 10 points were assigned for complete answers only. Points were assigned on a basis of the response being either right or wrong. No partial answers were assigned points, which explained why the first and last names were assigned separate points. The students were allowed to use only memory information in completing the questionnaire. No help was given; no written information was accessible to the students.

The duration of class was eleven weeks, a usual college quarter in Washington State. The instruction during the duration of class included explicit instruction on proper protocol for written personal information. The instruction was delivered using the approach known as Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English. The approach was specific and well-researched as an effective method to teach English language learning students. At the end of ten weeks a post-knowledge questionnaire was administered by the instructor to students who had remained in the program for the duration of the quarter. The research presented was the result of the pre-knowledge and post-knowledge questionnaires.

Definition of Terms

<u>bilingual.</u>	A person who used or knew two languages.
<u>Monolingual.</u>	A person who used or knew only one language.
<u>Multilingual.</u>	A person who used or knew more than two languages.

Acronyms

<u>CASAS.</u>	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System
<u>CBI.</u>	Content-based instruction
<u>ELL.</u>	English Language Learning
<u>ESL.</u>	English as a Second Language
<u>ESOL.</u>	English to Speakers of Other Language
<u>L1.</u>	First Language
<u>L2.</u>	Second Language
<u>SDAIE.</u>	Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English
<u>SIOP.</u>	Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol
<u>SLA.</u>	Second Language Acquisition
<u>TESOL.</u>	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
<u>TESOL.</u>	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
<u>TESOL .</u>	International Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
<u>WAESOL.</u>	Washington Association of English to Speakers of Other Languages

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

Literature selections reviewed for the study dealt with major issues that confronted teachers of English to speakers of other language. A study of beginning level English language learners included areas that demanded attention with each lesson planned, practiced and presented.

The major themes chosen for review of literature were based on the current view of second language acquisition in the United States public educational institutions. The review began with the history and laws of the United States that affected public education in SLA classes. Theoretical framework explained a few of the most respected theories in the field of TESOL. Affect examined and explained the changes in the TESOL profession following the structuralism period, which relied solely on the audio-lingual method. Classroom environment, closely related to affective factors, reached further into the atmosphere and settings optimal for ELL students. Methods or approaches attempted to set the stage for the necessity for the current study. Lastly, Best Practices gave background knowledge for the unfolding of the research project.

History and Laws

In the United States, the history of bilingual education dated back to the 1800s with varying degrees of approval and support. A national social conscience emerged following the unanimous *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, Supreme Court decision in 1954. The Court decision eventually

led to and produced the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 followed in 1974 by the *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision (*Lau v Nichols*, 1974). The Supreme Court decision stated, “There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education” (*Lau v Nichols*, 1974).

Title VII of the Bilingual Education Act failed to outlast the critics and by the year 2000, the Improving America’s Schools Act and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act changed programming within Title VII by giving greater control and flexibility to the states. In 2001 the No Child Left Behind Act along with federal initiatives of Title I and Title III had set the stage for further changes regarding the types of instructional programs offered and the assessments required of ELL students, and limited bilingual education and other specialized, often separate, language support programs for non-native speaking public school students (Platt, Harper, & Mendoza, 2003). The struggle to realize the objective continued in United States public schools, where approaches to achieving equalized opportunity were characterized by dueling philosophies (Platt et al., 2003.)

English as a Second Language programs separated ELL students from the mainstream for specialized language and content instruction. The ESL program earned a professional identity in the United States in the 1930s. Early ESL instruction was influenced by a behaviorist/structuralist approach to language teaching and was geared toward cultural assimilation and oral language

proficiency. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 led to inclusion of both special education and ESL programs into mainstream classes in order to satisfy the requirement for the least restrictive environment in the United States (Public Law 94-142 Education of All Handicapped Children Act).

The research of Platt et al., (2003) in Florida was a study that interviewed district ESL administrators to determine responses concerning inclusion/separation of ESL programs within school districts. Districts were divided into five categories based on size of the population served by each district. Twenty-nine interviews were conducted from the 44 responses received. The surveys were mailed to 67 county district ESL administrators. A few of the large districts housed the ELL students with teachers in a bilingual program. Another few separated the students with ESL teachers for a maximum of 1 year before placing students in mainstream classrooms.

Equity remained elusive. In districts whose resources were stretched and/or where administrators and teachers lacked time or expertise, students were less successful. Equity required both the challenge and support for ELL students. Inclusion was a way to provide the challenge, but for students with limited educational backgrounds, very low English proficiency, migrant status, or traumatic experiences, the provision of support in inclusion settings was seldom available. Negative consequences of inclusion were obvious in the districts with the largest numbers of ELL students. The detrimental consequences for vulnerable students with low levels of English and academic skills disproved the

assumption that ELL students would get the help needed to succeed in school (Platt et al., 2003). Continuing in this thought, the authors stated:

If an assimilationist goal is in place, language minority students may become marginalized or even invisible in the school community. If an inclusion program attempts to conceal the so-called English language deficits of students, or if the school ignores the linguistic and cultural diversity that ELL students bring, then the goals of inclusive education are subverted. (Platt et al., 2003, p.125)

The state-mandated achievement tests in the state where the study was conducted, as in most states, were required of all ELL students. The expectation of the school to produce good test scores and to reach grade-level benchmarks, often before the students were ready, placed unrealistic expectations on teachers and students (Platt et al., 2003).

Educational opportunity was considered to be a collection of opportunities extended to students throughout each student's enrollment in public school. Equality of educational outcomes needed to be measured through parity in graduation rates, test scores, dropout rates, and college admittance. "The disproportionate number of linguistically and culturally diverse students who fail in school, drop out, or get placed in low-track or special education courses suggested that merely having access to schooling was an inadequate measure of educational opportunity" (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003).

In the recent past, Proposition 187 in California attempted to prohibit undocumented children from attending public schools and challenged the right of

children to equalization of educational opportunity. With the defeat of Proposition 187, universal access to school was thought to be accomplished within the United States. “Access to schooling, however, did not ensure that educational opportunity had been equalized” (Reeves, 2004, p. 45). Educational opportunity would not be considered real if students were not also offered the means to obtain success. Equalizing educational opportunity had basically been approached following one of two policies. During the 20th century, differentiation and universalization were seen as dominating policies in the United States. Differentiation attempted to match schooling to students’ individual needs, while universalization attempted to standardize schooling to meet the needs of all students collectively (Reeves, 2004).

The qualitative research by Reeves was conducted over a year-long study of secondary teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of the inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classrooms. The researcher spent a year gathering detailed information on the experiences of ELL students in three classrooms. Reeves used interviews, observations, field notes, and document collections from the teachers involved in the qualitative inquiry. Two research questions guided the analysis of the data collected: “(a) How is equality of educational opportunity viewed, approached, and measured in the school and in the classrooms of the participants? and (b) What steps, if any, do the school and the teachers take to equalize educational opportunity for ELL students?”(Reeves, 2004, p. 48).

Reeves found, “Equal treatment was viewed by the teachers as both a policy that produced inequity for ELLs(tudents) and a policy that would

ultimately equalize educational opportunity” (Reeves, 2004, p. 58). Two important inequities were: ELL students were limited in access to the curriculum; and assessment and grading were inaccurate. The teachers in the 3 classrooms understood, and, with some discomfort, accepted that ELL students’ test scores and grades were not valid until the time the students learned and performed through native-like English. Acceptance of a neutral attitude toward students assumed that English proficiency was out of sync with the increasingly multilingual school-age population. The researcher’s assessment was “...the possibility that continued commitment to an English-only pathway may be a political rather than a pedagogical stance” (Reeves, 2004, p. 61). Reeves concluded that a long-term study of the ELL students in the specific school context, where the research was conducted, was necessary to determine whether these inequities (tolerated by the 3 teachers in the study) resulted in the eventual equalization of opportunity.

Research by McCarty (2002) into the normalization of linguistic newcomers showed that the inequities persisted even after newcomers had linguistically assimilated. Reeves researched further finding there were several more issues. The issues focused on the likelihood that newcomers had also been required to adopt subordinate social, economic, and racial roles. The roles carried the possibility of feelings of exclusion, anger, and alienation for many children and the families of the children (Reeves, 2004).

Reeves concluded:

This study points to a need not only to rethink traditional approaches for equalizing educational opportunity but, perhaps, to rethink educational opportunity itself. For equality to be realized in educational opportunity, all students must have access to opportunities that are not just real, but authentic and participatory, and authentic and participatory educational opportunities should not require the normalization of students into white English-speaking monolinguals. Rather than the erasure of difference or the pretension that difference does not matter, schools should work toward a view of educational opportunity that represents their multiplicity. This participatory version of educational opportunity must be one that can be accessed through multiple pathways that require neither the dissolution of high academic expectations nor the devaluation of non-dominant languages and cultures. (Reeves, 2004, p. 62)

In McCarty's (2002) research, Appendix A noted questionnaire responses by all teachers in the school building. The district had determined the appropriateness of adding ELL and minority language students into the mainstream classrooms but the responses of the teachers indicated a lack of specific training to be prepared for the mainstreaming of ELL and language minority students in class. Two examples of distressing responses follow.

Question #6: Had the teachers received training in teaching language minority or ESL students?

Response: Yes - 5 out of 94 (or 5%) No - 87 out of 94 (or 93%)

Survey item #14: Was the teacher interested in receiving more training in working with ESL students.

Response: Yes - 48 (51%)

No - 44 (or 49%)

Two respondents were unreported (Reeves, 2004).

Of the two responses the Survey item #14 received a higher percentage of yes responses but was not an encouraging indication of the will of the teachers in these school districts to meet the special needs of the ELL students. The attitude on the part of mainstream teachers in this survey punctuated the argument that ELL students were more likely to receive increased attention and focus to specific educational needs in a self-contained ESL classroom.

Theoretical Framework

Lev Vygotsky believed there were several factors that could influence acquisition of language and literacy development within a social context. By social context, Vygotsky included social interaction, home culture, and language and home environment. Vygotsky developed socio-cultural theories of learning, and emphasized that language and literacy development was influenced by the context and society in which the individual lived: "...higher mental functions are socially formed and culturally transmitted" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 126).

Vygotsky, a Russian educator, believed that learning preceded maturation. Learning should always be one step ahead of development. Although Vygotsky did not speak directly to second language teaching, he did construct theories concerning learning and development that had important implications for second language teaching. The theory developed by Vygotsky was based on the belief

that an individual progressed through interactions from what he called an actual developmental level to a potential developmental level. This the theorist called the zone of proximal development.

Vygotsky established that interaction with adults and peers was a vital part of the social context of learning, argued that children's interaction with literate adults and peers was crucial to cognitive and literacy development, and that a majority of such learning was incidental and happened in the midst of ongoing activities in which children participated with adults (Vygotsky, 1978).

Paulo Freire enlarged on Vygotsky's writings but distinguished between two kinds of education: banking and libertarian. Banking education involved the act of depositing. The student was an empty depository and the teacher was the depositor. In libertarian education the teacher and students were partners. Meaning was inherent in the communication. Students were not simply empty vessels waiting to be filled with information. The ideas of Freire were important to second language teaching. This concept led directly to meaningful interaction about some content of interest. During this interaction, the teacher was attuned to the students' emerging skills and abilities. The key indicator was meaningful interaction (Nieto, 2001).

Stephen Krashen studied language input and the role it played in the language acquisition process. Krashen's theory of second language acquisition included five hypotheses. The learning/acquisition hypothesis stated the difference between learning, a conscious process that involved studying rules and vocabulary, and acquisition, which was a subconscious act. Acquisition took

place as students used language for a variety of purposes, such as when someone went to another country and picked up the language in the process of day-to-day living and interacting with native speakers of the language.

The natural order hypothesis formed by Krashen's research stated that some aspects of language appeared in the speech of language learners before other features. All children learning English as a first language acquired forms of speech in approximately the same order. The natural order of second language acquisition differed slightly from that of first language, but there was a definite order. The order seemed to be determined by the language being acquired, not by a transfer of features from the first language. The order of acquisition was the same for both children and adults from different language backgrounds. A Chinese speaker and a Spanish speaker acquired English in the same order (Krashen, 2003).

The monitor hypothesis helped explain the role of learning in the process of language acquisition. Acquired language formed the basis for the ability to understand and produce language. Learned knowledge, the rules people learned, could be used to monitor spoken or written output. In order for monitor use to be effective, language users must have time, they must focus on language form, and they must know the rules.

Another focus of Krashen's theory was the notion of comprehensible input. Krashen's hypothesis of $i + 1$ explained the cognitive operations involved in language acquisition. Like the zone of proximal development from Vygotsky, it referred to the distance between actual language development (represented by i)

and potential language development (represented by $i + 1$) (Krashen, 1985). As long as students understood most of the input, of oral or written language, they acquired the language.

The affective filter hypothesis was the fifth part of Krashen's theory. Comprehensible input must reach the part of the brain that processed language. Affective factors such as nervousness, boredom, and anxiety served as a kind of filter to block out incoming messages and prevent meaningful input from reaching the appropriate area of the brain, and, therefore, had a negative influence on language acquisition. When the affective filter was open, when students were relaxed and engaged in a lesson, even messages that were not easy to comprehend would trigger the acquisition process. Students often acquired language when singing or when involved in an interesting hands-on activity.

The work of Jim Cummins, in 1984, with his notions of cognitive demand and decontextualized language, led to his study of 'surface fluency' and 'conceptual-linguistic knowledge'. Cummins eventually explained language learning by separating spoken or conversational English needed for everyday interaction, which he termed Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) from the academic language of content-area textbooks that he termed Context-reduced Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Conversational language was embedded in a rich context of things people could see or touch. Topics for discussion were not cognitively demanding. People talked about familiar things. Academic language, often written, was generally more cognitively demanding with less contextual support. Additionally, much of the input from academic

language may not be comprehensible, and only comprehensible input led to language acquisition (Schleppegrell, Achugar, & Oteíza, 2004).

Affect

Recent developments in Second Language Acquisition research, during the past twenty-five years, produced research publications investigating the impact of affective influences on foreign language learners and ELL students. Research confirmed a neural basis for affect. Neural scientists saw emotion and cognition as partners in the study of the mind. The relationship among affect, learning and memory had been established. David Crabbe listed three interrelated factors supported by SLA research as being affect, style and prior experience of learning, and motive (Crabbe, 2003, p. 19).

Affect was defined in educational contexts as anything involving aspects of emotion, mood, disposition, attitude, and preference which conditioned behavior. Feelings affected the learning behaviors of language learners. Jane Arnold (1999) pointed out, “When dealing with the affective side of language learners, attention needs to be given both to how we can overcome problems created by negative emotions and to how we can create and use more positive, facilitative emotions” (p. 2). Institutions of education realized an obligation to build healthy value systems by dealing with values and affective issues, such as self-esteem. Researchers did not suggest that attention to affect would provide the solution to all learning problems or that cognitive aspects of the learning process be dismissed or disregarded. Language teachers needed to be concerned with both the cognitive and affective natures and needs of Ell students. There was

a beneficial outcome for language teachers who focused on affective questions as an integral part of classroom environment and lesson planning (Arnold, 1999).

In the early and middle 1900s, structuralism in language learning supported the audiolingual method while neglecting important affective aspects of learning. The Natural approach, developed by Krashen and Terrell (1983), integrated affect into language learning in a prominent way. One of the five hypotheses in Krashen's theory of second language acquisition was the affective filter. Affective factors were found to be relevant to language learning and teaching, influenced the development of current language teaching theories and practice, and focused more on language learners and their experience rather than simply on the narrower field of linguistic features.

An analysis of affective factors related to language learning resulted in several conclusions. The factors were considered to be self-esteem, motivation or empathy, facilitation, and anxiety. Research concluded that as language learners, students were influenced by their feelings and did not learn when anxious or stressed. Anxiety was associated with negative feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension and tension. Current methods of SLA which focused on communication created a great deal of vulnerability as the students tried to express themselves in a second language of which many were beginning learners. (Language anxiety ranked as a high factor influencing language learning, regardless of whether the setting was informal or formal.) Care had to be taken in thought, practice, and presentation so as to provide an emotionally safe

atmosphere. Friendly, cheerful, reassuring teachers who kept students relaxed and amused were characteristics that built trust and safety (Stevick, 1999).

Ways to diminish language anxiety were promoted by teachers who were attuned to the students' individual needs: new vocabulary for a particular lesson was presented ahead of any request for student production of the language; expectations were clearly expressed from teacher to students; scaffolded lessons built to a larger whole; and supported practice reinforced both whole group and small group exercises (Oxford, 1999).

'Modeling' was found to be a supportive manner for teachers to provide learners with assistance so that learners became progressively more autonomous and in control, reducing the affective filter. Modeling involved the process of offering behavior for imitation. Within education, modeling had been applied in a cognitive context, but it was just as effective on the affective level (Arnold, 1999).

Reflection and visualization were natural follow-up activities to modeling. Learners needed to use both techniques as re-enforcers to acquire the qualities, attributes, or cognitive skills that had been modeled by teachers. Visualization included imagining themselves using the skills being acquired (Arnold, 1999).

An example from Lorraine Ingham (1994),

The time allowed and number of trials of mental practice as well as the ability to image and the quality of the images influenced the effectiveness of mental imagery. High imagers performed better than low imagers on a retention test given two weeks after training. Participants were classified as either high or low imagers based on their scores on a questionnaire

designed to detect a participant's ability to create vivid images. The ability to image was an important factor to consider when using mental imagery as a follow-up to a modeled activity. The findings were based on the study that examined participants' ability to reproduce modeled behaviors. (Ingham, 1994)

Given the uniqueness of each teaching situation, the main role of the teacher was that of facilitating the language acquisition process by taking into account the students' overall needs. Teachers were reminded of the oft quoted statement by Margaret Mead, that small groups of thoughtful concerned citizens can change the world.

There were a wide variety of ways to incorporate affect in the target language classroom. Students' inhibition to making mistakes presented an issue worth deep thought. Language teachers needed to consider affective factors when creating an effective yet caring technique of error correction (Arnold, 1999).

Jane Arnold advised language teachers:

From the point of view of affective language learning, *being* is just as important as *doing*; a good language teacher *knows* and *does* but most essentially *is*. This does not mean that language teachers no longer needed, for example, a firm command of the language being taught or proper training in language teaching methodology. It means that these skills will be much more effective if teachers are also concerned with their own emotional intelligence. This made a great deal of difference in the learning process from the point of view of the learner. (Arnold, 1999, p. 4)

Classroom Environment

In 2001, Sonia Nieto wrote of a “balanced literacy”. Her view of balanced literacy highlighted the teacher’s ability to create a knowing, trusting, and empowering context for language and literacy learning that suggested three aspects of the classroom environment—physical, emotional, and instructional (Nieto, 2001).

Language and literacy materials within ESL classrooms must be evaluated to ascertain that students’ developmental needs and interests were met. A positive message about diversity was also conveyed. Walls covered with bright visual images, various English print posters, and examples of intergenerationally, culturally and racially diverse communities at play and at work provided interest and curiosity to beginning ELL students (Ellis, 1994).

Classrooms that promoted conversations and discussions were critical to the language growth of English language learners. Oral language competencies developed both in receptive (listening) and expressive (speaking) modes. In order to reflect the identities and values of each student’s family and community, teachers needed to understand that every student’s language or dialect was worthy of respect as a valid system of communication. Even when students were not yet speaking in English, it was important for teachers to treat all students as conversationalists. In speaking with non-English-speaking students, teachers needed to provide contextual and linguistic support for their spoken language in the form of gestures, acting out, facial expressions, and the use of visual aids. Read-aloud experiences, sharing talk, language play (songs, rhymes or poems,

riddles, games), and storytelling were ideal contexts for promoting attentive listening and oral discussion skills (Nieto, 2001).

Methods / Approaches

Constructivist perspectives supported diverse learners such as students found in ESOL classrooms. Classroom practices considered “constructivist” demonstrated a perspective on thinking, oral language learning, and literacy learning that viewed learners as active participants in the learning process, not passive recipients of information delivered by preplanned and sequenced lessons. There was a shift away from a deficit model of teaching, where diverse students were viewed as lacking basic knowledge and skills that must be remedied through instruction. Teachers, administrators and policy makers made philosophical choices to assess and build on learners’ strengths. Efforts were made in redesigning literacy experiences to meet the individual learning strengths and needs of diverse students. Social aspects of learning were viewed as relevant in ESOL classrooms.

Content-based instruction was developed as an approach to teaching ESL based on an acquisition model of language development. Teachers used a variety of techniques to make the linguistic input comprehensible. Curriculum organized around themes promoted the teaching of language through content areas. This method urged teachers to build knowledge of grade-level concepts for students in content areas at the same time students developed English proficiency. Content-based instruction had built in an understanding that language and

content were never separate. In a school setting, content was always presented and assessed through language. Language never was taught in isolation from content. At beginning levels, learners worked to gain fluency in common everyday uses of language; the students were also learning something else: how to greet another person, how to make a request, how to tell about an event, or how to use a cultural signal. For upper levels, academic language differed from conversational language in both vocabulary and syntax. Teachers who understood syntax designed lessons to help students acquire academic language (Schleppegrell et al., 2004).

Content-based instruction began to gain prominence in the 1980s in the United States as immigration swelled the numbers of ELL students in public school systems across the nation. The development of CBI was heavily influenced by the work of Krashen and Cummins in the early 1980s. Using immersion programs as a model, CBI was promoted (through theme-based ESL and sheltered classes) as a way of providing context for language to be taught through a focus on grade-appropriate content. The CBI approach included a focus on disciplinary vocabulary and use of a variety of learning and teaching strategies, especially visual aids and graphic organizers to make meanings clear. Teachers helped students to comprehend and use the language structures and to facilitate ELL students' practice with academic tasks such as listening to explanations, reading for information, participating in academic discussions, and writing reports. Using a functional theory of language, researchers of this literature

stressed that focus on form needed to be done in ways that were not isolated from the communicative context, (Schleppegrell et al., 2004).

The challenges for L2 learners in disciplinary learning become greater as they proceed through the school years, with particular difficulties typically emerging at the middle and secondary school levels. It is at this time that the kinds of texts students are expected to read and write become increasingly distanced from the ordinary language through which everyday life is lived, taking on features of vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structuring that are functional for the presentation of knowledge in various subject areas. (Schleppegrell et al., 2004, p. 70)

In mainstream education, as in ESOL, Acheson & Gall (2003) wrote:

A review of research and theory suggests that students' learning is most affected by their (1) level of attention and motivation, (2) whether they can find personal meaning in the information being presented, (3) opportunities to practice using new information, (4) group processes in the classroom, and (5) whether the teacher focuses on lower-cognitive or higher-cognitive processes. (Acheson & Gall, 2003, p. 210)

Training in CBI approaches provided teachers with the knowledge and information needed to help L2 learners, as well as low-literacy students, gain access to grade-level content at the same time the students developed academic language. When ELL students studied new concepts in science or social studies, the students were coping with both new ideas and new vocabulary used to express the new ideas. By gaining linguistic knowledge and awareness of language

structures the teachers were able to provide major foundations of fluent reading for ELL students (Schleppegrell et al., 2004).

The central goal of CBI was to give L2 learners many opportunities to practice on grade-level standards so they were prepared to keep up in academic subject areas while ELL students were learning English. Schleppegrell et al., (2004) concluded, “Advanced literacy development for learners requires that teachers understand the specific textual demands of a discipline so that they can help students gain control of the language through which the discipline presents information and argues about interpretations” (Schleppegrell et al., 2004, p. 88).

Best Practices

Quality of language learning opportunities became important to ESOL teachers as a result of a genuine concern to assure good practices. Quality has been defined through clearly stated outcomes, in addition to a clearly planned and delivered process throughout lesson development. Traditionally, the quality of a process was found in the method and prescribed procedures. Over time, the prescriptive methods transformed into a more communicative approach, which encouraged extensive involvement in simulated or real communication as the basis for learning (Crabbe, 2003). An example of an opportunity for L2 learning, as described by Crabbe, included access to any activity that was likely to lead to increased language knowledge or skill. Crabbe attempted to frame language teaching in a way that was intended to enhance the quality of learning opportunity in a program in several ways. The author stated,

First, a framework of learning opportunity standards links practice and understanding by encouraging teachers and learners to work from basic principles rather than fixed routines as provided by materials unanalyzed tasks. Second, such a framework was intended to foster discussion (between teacher and students) about quality. Standards can be an instrument for developing the learner's role by providing a reference point for learners to talk about learning. A framework of opportunities demystifies language learning by exposing the underlying processes aimed at by tasks and materials. Opportunity standards as goals are as relevant to the learners as they are to teachers. Third, an opportunity framework provides a proactive basis for evaluation by stating the salient features of program quality from the beginning. (Crabbe, 2003, p. 31)

Scaffolding was a term used to describe the supportive strategies instructors employed to guide students' language and literacy learning.

Scaffolding was found to be as useful with adult language learners as it was with first language learners. This process laid a foundation for learning to read and write in an additional language. Teachers used a form of temporary, learner-sensitive modeling to structure, support, and guide students' emergent oral language as well as literacy learning. The scaffolding support was then de-emphasized as the students abilities and learning advanced (Donato, 1994).

Classroom questioning techniques were another important part of lesson presentation. Teacher behaviors described important classroom questioning techniques. Behaviors that increased student participation included calling on

non-volunteers, redirecting questions after initial response, praising student responses, and inviting student-initiated questions. Behaviors that elicited thoughtful responses included asking higher level cognitive questions, requesting more than a recited response from a textbook, pausing three to five seconds after asking a question giving students time to think and encouraging all students in the class to generate an answer, and asking follow-up questions to an initial response (Acheson & Gall, 2003).

Bloom's taxonomy of thinking processes was used as an excellent prompt for forming questions to ELL students. The hierarchy of cognitive levels translated into guidelines for questioning provided increasingly complex questioning into the ESL classroom. In best practices, the lessons in English language learning were context-embedded. Another excellent process for questioning was to have translated the questions to include Bloom's taxonomy (see Appendix B).

Summary

Research in second language acquisition was important in the course work of pre-service student teachers during university training. The importance of current research in SLA informed and updated the teachers in ESL programs across our country. The spread of new research results into the school districts and classrooms occurred with irregularity. Those teachers who continued their own ongoing education were likely kept abreast of new research in the field of education. States had been requiring continuing education in the recent past.

A learner-centered language curriculum program highlighted the needs of the ELL students. The elements chosen to be the focus of this research chapter were representative of such learner-centered language practices.

Research reported in chapter two was chosen for the importance of background and/or research results. A broad selection of research was selected as a basis for understanding the specific field of second language acquisition. Those subjects selected were not a comprehensive background for the current research project, nor could they have been in this paper. The collection presented acquainted the reader with information to understand how the current project impacted the ELL students. In *Affect in Language Learning*, Arnold (1999) wrote:

We could say that a circular relationship exists between imagery and affect. Images are saturated with affect, but in turn mental imagery can influence our affective states and development. Both directions are important for language learning. This bond between affect and imagery in our mental processes points to the usefulness of incorporating visualization into an affective approach to language learning. When positive emotions are involved, learning is reinforced, and an easy way to bring about an association of emotion and language is through images. Words are merely a series of letters, originally without meaning or emotional content. What stimulates the emotional reaction is the image associated in our minds with the words. Thus imagery in the classroom helps us connect the language we teach with the affective side of our learners. (Arnold, 1999, p. 264)

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

This project was based on a questionnaire the instructor had used the first day of beginning level ESL during many years of teaching. The questionnaire was created by the instructor to gather personal information from each student. Additionally, the questionnaire was an instrument to provide important information to the instructor that addressed multiple literacy issues. Did the student know how to write important personal information in English that everyone was expected to have memorized? Was each student capable of understanding and answering written questions about personal information? Did each student understand requests for first name/last name on written forms? Did the student write the street address, name of city, state, and zip code? Were the telephone number and birth date formed correctly and in a culturally correct format (telephone number: three numbers, three numbers, four numbers; birth date: month, date, year)? Did the student have the English skills necessary to list place of employment? Was the request for name of native country recognizable to the student? This type of information was requested of residents of the United States when encountering a government, school, employment or financial institution. Therefore, the questionnaire was judged to be a practical instrument for use with beginning level ELL students.

Over time, the instructor realized there was no direct information available concerning the achievement of personal information abilities and no assessment to

determine any improvement for students in the class. The mandated state tests, Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, did not directly test for this information. The researcher found only two questions in the level one CASAS tests that focused on personal information. Through reflections, based on the quarterly lessons, the instructor became aware of the lack of conclusive feedback at the completion of a quarter in level 1 on this particular topic. The written responses to personal information questions were deemed necessary for level one students prior to progressing to a level two class.

A post-test of the exact questionnaire used in the pre-test was administered the last week of the college quarter. The instructor evaluated the results of this post-test as compared with the pre-test, using the same scoring method, and determined that the use of intervention was needed to provide each student with increased abilities when writing their personal information on written forms.

The following college quarter, (which became the study period for this research project) the instructor instigated an explicit instruction format, (based on SDAIE methods), to teach personal information. Results of student improvement were obtained, analyzed, and recorded.

Methodology

Alfred W. Crosby discussed the development of quantitative thinking as the key factor that transformed western civilization and gave birth to the Renaissance. Crosby (1997) stated, "...it was Europeans' ability to divide the world, whether experiential or abstract, into quanta which they could then manipulate and exploit" (p. 147). Analyzing into uniform, countable units made

possible the precise measurement of time, number and distance. Educators have followed the lead of scientists and other professionals in a desire to analyze teaching into units that could be tallied or rated on numerical scales. Various quantitative observation techniques were combined with this qualitative research project in order to broaden the scope of results, therefore increasing the usefulness of results in the assessment of student learning.

The experimental research study was conducted as qualitative research using a pre-knowledge test/post-knowledge test criterion-referenced questionnaire. Quantitative numbers were also examined but the focus of the research was qualitative in nature.

The questionnaire used for this research was designed as a tool specifically for use with level one students in the community college adult basic education program. The questionnaire asked the respondents to complete sentences with personal information such as first name, last name, street address, name of town, state, zip code, telephone number, birth date, country of origin, and name of employing company. Additional questions referred to information that had been taught immediately prior to the questionnaire and were written on the board at the front of the classroom.

As the research project developed, the researcher continued a reflective attitude toward the methods being employed, all the while avoiding premature judgment of any specific outcome. A continual question was kept in mind. Was the research question of the project answerable and did the question continue to be worth answering?

Participants

A class of twenty-three ELL students was chosen for this study. These students continued to the end of the Winter Quarter with the researcher as the instructor at an eastern Washington community college. A majority of the group of level one ELL students participating in this research project were field workers from second-world and third-world countries. The students were primarily monolingual speakers in their native language. No bilingual students had acquired English. A few students were multilingual when entering the class. However, none of the students had developed use of the English language at the beginning of this research study.

Approximately 50% of the participating students were literate in at least their first language prior to enrolling in the level one ESL classroom. The other 50% of student participants were not literate in any language. The pre-literate students did not write sufficiently to be considered at a grade two level in public school. A few students were immigrants and refugees educated prior to arriving in the United States. Those students achieved the equivalence of a United States public high school diploma with varying degrees of competence. There were two exceptional students who stood out amongst the rest: a woman in her seventies from Ukraine and a thirty-something woman educated in Brazil. These two women were well educated and had attained professional employment in their native countries.

Within the group of student participants, many variables existed: literate vs. pre-literate in a first language, days of attendance in class, length of time

students had resided in the United States, length of time at current address, and/or length of time with current phone number. Additionally, employment for field workers and many other jobs held by marginal English-speakers led to a multitude of employers within a years' time period. Keeping track of employer's names was not always a high priority for this population. The demographics of ESL class students usually led to a somewhat unstable lifestyle. Mobility was a reality in the lives of a majority of these students. Poverty-level existence was common for the students within the ESOL classes at level 1. Given the diversity of life situations of the students, the instructor was fortunate the twenty-three students chosen for this study had remained in the classroom setting for the eleven-week college quarter.

Instruments

The research instrument was conceived of and designed by the instructor as a pre-knowledge questionnaire. The instrument included questions about the specific day the questionnaire was being used in addition to the personal information questions. The specific questions about the day were not evaluated as part of this research project (see Appendix A).

As the questionnaire was created by the classroom instructor, there was no way to apply standards of validity and reliability. The instructor created this questionnaire as an information-gathering tool to be used in guiding lesson planning for the first quarter of English language classes. The purpose of having some information written on the board was to determine if the respondents were able to connect the questions from the questionnaire to the information just

previously covered in class and then copy that information onto the questionnaire. Specifically, the questions on the board related to the day of the questionnaire: day, date, weather and temperature (see Appendix B).

Design

The instructor used the One-Group Pre-test/Post-test Design (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). This design was used because it involved a single group that was pre-tested and exposed to an intervention and then post-tested. The success of the intervention could be determined by comparing pre-test and post-test scores. The duration of research was an eleven-week college quarter.

The experimental research study was a single variable design. The research plan involved only one independent variable. The variable chosen was the intervention of explicit teaching methods from SDAIE following the pre-test. The practical action research employed a pre-knowledge/post-knowledge questionnaire. The intention of this instrument was to gauge the impact of explicit teaching of students' personal information required of ESL level 1 students prior to the advancement to a level 2 class. The success of the treatment was determined by comparing pre-knowledge test with post-knowledge test scores.

Procedure

On the first day of a 3-hour ESL class, greetings were written on the board along with pertinent information about the day of the week, name of month/date/year, yesterday, tomorrow, weather and temperature (see Appendix A). In addition the instructor's name was written on the adjoining (but separate) board, as an example of a complete sentence. (My name is Janet Tyler.) The lesson

focused on each sentence separately and then the class read the greeting and sentences chorally. A handout was distributed with the exact same sentences minus the information that changed day by day. The students were requested to complete their sentences on the handout with the information from the board.

Next, the students began informal introductions. The instructor practiced pronouncing students' names and asked students for any necessary corrections. This led to questions posed by the instructor as to the name of the town where each student lived. The community college served three cities and several smaller communities within a thirty-mile radius.

Another handout was distributed, a personal information questionnaire, which was the focus of this action research. The instructor assured the students the information on this questionnaire was only for the instructor and for this class. The students were instructed to complete the personal information from memory. No one was allowed to use a driver's license or other written information to complete this form. The instructor requested a time of silence for this assignment.

For assessment purposes, each of the 10 items assessed from the questionnaire was determined to be correct or incorrect. The 10 items included: first name, last name, street address, name of town, state, zip code, telephone number, birth date, country of origin, and name of employer. One point was assigned for each of 10 responses. No points were assigned for responses that were only partially correct.

Intervention

Planning instruction for diverse students required tightly focused creativity and discipline to offer a wide spectrum of demonstrations and classroom experiences. The students in an ESOL classroom had diverse cultures, languages, educational backgrounds, life experiences, literacy skills, job skills, and diverse personal backgrounds. The adult students in the community college program lived under diverse socioeconomic conditions and brought to the classroom diverse abilities in English comprehension. Preparation for lessons in the ESOL classroom required considering all aspects of the impact of this student diversity, the variety of student skills, and diversity of student levels in each skill.

The preliminary results from the pre-knowledge questionnaire showed that some students had an adequate ability to provide their personal information in written English. However, other students displayed gaps in their ability to provide the requested information. The responsibility fell on the instructor to help students reduce the gaps and increase their abilities.

The ESOL instructor was faced with a group of students with widely diverse background knowledge who came together in a classroom for the sole purpose of language learning. Scaffolded lessons, using SDAIE methods, resulted in addressing the issues in an appropriate manner to meet the needs of the students. Scaffolding allowed for spiraling to a higher level each time a lesson cycled back in reviewing and enlarging knowledge of a specific competency.

Treatment of the Data

The data for analysis was comprised of the scores obtained by the pre-knowledge test and the post-knowledge test of an instructor-created questionnaire requesting written responses to questions of personal information. The questionnaire requested students to complete statements using personal information. The information involved first and last name, street address, name of town, state, zip code, telephone number, birth date, country of origin and name of employer. The selection of the specific information was chosen from information frequently requested of people establishing themselves in a new geographic location. All of the students had at one time been newcomers to the United States of America.

Eleven weeks elapsed between the gathering of pre-test data and post-test data. Scoring of the post-knowledge test was completed in the same precise manner as scoring on the pre-knowledge test; one point for each of the ten items correctly written, no points for partially correct responses. Once the analysis was begun, the researcher focused on an ability to think, imagine, create, intuit, and analyze in order to digest the data and consider the data through multiple lenses, leaving options open to re-interpret as needed.

A comparison was made for each student's scores and the difference in scores was recorded. The results were listed in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3. Table 1 showed the comparison of pre/post-test scores for each student. Table 2 showed the correct number of pre/post-test responses for each of the ten items being tested. Table 3 showed from lowest to highest the improvement and lack

of improvement of student scores. A graph showed the comparison of pre-knowledge test scores with post-knowledge test scores for the 23 students in the study.

Summary

The need for accurate, fair, and meaningful assessment has become more important with the push for accountability. The instrument chosen for this project had been used with beginning level 1 students in the ESOL program at a community college in eastern Washington at the beginning of each college quarter for many years. As an information-gathering tool designed by the level 1 instructor it was beneficial as a benchmark. This questionnaire informed the instructor of the students' abilities in supplying written personal information. For this special project the same instrument was used at the completion of the college quarter as an indicator of progress. Written responses were only one mode of communicating personal information. Oral responses were equally important. In the level 1 class, listening, speaking, reading and writing were each important functions. Improvement was expected at different levels for each function. The listening and speaking functions required improvement to a higher level than did the reading and writing functions in order to provide the necessary skills for students to progress to the ESOL level 2 class. This special research project only concerned written responses of personal information.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The selection of action research for a special project was prompted by the habitual use of an instructor-created questionnaire on the students' first day in class. This instrument had been created to alert the instructor to the knowledge skills of the beginning level 1 students as they entered the ESOL program. The questionnaire allowed the instructor to gauge reading skills, knowledge of personal information, and writing skills. In the early years of teaching ESOL, the instructor had gradually become aware of the need for a post-test using the same questionnaire. During the quarter-length course, no other form of feedback had been available for the instructor to become knowledgeable as to improvement of the students' abilities to respond to the personal information questions in writing. A review of the test questions from the CASAS exit exam showed only two questions concerned personal information. This was not adequate for assessment.

Specifically the instructor wanted to determine if the use of SDAIE methods of explicit instruction improved the student responses to personal information questions. The use of a post-knowledge questionnaire was studied as an appropriate instrument to measure improvement.

Description of the Environment

The learning environment surrounding this special project was an ESOL classroom within the adult basic education program of an eastern Washington community college. The study was conducted during winter quarter, beginning

the first week of January, 2008, and completed eleven weeks later, the middle week of March. There were 23 students completing the course and responding to the post-knowledge questionnaire.

The classroom was a language-rich environment with walls and tables displaying English use in everyday life. Maps of different portions of the world covered walls as did posters displaying survival English information such as letters in alphabetic order, vowels, consonants, numbers, traffic safety signs, days of the week, months of the year, colors, U.S. currency, et cetera. A calendar, clock, globe and well-stocked library of books were displayed prominently. A large collection of various picture dictionaries filled a bookshelf.

Research Question

Would an explicit teaching approach, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, improve students' ability to respond correctly with their personal information in written English as measured by a pre-knowledge and a post-knowledge questionnaire?

Results of the Study

Twenty-three students who attended class in the first week of the quarter remained through the last week of the quarter. The pre/post questionnaires were scored using the exact same methods. The comparison of scores for each student between pre-and post-knowledge tests was shown in Table 1. The difference between scores for each student was shown in the last column of Table 1.

Table 2 showed the number of students who responded correctly to each of the ten pieces of personal information being tested. Shown in Table 2, the

frequency of correct responses was represented in the pre-knowledge test column and in the post-knowledge test column. First names and telephone numbers were the two most frequently correct responses of the ten items. The next highest frequently correct responses were for last name, street address, and city. The least frequently correct responses were name of employer and zip code. Table 3 showed the intervals of improvement from lowest to highest. Figure 1 was a bar graph showing the relative difference between pre-knowledge scores and post-knowledge scores.

Findings

An explicit teaching approach, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, improved students' ability to respond correctly with their personal information in written English as measured by a pre-knowledge and a post-knowledge questionnaire for the majority of the students in this study. As shown in Table 1, two students regressed and two students made no progress. The remaining 19 students did make progress. As seen in Table 1, many students scored in the top third on the pre-knowledge responses. This fact alone made it difficult to show much improvement in the post-knowledge responses.

As seen at the bottom of Table 1, the mean pre-knowledge score was 6.04. That was an increase of 1.74 to 7.78. The median pre-knowledge score was 7 which increased to 9 on the post-knowledge test. The mode increased from 7 to 10 on the post-knowledge score.

The most frequent correct responses were first name and phone number. The most frequent lack of correct responses were street address, city, state and zip

code. As most respondents were unemployed, not many were able to respond to the question of the name of employer. Written birth dates improved as students became aware of common practice in our culture.

Items correctly answered on the pre-knowledge test demonstrated more common information or easier to remember items. The country of birth responses reflected students' difficulty with reading and also with the concept of the phrase.

Discussion

The two students who made no progress were both pre-literate students. One knew to write her first and last name; the other didn't comprehend the question. The student who regressed by 1 was also a pre-literate student who struggled all quarter and was suspected of learning disabilities as a result of a head injury several years ago (he was gored by a bull in his right eye). The student who regressed 2 points had missed school for two weeks due to a difficult pregnancy. This student returned the last morning of the quarter in order to complete the post-knowledge questionnaire.

The one pre/post response which did not include the student's name was not based on the student's lack of ability to know the information, but rather on the student's lack of reading ability to determine what information was appropriate for that particular line. It was not surprising that most responses for first name were correct. The problem of some students' lack of correct response for last name was that the question simply asked for name. In Spanish (first language for a majority of students) the word *nombre* translates to English as name. However, *nombre* means first name only. A different word is used in

Spanish for 'last name'. Additionally, many students immigrated to the U.S. from rural areas. The population of very small communities tended to know one another on a first name basis. The last name was rarely needed.

The students new to the United States learned the landmarks to come and go from their place of residence. Commonly the students rented postal boxes for mail delivery. The address was not something frequently needed as newcomers to this country. In the lessons during the term of the class, the students were taught to write 'none' for name of employer if not employed. On the post-knowledge test, most students wrote 'none', resulting in increased scores on this one item.

Birth dates were written differently in different cultures. Most of the students attending ESOL classes came from a culture that wrote the date, month, year in contrast to the usual American way of month, date, year.

Summary

The study found an improvement in scores between the pre-knowledge test and the post-knowledge test. The eleven weeks of SDAIE methods used in lesson planning and execution demonstrated a positive influence as evidenced by improved scores for beginning level 1 students in the ESOL program. A significant improvement was an unreasonable expectation for a beginning level class when numerous students needed to focus on printing skills and basic reading skills. The level 1 class was a mixture of pre-literacy/beginning literacy students. Writing their own name was a big accomplishment for these students. Most students in this class attended anywhere from first through fourth grade in their first language (many years in the past).

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The research study was designed to determine if intervention using Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English methods would result in an increase of student correct responses to personal information questions in a beginning level 1 ESOL class. An explicit teaching approach was implemented with a focus on scaffolded lessons for survival English improvement specifically aimed at improving student skills and abilities in responding to questions of personal information.

The intervention included specific attention to issues of affect in the classroom. SDAIE relied on an environment of support. Positive affect was supported by the classroom set-up: a daily review of lessons previously learned, the constant spiraling of lessons to new and higher levels of cognitive abilities, an atmosphere of exploration and inquiry, small group practice sessions, and lessons involving physical activity and music. Interactive lessons gave students the opportunity to use multiple intelligences and a variety of learning modalities. A culture of caring was promoted within the classroom to encourage students to become familiar with one another and therefore provide support for each other.

Cultural differences confronted students in ESOL classes constantly. The differences often slowed students' learning progression. Progress in level 1

ESOL was slow. After summarizing the research, the instructor reached conclusions and made recommendations based on the data of the research project.

Summary

The purpose of the special project was to determine if using an explicit teaching approach, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, would improve students' ability to respond correctly with their personal information in written English as measured by a pre-knowledge and a post-knowledge questionnaire. The gauge for determining the research question was assessing scores at the end of one college quarter anticipating higher post-knowledge test scores as compared with pre-knowledge test scores. Tables and a graph visually depicted the data resulting from the study. The results shown by the mean, median and mode in Table 1 indicated the overall progress of the students completing the first quarter of a beginning level ESOL class. Also shown in a table were the ten items of personal information requested and the number of correct responses for each of those items.

Conclusions

It was clear from the individual scores that not every student made similar progress. A few students seemingly made no progress. This could be true only in the personal information area of lessons. Not every student accomplished the level 1 goals in one college quarter. The students who entered the class literate in one or more languages were most likely to be the students who gained the highest increase of knowledge and ability in the personal information area and in most other subject areas of level 1. The students who made up the level 1 class this

particular quarter differed from other quarters in the high level of entrance literacy they brought into the classroom. As can be noted from Table 1, high scores were the norm in the pre-knowledge test. There were only eight out of the twenty-three students who scored five or below at the time of entering the level 1 classroom.

With a different instrument and a more usual pre-literate group of students, a repeat of the use of SDAIE methods could prove more clearly the benefits of using explicit instruction in a level 1 ESOL class.

Recommendations

I strongly recommend using a different instrument for this study in the future. The SDAIE methods were successful but the questionnaire instrument was problematic. The difficulty with the instrument was the students' lack of English reading skills (see questionnaire in Appendix A). There is a need to re-create an instrument that does not involve students' reading partial sentences and then requiring them to complete those sentences. The expectation was beyond the abilities of the usual level 1 students. I recommend an instrument using vocabulary words from Table 2 with a line on which the students would write their information.

The SDAIE methods provided effective techniques for acquiring English for personal information. The pre-test/post-test instrument had been designed for gathering pre-knowledge information but was inadequately formed for use as a post-test at the beginning level of ESOL. Small steps that lead the students to continue another quarter or two in level 1 would be an appropriate accomplishment for the first quarter at level 1 in an ESOL classroom.

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Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

My name is _____

My address is _____

I live in _____

My phone number is _____

My birth date is _____

I am from _____

I work at _____

Today is _____

The date is _____

The weather is _____

I go to class at _____

My teacher is _____

Appendix B

Morning Greetings

Hello, Good Morning !

Today is _____

The date is _____, 2008

_____ / _____ / 08

Yesterday was _____

Tomorrow will be _____

The weather is _____ and _____

The temperature is _____

Appendix C

Bloom's Taxonomy of Thinking Processes

LEVEL OF TAXONOMY	DEFINITION	WHAT THE STUDENT DOES	VERBS TO HELP YOU DESIGN ACTIVITIES
Knowledge	Recall or location of specific bits of information	responds absorbs remembers recognizes	tell – list – define name – recall – identify – state – know – remember repeat – recognize
Comprehension (understanding)	Understanding of communicated material or information	explains translates demonstrates interprets	transform – change – restate – describe – explain review – paraphrase – relate summarize – interpret – infer – give main ideas
Application (using)	Use of rules, concepts, principles, and theories in new situations	solves novel problems demonstrates uses knowledge constructs	Apply – practice – employ – use – demonstrate illustrate – show - report
Analysis (taking apart)	Breaking down information into its parts	discusses uncovers lists dissects	analyze – dissect distinguish – examine – compare – contrast – survey investigate - categorize – classify - organize
Synthesis (creating new)	Putting together of ideas into a new or unique product or plan	discusses generalizes relates contrasts	create - anticipate compose – design construct - invent modify - imagine produce - propose what if
Evaluation (judging)	Judging the value of materials or ideas on the basis of set standards or criteria	judges disputes forms opinions debates	Judge – decide – select – justify – evaluate – critique debate – verify – recommend – assess - appraise

Table 1

Pre-test/Post-test scores

Student	Pre-test score	Post-test score	Difference
S01	7	8	1
S02	0	0	0
S03	8	10	2
S04	7	10	3
S05	8	9	1
S06	5	6	1
S07	8	7	-1
S08	7	10	3
S09	5	9	4
S10	7	9	2
S11	3	4	1
S12	7	8	1
S13	8	6	-2
S14	1	9	8
S15	4	9	5
S16	2	2	0
S17	7	9	2
S18	8	10	2
S19	9	10	1
S20	9	10	1
S21	4	5	1
S22	9	10	1
S23	6	9	3
	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	
Totals	139	179	40
Mean	6.04	7.78	1.74
Median	7	9	1
Mode	7	10	1

Table 2

Distribution of Scores per item

Item	Pre-test	Post-test
First name	21	22
Last name	19	20
Street Address	18	18
City	14	19
State	11	15
Zip code	8	14
Telephone number	20	21
Birth date	11	16
Country of origin	12	19
Name of employer	5	15

Table 3

Distribution of Improved scores

-2
-1
0
0
1
1
1
1
1
1
1
1
1
1
1
1
2
2
2
2
2
3
3
3
4
5
8

Figure 1
Pre-test/Post-test graphs

