

# Florida Foreign Language Journal



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**Florida Foreign Language Journal Fall 2013**

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**FLORIDA FOREIGN LANGUAGE JOURNAL**

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## Editors Acknowledgement

Thanks you to the review board and the authors of the manuscript in this issue of the Florida Foreign Language Journal issue. The mission statement of Florida Foreign Language Journal clearly states that the Journal is the official academic organ of the Florida Foreign Language Association, and that its objective is to serve as a vehicle for expression by teachers, students and the greater general public who have an interest in furthering the instruction and knowledge of foreign languages. This issue features an exploratory study by Chism and Motts who investigated whether or not formally teaching learning strategies reduced speaking anxiety in a secondary Spanish III class. Another study by DeMill's that explored the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies which provided evidence that certain types of activities promote language acquisition in a much more effective way than others. Maino's study examines how Hispanic ELL students' participation in Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS) programs in Florida high schools is associated with students' academic achievement. In a dissertation excerpt by Mecado offers the reader important and interesting information about deaf and hard of hearing learners' perceptions from a hybrid learning experience; and recommendations of how to design better hybrid English courses to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing learners' needs. Kourova's article is informing the reader about *The Bologna Process*, which is a bright example of European integration. It is aimed at the development of an European Higher Education Area in Second Language Education. The book report gives positive comments on a publication on early childhood language arts text for educators. Finally, our FFLJ readers will get an intimate look at what it is like to be a deaf student at in higher education.

Enjoy the reading and share them with your peers. I invite you to submit manuscripts on research and review-oriented articles in the area of foreign language education and technology, program articulation, ESOL, culture, film, travel, FLES, national certification, multicultural instruction, multilevel teaching, diversity, foreign language advocacy, international programs and initiatives. See the guidelines in this journal on submissions, or visit the website [www.ffla.us](http://www.ffla.us) for more information.

Dr. Betty Nielsen Green  
FFLJ Editor 2013

## President's Corner



Dear FFLJ contributors and readers,

Thank you for your continued dedication, passion and professionalism in the business of teaching languages to students. We're excited about the articles contributed to this year's FFLJ and are thrilled to be the only foreign language journal published by a state affiliate of ACTFL.

Many thanks again to Dr. Betty Green and the peer editors who have worked so hard to complete this journal: sifting through manuscripts, communicating and editing, formatting and completing. It's a big job and they do it very well under Betty's leadership.

We are so looking forward to the annual ACTFL conference which is being held in Orlando, Florida this November 22-24. Because the ACTFL conference is being held in Florida, FFLA will not be holding its' own annual conference. We will instead attend the ACTFL conference and will hold our own events like the Awards Luncheon and FFLA General Assembly during the ACTFL conference. If you've renewed your FFLA membership for the 13-14 year, you can attend ACTFL at the ACTFL member rate—a significant savings. Check the [www.ffla.us](http://www.ffla.us) and [www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org) websites for more information.

The ACTFL theme this year is "New Spaces, New Places: Learning Anytime, Anywhere". Florida teachers are presenting more than 20 of the workshops which will be presented at ACTFL this year. With more than 800 workshops to choose from, you're sure to find something to inspire you. I hope you join us at ACTFL.

These are difficult times for education in Florida. With new rules and laws which make our jobs even more complicated and paperwork heavy, I encourage you to look in the pages of the FFLJ to learn about new ideas and approaches and to attend the ACTFL conference where you can share the joy of collaborating with and learning from colleagues who have the same thirst for educating our students using new but researched methods. Enjoy this publication and see you at ACTFL!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela H. Benton".

Pam Benton, FFLA President

## **Mission Statement**

The Florida Foreign Language Journal is the official academic organ of the Florida Foreign Language Association. Its objective is to serve as a vehicle for expression by teachers, students and the greater general public who have an interest in furthering the instruction and knowledge of foreign languages. The journal seeks articles, reviews, notes and comments concerning any aspect of foreign language acquisition. The era where educational funding is often limited, where foreign, immigrant, and migrant students seek instructional equity, and where a greater number of students are desirous of learning a foreign language, it seems imperative to have such a journal. The journal reaches out especially to those already teaching a foreign language as well as those who are preparing for such a career. The demands on teachers are overwhelming today. There is a plethora of methodological approaches, technical apparatuses, and multi-faceted textbooks available, amidst a variety of instructions with diverse milieus and attitudes toward foreign language instruction. Such an environment creates a daunting challenge to practitioners of foreign language instruction.

The goal of FFLJ is a modest one; it is to serve as a sounding board and a reference point for those who teach and learn foreign languages. It is hoped that the journal will help foreign language enthusiasts and professionals form a community that shares its concerns, discoveries, and successes of issue in the foreign language domain. It is further hoped that our voices will become more numerous and ring more loudly as we proceed through what promises to be a century of challenge and opportunity for foreign languages. Our emphasis will be fostering better learning conditions and results fro our students and teachers. FFLJ urges all readers and participants to become ardent advocates to further and safeguard foreign language practices.

## **Manuscript Guidelines**

The editor and editorial board welcome research and review-oriented articles in the area of: foreign language education and technology, program articulation, ESOL, culture, film, travel, FLES, national certification, multicultural instruction, multilevel teaching, diversity, foreign language advocacy, international programs and initiatives, availability of career positions etc.

We encourage you to submit previously unpublished articles for publication in the second issue that will feature pedagogical concerns, strategies, and successes in the language classroom, as well as methodologies, teacher preparation, ESOL, National Board Certification, and/or culture and diversity.

A double-blind review process will be followed, in which submitted manuscripts are distributed by the editor to 2-3 reviewers with expertise in the areas addressed in each manuscript. Written comments by reviewers and a recommendation on acceptance are returned to the editor, who then will communicate the comments and decision on acceptance to each author.

## Requirements - Manuscripts must:

1. Appeal to the instructional, administrative, or research interests of foreign/second language educators at K-16 levels of instruction.
2. Be substantive and present new ideas or new applications of information related to current trends and teaching in the language field.
3. Be well written, clearly organized, and carefully proofed.
4. Include a complete reference list at the end.
5. Be formatted according to guidelines in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Ed. (2001). APA Style Resource.
6. Be no longer than 12-15 double-spaced pages in 12 pt. Times New Roman typeface, with 1½ inch margins, black text on white paper.
7. Be sent in triplicate (3 copies are necessary for review purposes).
8. Be submitted with no authors' names indicated (for review purposes).
9. Include a cover letter with the name, postal and e-mail addresses, and phone number of the first author (or other contact person) clearly noted.
10. Include an abstract of no more than 150 words.
11. Be sent with a biographical statement of 50 words or fewer for each author, including information on current job or title, institution, degrees held, professional experience, and any other relevant information.
12. Be sent in both hard copy and electronic formats. The electronic version must be saved as a Microsoft Word, .txt or .rtf document. Electronic versions may be submitted on a CD (PC compatible), or as an e-mail attachment.
13. Include any figures and tables in camera-ready format. Photographs, graphics, figures and tables must contribute to article content. Please be absolutely certain that all materials are complete with caption/credit information. Figures and Tables must be appropriately labeled in the article.
14. Not have been published previously and may not be under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Manuscripts submitted to FFLJ cannot be returned, so authors should keep a copy for themselves. Submissions will be acknowledged within one month of receipt.

The editor of FFLJ reserves the right to make editorial changes in any manuscript accepted for publication to enhance clarity or style. The author will be consulted only if the editing has been substantial, though the author will be able to review the article prior to publication.

Please follow the manuscript guidelines and send your submission to::

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**Book Review Guidelines**

- Materials must have been published within the last three years.
- Review should be a maximum of three double-spaced pages.
- Each review must include complete bibliographic information, a description of the book/material, the audience for whom it is designed, and how well it accomplishes its purposes
- A cover letter should provide the author's name, postal and e-mail addresses, telephone number, and a brief (25-word) bibliographical statement.
- Reviews should be submitted as an email attachment in Microsoft Word.  
Send review to Dr. Vivian Bosque e-mail **bosque@nova.edu**

**Accepting ongoing Submissions of reviews for FFLJ 2014**

**Rebecca L. Chism and Natalie M. Motts**

**Learning Strategies and Speaking Anxiety in the Foreign Language Classroom: An Exploratory Study**

Difficulty speaking is probably the most frequently stated concern of foreign language students. Research supports the notion that foreign language anxiety is a common phenomenon and that learning strategies may help to reduce it. The present study investigated whether or not formally teaching learning strategies reduced speaking anxiety in a secondary Spanish III class. The study ascertained the level (low to high) and origin (state or trait) of students' anxiety as well as their awareness of learning strategies. The study found that while students were aware of effective learning strategies, they often needed teacher guidance and time in class to practice them. Of the four strategies that were formally taught, students preferred memorization and reported that the strategies, when used, did reduce their speaking anxiety.

Anxiety, as defined by Spielberger (1983, p. 55), is the “subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry.” Horwitz et al. (1986) portray foreign language anxiety as a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning” (p. 128). Research has indicated that anxiety is common among students (Noormohamadi, 2009) and that foreign language classroom anxiety (FLA) is consistent across different target languages (Kim, 2009). Foreign language anxiety is common in testing situations (Marcos-Llinás & Garau, 2009). Students commonly report that they know a certain structure but forget it during a test or oral exercise (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 126). People who typically have trouble speaking in groups are likely to experience even greater difficulty speaking in a foreign language class because they have little control of the situation and their performance is constantly monitored (p.127).

Researchers note the negative connection between FLA and foreign language learning (Awan et al., 2010; Horwitz et al., 1986; Na, 2007; Noormohamadi 2009; Sparks & Ganschaw, 2007). Usually learners with high anxiety get discouraged, lose faith in their abilities and avoid participating in classroom activities. Sometimes, high anxiety can even cause learners to give up their efforts to learn a language at all. As a result, learners with high anxiety often get low achievement scores which make them even more anxious about learning (Na, 2007).

Measuring FLA was difficult until Horwitz et al. (1986) developed and implemented the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The FLCAS measures students' levels of foreign language anxiety and their perceptions about their language learning skills and helps researchers differentiate language anxiety as either state, an anxiety experience, or trait, a personality characteristic (Spielberger, 1983).

Difficulty speaking in the foreign language classroom is probably the most frequently cited concern of anxious foreign language students (Horwitz et al., 1986; Mak 2011) and is a major obstacle to overcome in learning to speak a foreign language (Horwitz et al., 1986). Oral performance, or speaking in public, is the most

anxiety-provoking experience for foreign language learners (Phillips, 1992). In addition, Gallagher-Brett (2007) found that many pupils make insufficient progress in speaking. Often, students report that they feel moderately comfortable responding to a drill or delivering prepared speeches in their foreign language class but tend to freeze up in role-play situations (Horwitz et al., 1986). Kim (2009) also revealed that sources of anxiety in conversation classes were related to speaking spontaneously, speaking in front of peers, and a fear of negative evaluation.

Gallagher-Brett (2007) found that students use a series of cognitive, social and learning strategies; most notably, practice and repetition. However, it has been found that when students are informed of the use, monitoring, and evaluation of specific strategies, performance improves (Oxford & Crookall, 1989). Even low language-anxious students try a variety of strategies to reduce what little anxiety they experience (Kondo & Ying-Ling, 2004). Moreover, teaching these strategies may help reduce the levels of anxiety and tension among highly anxious learners (Horwitz, 2001).

The present study investigates speaking anxiety in a secondary Spanish class and poses the following questions:

1. To what extent do American Spanish learners experience speaking anxiety in the Spanish language classroom?
2. What are student awareness levels of learning strategies in the classroom?
3. To what extent does formally teaching learning strategies decrease speaking anxiety in the Spanish classroom?

To answer these questions, data on students' general anxiety in the foreign language classroom as well as their state and trait anxiety levels will be compared. In addition, data on what learner's beliefs about speaking reveal about their awareness of learning strategies and their overall confidence in speaking Spanish in class will be considered. After the students participate in two separate speaking assessments, they will complete a survey that will elicit their final thoughts on the exercise.

### **The Study**

The study took place at a small, rural high school. Participants consisted of thirty-two Spanish III students who were given a Background Information survey concerning their gender, age, language ability, reasons for studying Spanish, and what area of learning a foreign language (reading, writing, listening, speaking) did they have the least confidence in performing and why.

The study took place over a six-week period. Participants were told the class routine would be unchanged except they would be asked to participate in surveys and questionnaires regarding their anxiety levels. Throughout the study, students used Spanish vocabulary and structures from their textbook *Exprésate 3* (Humbach & Velasco, 2006). Students also completed writing, reading, and listening activities associated with these sections as per their routine.

Participants completed Horwitz's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Appendix A) and State Trait Anxiety Inventory Trait-Anxiety Scale (STAI-T) (Spielberger, 1983, Appendix B). Participants were classified as either high, mid, or low anxiety based on a median split of their total FLCAS and STAI-T anxiety scores; the participants were not informed of their individual classification.

In order to determine student's knowledge about learning strategies, participants took the Language Belief Questionnaire (LBQ), adapted from research by Gallagher-Brett (2007), where they were asked to respond to items regarding their confidence in speaking Spanish in class and their awareness of learning and communication strategies (Appendix C).

For the first speaking prompt, students were to simulate a setting at a family reunion. After a brief practice, students were then grouped into random pairs. Once paired, students were given a laptop to fill out the STAI-S survey (Appendix D) about their state anxiety before the assessment took place. Students were then given two minutes to complete their speaking assessment entirely in Spanish in front of their peers and were informed of how they did when the assessment was complete. This process was repeated for three days until all students had filled out the STAI-S survey and had completed the assignment.

For the second speaking prompt, students were introduced to the Spanish vocabulary and structures for ordering a meal and were introduced to the first of four learning strategies: brainstorming. For this, students were paired into random groups of two or three and were given a blank piece of white paper. They folded it in half and labeled one side "waiter" and the other side "customer." The students then brainstormed the relevant Spanish vocabulary and structures for approximately 20 minutes. Then on the whiteboard, their brainstorming sessions were combined to generate a list for the class.

The next day, students were introduced to another strategy, memorization. Students used one class period to make flashcards (one side English and the other side Spanish) and were introduced to a method called "chunking;" that is, focusing on three or four flashcards to help them memorize the structures. They practiced until all the cards were memorized.

The next day, students were introduced to the third learning strategy, scripting. Students were given a sheet of paper and divided into groups where they wrote out a conversation using words and phrases from the brainstorming and memorization exercises.

Then, students were introduced to the fourth learning strategy--mimicking. Students were randomly paired as "waiter" and "customer." Using the speaking prompt, the students had five minutes to complete all of the indicated requirements; the pairings rotated until everyone had had a turn.

When it was time to conduct the second speaking assessment, students were randomly paired into groups of three or four. Once grouped, students were given a laptop to fill out the STAI-S survey about their state anxiety before the assessment took place. Students were then given two minutes to complete their speaking assessment entirely in Spanish in front of their peers and were informed of how they did when the assessment was complete. This process was repeated for three days until all students had filled out the STAI-S survey and had completed the assignment.

On the last day, participants completed a final questionnaire detailing their thoughts in regards to the most effective learning strategies used during class, which speaking assessment they felt was easier, and whether they felt any difference from one speaking assessment to the other and, if so, why (Appendix E).

### **Findings and Discussion**

The results of the Background Information survey and the FLCAS questionnaire confirm that for a majority of students (67%), speaking is the most anxiety-provoking experience. Only three of the 32 students (9%) exhibited high trait anxiety, indicating that the anxiety experienced was directly tied to the speaking assessment. Interestingly, there was some increase in anxiety on the part of the low- to mid-trait anxiety students from the first speaking prompt to the second speaking prompt (8%), likely due to the differences in the types of speaking tasks. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that there was a decrease in anxiety (11%) on the part of the high anxiety students from the first speaking prompt to the second. Most of the students indicated awareness of useful learning strategies and that both high and low level anxiety learners were equal in their recognition of use of such strategies. Regarding the third research question, *to what extent does formally teaching learning strategies decrease speaking anxiety in the Spanish classroom*, almost all of the students reported that the learning strategies used in class helped them feel more confident for the second speaking assessment. The majority preferred memorization, with mimicking as second. Students likely prefer memorization because it involves lower level thinking skills compared to the other strategies and students generally feel more secure with a set dialogue to learn. In addition, it is also a strategy that they are most accustomed to.

### **Limitations and Conclusions**

There were several limitations to the study. First, only six weeks were available for the study and only two assessments were given to assess state anxiety. Second, it is possible that students already felt comfortable with their instructor, affecting their measurement of anxiety. And, as a few students pointed out, the assessments were different in theme and scope.

Nevertheless, the results of this study found that the majority of Spanish III students do experience some degree of state speaking anxiety in the Spanish classroom. The results also found that all anxiety levels of students cited practice, memorization, and studying as the main strategies needed in order to do well in speaking in the foreign language classroom. Although nine students increased their anxiety from the first speaking assessment to the second, twenty-three students showed a reduction in anxiety or stayed the same. This study supports the idea that formally teaching learning strategies in the classroom helps students feel more confident and reduces anxiety. However, it is worth noting that high school students often do not set aside ample outside time needed to master a skill in a foreign language; therefore, it is suggested that students not only be exposed to the various strategies, but that class time be used for practice.

Additionally, students should be encouraged to move beyond the strategies with which they are most comfortable (memorization) toward other strategies. It is the hope of this study that in a supportive classroom atmosphere and with the use of effective strategies, students can reduce their anxiety in speaking a foreign language.

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**Appendix A: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)**

Please indicate your opinion about each statement by choosing what best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

**5 – strongly agree, 4- agree, 3- neither agree or disagree, 2- disagree, 1- strongly disagree**

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my Spanish class.
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in Spanish class.
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in Spanish class.
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in Spanish class.
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
6. During Spanish class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my Spanish class.
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in Spanish class.
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my Spanish class.
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over Spanish classes.
12. In Spanish class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my Spanish class.
14. I would not be nervous speaking Spanish with native speakers.
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
16. Even if I am well prepared for Spanish class, I feel anxious about it.
17. I often feel like not going to Spanish class.
18. I feel confident when I speak in Spanish class.
19. I am afraid that my Spanish teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in Spanish class.
21. The more I study for a Spanish test, the more confused I get.
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for my Spanish class.
23. I always feel that the other students speak Spanish better than I do.
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking Spanish in front of other students.
25. Spanish class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in Spanish class than I do in my other classes.
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my Spanish class.
28. When I'm on my way to Spanish class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the Spanish teacher says.
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak Spanish.
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak Spanish.
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of Spanish.

33. I get nervous when the Spanish teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

**Appendix B: State Trait Anxiety Inventory Trait-Anxiety Scale (STAI-T)**

Please indicate how you generally feel for the following:

**4- almost always, 3- often, 2- sometimes, 1- never**

1. I feel pleasant.	4 3 2 1
2. I feel nervous and restless.	4 3 2 1
3. I feel satisfied with myself	4 3 2 1
4. I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be.	4 3 2 1
5. I feel like a failure.	4 3 2 1
6. I feel rested.	4 3 2 1
7. I am "cool, calm and collected."	4 3 2 1
8. I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them.	4 3 2 1
9. I worry too much over something that doesn't really matter.	4 3 2 1
10. I am happy.	4 3 2 1
11. I have disturbing thoughts.	4 3 2 1
12. I lack self-confidence.	4 3 2 1
13. I feel secure.	4 3 2 1
14. I make decisions easily.	4 3 2 1
15. I feel inadequate.	4 3 2 1
16. I am content.	4 3 2 1
17. Some unimportant thought runs through my head and bothers me.	4 3 2 1
18. I take disappointments so seriously that I cannot put them out of my mind.	4 3 2 1
19. I am a steady person.	4 3 2 1
20. I get in a state of tension as I think over my recent concerns and interests.	4 3 2 1

**Appendix C: Language Belief Questionnaire (adapted from Gallgher-Brett. 2007)**

Please chose an honest response to these statements using the following scale:

**5- strongly agree, 4- agree, 3- neutral, 2- disagree, 1- strongly disagree**

1. It is important to speak Spanish with excellent pronunciation.	5 4 3 2 1
2. You shouldn't say anything in Spanish until you can say it correctly.	5 4 3 2 1
3. It's ok to guess if you don't know how to say a word in Spanish.	5 4 3 2 1
4. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	5 4 3 2 1
5. I try to speak as much Spanish as I can in class.	5 4 3 2 1
6. I think I'm doing well at speaking Spanish.	5 4 3 2 1
7. You are not doing well at speaking Spanish unless you can speak it fluently.	5 4 3 2 1



- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 8. I generally work hard at school.   | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 9. I find it hard to speak Spanish if I don't have it written down in front of me.    | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 10. I ask the teacher to help me straightaway if I don't know what to say in Spanish. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 11. I can improve my Spanish speaking by . . .  |           |
| 12. When I do well at speaking Spanish, the main reasons are . . .                    |           |
| 13. When I don't do well at speaking Spanish, the main reasons are . .                |           |

**Appendix D: State Trait Anxiety Inventory State-Anxiety Scale (STAI-S)**

Please choose the best response to how you feel right now.

**4- very much so, 3- a little, 2- somewhat, 1- not at all**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 1. I feel strained.                                   | 4 3 2 1 |
| 2. I feel at ease.                                    | 4 3 2 1 |
| 3. I feel upset.                                      | 4 3 2 1 |
| 4. I am presently worried about possible misfortunes. | 4 3 2 1 |
| 5. I feel satisfied.                                  | 4 3 2 1 |
| 6. I feel frightened.                                 | 4 3 2 1 |
| 7. I feel uncomfortable.                              | 4 3 2 1 |
| 8. I feel self-confident.                             | 4 3 2 1 |
| 9. I feel nervous.                                    | 4 3 2 1 |
| 10. I feel jittery.                                   | 4 3 2 1 |
| 11. I feel indecisive.                                | 4 3 2 1 |
| 12. I am relaxed.                                     | 4 3 2 1 |
| 13. I feel content.                                   | 4 3 2 1 |
| 14. I am worried.                                     | 4 3 2 1 |
| 15. I feel confused.                                  | 4 3 2 1 |
| 16. I feel secure.                                    | 4 3 2 1 |
| 17. I feel steady.                                    | 4 3 2 1 |
| 18. I feel pleasant.                                  | 4 3 2 1 |
| 19. I feel calm.                                      | 4 3 2 1 |
| 20. I feel tense.                                     | 4 3 2 1 |

**Appendix E: Exit Survey (Post Speaking Assessments)**

Please respond to the following questions honestly in regards to the first speaking assessment (a family reunion) and the second speaking assessment (functioning at a restaurant.)

1. Which of the speaking assessments did you feel was easier for you? 1<sup>st</sup> SA 2<sup>nd</sup> SA

2. Did you feel the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> speaking assessments were equal in difficulty? Yes No
3. Of the four learning strategies we practiced in class, which did you find most helpful?
  - a. Brainstorming
  - b. Memorizing
  - c. Scripting
  - d. Mimicking
4. Of the four learning strategies we practiced in class, which did you find the least helpful?
  - a. Brainstorming
  - b. Memorizing
  - c. Scripting
  - d. Mimicking
5. Do you feel the strategies we practiced in class helped you feel more confident and less anxious in your second speaking assessment? Yes No
6. Please explain why you chose Yes or No to the above question.

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Andrew DeMill and James Aubrey

**Beginning French Textbooks: Are they teaching communication?**

**Abstract**

In the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies have provide evidence that certain types of activities promote language acquisition in a much more effective way than others. Mechanical drills, i.e. activities that ask students to produce grammatical forms mechanically (I am, you are he is...) without understanding meaning, do not lead to language development. Recent studies look at language textbooks to see if the grammar instruction is in line with SLA research. This study examines best-selling beginning French university textbooks. The findings support previous research that these textbooks are moving toward some exercises that promote communication, but still overwhelmingly supply an array of mechanical drills.

**I. Introduction**

Second Language Acquisition has grown as a field around issues of how a second language is learned and the best way an instructor can play a role in the process. Furthermore, studies in the field offer evidence on the teaching methods that promote effective language comprehension and production, and those that are unable to do so. However, many studies bring to light that textbooks used in the classroom are not providing what instructors need to promote communicative language teaching (Allen, 2008; Fernández, 2011; Lally, 1998; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Walz 1989). Therefore, this study sets out to see if the recommendation of these past researchers have been incorporated into present day beginning French university textbooks.

**II. Background**

*Input and input processing*

Without input (language that a learner hears or reads to comprehend a message) language learning does not take place. (White, 2007). There is no theory of Second Language Acquisition that does not have a crucial place for input. Production practice (writing or speaking in order to communicate a message) allows learners to practice fluency, but it is unable to affect learners' developing language system (Swain, 1995; VanPatten, 2003). According to VanPatten (2007), input is the first step of the language learning process, and is solely responsible for modifying the underlying language system. This system is responsible for comprehension, and is used for language production.

VanPatten has extensively studied the role of input in language acquisition, and has delineated the processes and strategies that beginning language learners employ when encountering new language data. The theory of Input Processing

(IP) looks at the problems that arise when learning a second language. As Vanpatten states (VanPatten, 2007: 115) “A good deal of acquisition is dependent upon

learners correctly interpreting what a sentence means.” The main constructs of IP are:

- Under what conditions do learners make initial form-meaning connections?
- Why, at a given moment in time, do they make some and not other form-meaning connections?
- What internal strategies do learners use in comprehending sentences and how might this affect acquisition?

When processing input, in order to comprehend, learners utilize certain strategies to try to understand the meaning of the input. A few of the ways learners process input are :

- The Lexical Preference Principle: If grammatical forms express a meaning that can also be encoded lexically (i.e., that grammatical marker is redundant), then learners will not initially process those grammatical forms until they have lexical forms to which they can match them.
- The Preference for Non-Redundancy Principle: Learners are more likely to process non-redundant meaningful grammatical markers before they process redundant meaningful markers.
- and so on (VanPatten, 2007).

Learners use these strategies to comprehend, or misinterpret, the new language input, and it this theory demonstrates that learners need training in comprehending input. Below are described two types of teaching methodologies, Traditional Instruction and Processing Instruction, and their presence in present day textbooks.

### *Traditional Instruction*

Traditional Instruction (TI), is the most widespread teaching methodology in foreign language classrooms in the United States (Fernández, 2011, Wong & VanPatten, 2003: 406). This method begins by explaining grammar information (how a form works, when to use it, examples of its use) and employs three types of drills: mechanical, meaningful, and communicative (Paulston, 1976). Mechanical drills allow one answer and learners *mechanically* produce without comprehending meaning to complete the drill, as in the example below:

#### Example 1 *Mechanical drill for the passé composé*

Complete the sentence with the *passé composé*.

1. Hier, la femme \_\_\_\_\_(voir) le garçon.
2. Ce matin, le garçon \_\_\_\_\_(parler) avec sa mère.

To complete the activity, it is not necessary to understand any French. The learner must know how to conjugate the verb in the correct form, and can ignore all the other language. The idea behind the activity is to make sure a student

can correctly produce the form. However, mechanical production has been shown to be of little use when learners are later asked to produce in a meaningful context (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993). After mechanical drills, learners move to “meaningful drills.” For meaningful drills, the student produces the correct form of the verb, but must also comprehend the meaning to be able to correctly answer. Here, English is provided, but would not be available to the learner.

Example 2 *Meaningful Drill*

Answer the following questions with a complete sentence using the *passé composé*.

1. *À quelle heure a commencé le cours de français?* 'When did French class start?'

The student would answer the above question with the correct answer (e.g., *Le cours de français a commencé à 9 heures.* 'French class started at 9.'), demonstrating the ability to not only correctly use the *passé composé*, but also comprehension of the question.

The third and final step of TI involves “communicative drills”. Communicative drills ask learners to communicate information to each other, and there is more than one answer, usually limited to yes/no, and the correct form of the verb. In the example below, the English is provided, but is not available to learners.

Example 3 *Communicative activity*

Talk in groups about what you did yesterday. Use complete sentences with the *passé composé*.

*Exemple: manger dans un restaurant* 'Model: to eat in a restaurant'

Student 1: *Hier, est-ce que tu as mangé dans un restaurant?*

'Yesterday, did you eat in a restaurant?'

Student 2: *Oui, j'ai mangé dans un restaurant/Non, je n'ai pas mangé dans un restaurant.*

'Yes, I ate in a restaurant./No, I didn't eat in a restaurant.'

1. *parler avec ta mère* 'talk with your mother'
2. *aller à la plage* 'go to the beach'

Communicative drills focus on a specific grammatical form, but the answer is personalized. However, there is no burden of communication for the students. The students do not need to understand what the other said, as there is no step that asks them to demonstrate comprehension. Therefore, it is possible to complete the activity without comprehension. If you fill in the example with non-sense words, the activity can still be completed.

Example 4

*Exemple: panjer dans un reparaunt* 'Example: to panjer in a reparaunt' [nonsense]

Student 1: *Hier, est-ce que tu as panjé dans un reparaunt?*

'Yesterday, did you panjer in a reparaunt?'

Student 2: *Oui, j'ai panjé dans un reparaunt. Non, je n'ai pas panjé dans un reparaunt.*

'Yes, I panjered in a reparaunt./No, I didn't panjer in a reparaunt.'

Although students are talking, this is a disguised mechanical drill aloud, and listening to another do the same. If a follow-up question were asked, as in, "Where did you eat?" learners often reveal they don't know what the sentence means, and getting the verb correct was their goal.

The use of the above methodology is prevalent in foreign language textbooks. However, this type of instruction is problematic for two principal reasons. TI forces learners to produce grammatical forms before they are capable of comprehending the forms, which leads to incorrect generalizations and overuse of the form when not necessary, e.g. *J'ai parlé (passé composé)* to mean *Je parle* (present) (Lightbown, 1983). Learners need the opportunity to comprehend language before being able to use it accurately. Second, language learning is the acquisition of the ability to connect form to meaning in comprehension and production.

When meaning is absent in instruction, acquisition is not occurring. In Wong & VanPatten (2003), the researchers state, "There is sufficient evidence to discard mechanical drills from instructional practice." (Wong & VanPatten, 2003: 403) The researchers' argument is that learners bring internal mechanisms to language learning that are unaffected by explicit instruction (TI). Learners, exposed to input learn more than what they are taught. This is a result of comprehension of input, and *not* mechanical drills and TI. This evidence caused a reaction by many language instructors, (Leaver et al., 2004) but no research can yet refute the claim: mechanical drills are unnecessary. (Wong & VanPatten, 2004).

### *Processing Instruction*

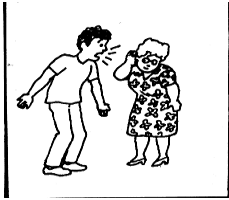
Processing Instruction (PI) is an instructional method based on the principles of Input Processing delineated in VanPatten's Theory of Input Processing (above). The goal of PI is train learners to better comprehend language by teaching them to avoid incorrect processing strategies, like the Lexical Preference Principle, in order to facilitate comprehension of grammatical forms. PI is delivered in three stages. First, learners are given explicit grammar information; one difference in the information from TI is that PI informs learners about processing strategies that will help them comprehend the meaning (e.g., "Remember that in French, you must pay attention to the verb to know when the action happened, and who did the action") Then learners complete *structured input activities* (SI) designed to push learners away from incorrect processing strategies by asking them to interpret meaning through grammatical form. Below is a sample SI activity for the French *passé composé*. The English is provided for the reader but not available to the learner.

Example 5 *SI activity*

Instructions: Mark when the action happened [*aujourd'hui* 'today' or *hier* 'yesterday'] and then mark *Vrai* 'True' if the sentence describes the drawing, or *Faux* 'False' if it does not.

1. *Le garçon a parlé.* 'The boy spoke'

*aujourd'hui / hier vrai/faux*



2. *La femme écoute.* 'The woman listens.'

*aujourd'hui / hier vrai/faux*



In the above example, the learner must decide the tense and meaning based on the verb form.

This simple exercise demonstrates comprehension of both meaning and verb morphology without production.

*PI and TI*

PI focuses on comprehension problems second language learners encounter and trains them to better comprehend language. The focus is comprehension, essential for acquisition. TI begins with mechanical production, and skips both comprehension and development of the linguistic system. Various studies offer evidence that PI is more effective than TI when teaching learners to comprehend written and spoken French, and equally effective for language production. That learners trained with PI are able to produce as well as those trained with TI is noteworthy because PI doesn't ask learners to produce, but they are able to do so as well as learners *only* trained to produce, mechanically and meaningfully. This evidence began with the results from training in Spanish in VanPatten & Cadierno (1993), replicated in Cadierno (1995) for the Spanish Preterit, Benati (2001) Italian future tense, Cheng (2004) Spanish copula, VanPatten and Wong (2004) French causative, and Benati and Lee (2008) Italian, English, French.

Studies also offer evidence that the causative factor of PI is the activities that train learners to comprehend input (SI activities). (Benati, 2004a, 2004b; Lee and Benati, 2007a; Van Patten & Oikennon, 1996). Learners trained with PI also perform as well as or better than learners trained with *meaningful* output instruction (MOI). In contrast to TI, MOI has learners produce language in a communicative situation. When compared empirically, learners trained with PI perform as well, if not better, than MOI (Benati, 2005; Farley, 2001a, 2001b, 2004a; Morgan-Short and Bowden, 2006). In short,

beginning with language comprehension improves overall comprehension and production of the language better than TI, and other methodologies.

*Previous Studies on Grammar presentation in L2 Textbooks*

Textbook choice often plays a role in the course curriculum and therefore the textbook choice becomes an important consideration for language programs (Byrnes, 1988, Allen 2008). Aski, (2003), Ellis (2002), and Islam (2003) observed that many English as a Second Language (ESL) textbooks offered fill in the blank and mechanical exercises, and most production was oral production, (listen and repeat), rather than written, or in a communicative context. In these texts, the features primarily present were explicit grammar information and controlled production practice, i.e. the TI format of mechanical, meaningful, and communicative drills, i.e. TI. The researchers noted that ESL texts were far behind current SLA research on teaching methods. Walz (1989) found that the drills meant to teach communication were mechanical drills somewhat disguised in a communicative context and no more effective for communication. Walz describes the problems with second language textbooks is that they often contain exercises with no theme (pastimes, sports, daily routine), are mechanical, and rarely distinguish between mechanical, meaningful and communicative activities. These drills ask learners to "falsify reality" rather than communicate real information,. Walz suggested that exercises lead to more communicative situations, that students start with exercises that give them a forced choice when interpreting language, (similar to SI), and that the composition of textbooks contain a majority of communicative exercises, rather than mechanical or meaningful drills. Lally (1998) examined French textbooks to see if Walz's suggestions had been incorporated. In this study, 6 textbooks were surveyed by examining 1) how writing skills were being treated, 2) the proportion of communicative activities versus mechanical drills, and 3) whether the textbooks used any forced-choice practice exercises. Lally posits that ten years after the publication of Waltz' article, efforts have clearly been undertaken by some publishers to make their French textbooks more communicative. For instance, two textbooks out of six displayed a process-oriented approach to L2 writing, whereas two of the textbooks surveyed completely ignored this skill. When it came to the proportion of exercises devoted to communication, only two texts embraced it by dedicating half their exercises to communicative activities when the four remaining texts mainly focused on mechanical drills. Finally, discrepancies between textbooks also existed in the number of forced-choice grammar exercises offered, with one textbook offering nearly half of all its exercises in this fashion when another text only proposed 10% of all its exercises as forced-choice. Lally concludes that, though some efforts have been made to render textbooks more communicative, further undertaking need to be made by publishers to include recommendations voiced by SLA researchers in second language learning. Allen (2008) offers evidence that that the textbook is more a tool that helps with course planning and learning vocabulary and grammar, but less useful for communicative activities. Fernández (2011) analyzed 6 elementary Spanish university level textbooks methodology for the preterit and found that the prominent features of the textbooks were explicit information and controlled production practice (TI). Only half provided activities where learners practice listening comprehension. According to Fernández, "at least half of the textbooks...overlook what is currently know in SLA: the central role of input in the development of an L2 grammar." (Fernández, 2011: 165)



### III. The present study

This study examines six (6) beginning French University textbooks. The focus of the study is the exercises that are used to teach the *passé composé*, the French tense employed to describe completed actions in the past. According to previous studies, the drills should be meaningful, contextualized in reality and communicative. This study will examine the exercises to determine whether the changes recommended by previous studies have been incorporated into these texts.

#### *Research Questions*

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What types of activities are used for instruction of the French *passé composé* in current beginning French university textbooks?
2. Do these activities reflect current SLA research on grammar instruction?

### IV. Method

The most recent editions of six top-selling beginning French university textbooks were selected in order to describe the types of activities used to teach the French *passé composé*. The textbooks included in the study were: *Débuts*, *En Avant*, *Espaces*, *Horizons*, *Liasons*, and *Vis-à-vis*. These books are suggested by publishers for use in the first year of university French. These books are promoted by the representatives of three major publishing companies (Heinle, McGraw-Hill, Vista), and therefore have a relatively widespread use. All texts were in copyright years between 2008 and 2013. All selected textbooks were self-identified as "communicative" approach. The focus was the chapter where the *passé composé* was introduced. Activities were examined to determine a) how many were used to teach the *passé composé* b) type (input activity, mechanical drill, meaningful drill, or communicative drill) and c) whether the activity promoted communication based on the instructions and the steps provided. Again, an input activity has learners read/listen to French, and respond without producing the target form; a mechanical activity (drill) has learners produce the correct grammatical form without having to know meaning; a meaningful drill has learners produce the correct form, but they must also know what the words mean to answer correctly; a communicative drill has students talk to each other using the correct grammatical form, but, as explained above, meaning is not necessarily exchanged. Finally, a decision whether the activity promotes communication was made, based on whether learners were asked to exchange and demonstrate comprehension of previously unknown information.

### V. Results

Of the six (6) texts, there were a total of 65 activities to teach the *passé composé*. The book with the most activities had nineteen (19) and the least, three (6). Of the 65 activities, twelve (12) were input activities. The combination of input activities, meaning and communicative drills were more prevalent than mechanical drills in the majority of the texts (5/6). However, mechanical drills are more prevalent than both input activities or meaningful drills. Of all 21 communicative drills, only 3 had steps to ensure communication.

**Table 1** *Analysis of activities*

Textbooks	Passé composé activities	Input	Mechanical Drills	Meaningful Drills	Communicative Drills	Communication
<i>Debuts</i>	6	0	2	1	3	1
<i>En avant!</i>	12	1	7	1	3	2
<i>Espaces</i>	12	0	5	3	4	0
<i>Horizons</i>	7	2	1	1	3	0
<i>Liaisons</i>	19	9	1	3	6	0
<i>Vis-à-Vis</i>	9	0	4	3	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>

## VI. Discussion

Learners need the opportunity to comprehend languages to promote acquisition, and then to use this new language data to communicate. Mechanical drills do not help learners because they are devoid of meaning and cannot effect underlying language development. Of the 6 texts, only 3 had input activities. The majority (9/12) were from one text. This simple fact indicates that these texts are not in line with the basic given that all SLA theories posit; acquisition cannot happen without input. Half of the texts had more communicative drills than mechanical drills. However, very few (3/21) of these activities had steps to promote communication. Lee and VanPatten, (2003) point out "it is important *not* to mistake 'getting or exchanging information' as the purpose of the task". (Lee and VanPatten, 2003: 62). What *is* the purpose of the exchange of information? "Learners will not only get and exchange information--they will *do something with it*." (Lee and VanPatten, 2003: 62). Learners speaking does not automatically mean they are communicating. Three (3) of all 65 activities had students use the information provided by another. One activity had learners make a judgment on the other's lifestyle (active, sedentary, sporty, intellectual) based on the activities s/he mentioned. Another asked students to determine who was the most recent one to complete a specific activity. The third asked students to figure out which activities were done daily by the classmate, and which ones were out of the ordinary. In all three cases, learners are using the information spoken by another to complete a task, which demonstrates comprehension of this information, thus, communication is taking place. Though these textbooks have incorporated some suggestions from Walz and Lally, as suggested by Fernández, (2011) a closer look at current SLA research will help to modernize textbooks, to incorporate effective methodology based on empirical evidence on how a second language is acquired.

## VII. Limitations

The most obvious limitation is textbook choice. However, this study incorporated textbooks that were recommended by leading higher education publishing companies. As such, it is safe to say that the textbooks used in the study are a fair representation of French beginning language instructional texts. Second, this study is an analysis of the classroom textbooks, and strictly defines communication as asking learners to exchange and comprehend information. It is probable that instructors with experience adapt mechanical, meaningful and communicative drills in such a way to encourage communication in the classroom. However, if an instructor doesn't have the required experience to modify the activities, communication may be extremely limited in the classroom. The textbook should be the impetus to update second language pedagogy, based on theory and research in Second Language Acquisition. Relying on the experience of the instructor could be problematic in programs with many instructors with a wide range of experience, or lack thereof. A good textbook benefits both learners and the instructors.

## VIII. Conclusion

The main instructional method present in all of these textbooks is overwhelmingly TI, that i.e. mechanical, and communicative drills. However, unlike in other languages (Fernández, 2011; DeMil, 2013) input activities are beginning to make an appearance, which is directly reflective of SLA research. Since Lally (1998), some additional steps to drills have taken place to put them in a meaningful context; i.e. based on a communicative theme such as lifestyle, activities, family, etc. Furthermore, most drills that ask students to communicate, are not promoting communication, but rather a mechanization of grammatical forms. Therefore, the trend beginning in French university textbooks is towards a change to reflect SLA research.

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Spanish For Native Speakers Curriculum And Academic Achievement In Florida

## **Abstract**

This study examines how Hispanic ELL students' participation in Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS) programs in Florida high schools is associated with students' academic achievement. Students' individual level data was provided by Florida Department of Education on all Hispanic ELL high school students in Central and Southeast Florida counties who attended 12<sup>th</sup> grade during 2006/2007 through 2009/2010. Students' FCAT scores were used as the dependent variable, and linear regression for data analysis. The study results indicate that student participation in SNS program does not affect students' overall FCAT scores. However, students who participate in SNS courses tend to perform better in Math FCAT, but not in Reading FCAT, when compared to their peers of similar Hispanic background that did not participate in SNS courses. The results show L1 maintenance may promote academic achievement, depending on the academic subject.

## **Introduction**

Hispanics are the largest minority in the United States, making up 15.8% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2010). One in five public school students are Hispanic, and more than 79% of English Language Learners (ELL) come from Spanish-language homes (Loeffler, 2007). Nevertheless, Hispanic students are not doing well in school as they tend to have low academic achievement, high dropout rates (Fry, 2010; NCES, 2008; Pew Hispanic Center, 2003), low college enrollment (HACU) and low graduation rates (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004), which in turn lead to limited job prospects.

Hispanic ELL foreign born students (1<sup>st</sup> generation) tend to be concentrated more at the upper grades (6 to 12) rather than at the elementary levels (Pre-K to Grade 5) (Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2000). In the year 2000, more than one-third (44 percent) of ELL students at the secondary level were foreign born, while less than one-fourth (24 percent) were in elementary grades (Capps et al., 2005). Thus, secondary schools are faced with the task of educating 1<sup>st</sup> generation ELL students that may have difficulties making the academic adjustment into American only-English secondary education in a limited time.

While ELL immigrant students at the elementary level may have more time to develop oral and academic English proficiency, ELL immigrant students in secondary education do not have the time to first learn English in order to understand content in English. Despite the fact that it is important that immigrant students learn English, they must also learn core content at the same state approved academic standards as the rest of the students (Capps et

al.; FLDOE). Furthermore, they must do it in a short period of time in order to obtain the credits required to graduate from high school.

While the high number of Hispanic ELL students in schools demand language programs that can address their linguistic and academic needs, the United States does not have a defined language policy on how to serve them. Instead, language policies on how best to educate immigrant children have been centered on two differing views on how the mind stores languages. The Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) views the mind as having two separate areas where each language is stored, but working and interfering with each other (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998; Cummins, 1986a). Based on SUP view, ELL immigrant students need to spend much time exposed to the English language in order to learn it, and avoid the exposure and use of their Heritage Language (HL)<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) views the mind as having only one area for storing languages.

According to Cummins (1981b, 1989) languages may differ in their surface characteristics such as pronunciation and grammar, nevertheless there is an underlying cognitive/academic proficiency that is common for all languages. Thus, whatever is learned in one language, such as knowledge, skills and concepts, can be accessed using other languages allowing for the transfer of cognitive/academic and literacy abilities across languages (Cummins, 1986a; Durgunoglu & Verhoeven, 1998; Durgunoglu, 2002; Javorsky, 2008). Therefore, it may be argued that by continuing the development of their first language (L1) these 1<sup>st</sup> generation and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation ELL Hispanic students may be able to transfer cognitive linguistic abilities to the acquisition of academic English, helping them to accelerate the acquisition of academic English through language transfer (Cummins, 1979b, 1981b).

This study is unique in terms of the language program, educational level studied, and region. By focusing on a HL program offered within the foreign language department at the secondary level in Central and South Florida, this study will examine in what way does the maintenance of Spanish, as a mean to speed up their acquisition of academic English, is associated with Hispanic ELL students' educational outcomes.

### **Literature Review**

Hispanics in the United States tend to be concentrated in mostly three states: 14 million Hispanics in California (28%), 9.5 million in Texas (19%), and 4.2 million in Florida (8.4%) (US Census, 2010). Florida's Hispanic population is made up of Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians and other Latin American countries. While two-thirds (68%) of all Cubans live mostly in South Florida (1.2 million), Puerto Ricans, the second largest Hispanic group in Florida, tend to be concentrated in Central Florida, making up 13% of Orange County and 27% of Osceola County (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011; Rojas, C., 2011).

Although the number of Hispanic students in schools has increased, education data on Hispanic academic achievement reveal a complex panorama. For the most part, Hispanics academic scores are still lagging behind those for non-Hispanic White and Asian American students (Ingels, Planty & Bozick, 2005). According to the NCES, in 2005 among eighth-graders, only 15% of Hispanic students receive a grade at or above proficient on the reading

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<sup>1</sup> Heritage language refers to a language student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English (Valdés, 2000).

assessment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), while non-Hispanic white students scored at 39% and Asian/Pacific Islander students at 40%. Furthermore, in the 2005 mathematics assessment of the NAEP among eighth-graders, only 13% of Hispanic students scored at or above proficient while non-Hispanic White students scored at 39% and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored at 47% (Kewal Ramani, A. et al., 2007).

Nonetheless, the gaps in reading and math achievement between Hispanic and white students were not much different in 2007 compared to the early 1990s (NCES, 2008). Even though Hispanic dropout rates have decreased in recent years, they are still lagging behind those for Whites (Greene & Winters, 2002; Roderick, Nagaoka & Coca, 2009). According to NCES (2003), Hispanic students have higher dropout rates than White or Black students. In 2009, the dropout rate for Hispanics ages 18 to 21 was 17.8%, while for Whites was 8.6% and for Blacks was 13% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). These numbers present a dim picture of the educational attainment of Hispanic students in public schools.

SNS students are immigrants or the children of immigrants that present varying levels of bilingualism by the mere fact that they have been exposed to two languages. Their linguistic and cultural knowledge, as well as their socioemotional needs, are very different from the typical foreign language student. In the case of immigrant bilingualism, language proficiency in Spanish tends to follow a generational pattern. Usually 1<sup>st</sup> generation speakers tend to be highly proficient in Spanish and have some speaking abilities in English. But 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations of SNS tend to become English dominant speakers, and may continue to communicate at various levels of proficiency in Spanish, especially with members of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation. However, by the 4<sup>th</sup> generation, most descendants of immigrants become English monolingual speakers, with the exception of a few who may retain some competence in the HL (Fishman, 1966; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Veltman, 1983).

SNS programs are usually offered at the middle and secondary level and are designed as a Language Arts class similar to English Language Arts class (Potowski et. al, 2008), thus offering SNS students the opportunity to study Spanish formally. SNS programs do not replace ESL instruction, instead it is offered as a foreign language elective. While the purpose of SNS program is to develop the linguistic repertoire of HL students, it also aims to develop cognitive academic language skills needed for academic success. This language program requires that the curriculum, teaching practices and pedagogical materials be adjusted to the linguistic and socioemotional needs of SNS students (Lewelling & Peyton, 1999; Valdes, 1997; Carreira, 2007).

Based on research done on bilingualism, it can be argued that being bilingual is more an asset than a liability, especially for cognitive and linguistic functions. Research done on bilingualism has shown that being able to communicate in two or more languages improves cognitive abilities (Peal & Lambert, 1962; Samuels & Griffore, 1979), and in general bilingualism fosters literacy and academic achievement among language minority children and adults (Cummins, 1979a, 1981b, 1985, 2001; Cummins & Swain, 1989; Eldesky, 1986; Krashen & Biber, 1988; Merino & Lyon, 1990; Melendez, 1990; Ramirez, 1992; Robson, 1982). Additionally, bilingualism improves verbal and spatial abilities (Diaz, 1983), and divergent thinking (Landry, 1974; Kharkhurin, 2009). Thus, bilingualism may promote academic achievement among those who have some form of fluency in the two languages. In



socioeconomic terms, being bilingual provides greater employment opportunities as adults, and higher income potential (Lynch, A., 2000).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Linguistic Interdependence Hypotheses proposes that while developing proficiency in one language, the individual develops cognitive skills and metalinguistic awareness, somewhat like a universal understanding of language which facilitates the acquisition of a second language (Cummins, 1979b, 1981c; 1984; 1986). Hence, having a good command in one language may facilitate the learning of a second one.

According to Cummins (2002) language proficiency in school is made up of three distinct dimensions: Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), and Discrete Language Skills. Therefore, the English language development of ELL students goes through a more or less precise process, ranging from one to two years to develop BICS, to five to seven years to develop CALP, while acquiring Discrete Language Skills throughout the whole process. Therefore, it is important to analyze how these language skills affect the academic achievement of ELL students.

The most noticeable language dimension is BICS; the “ability to carry on conversation in familiar face-to-face situations” (Cummins, 2002, p. 19). This type of language proficiency or social language is context-embedded and requires low cognition. BICS is acquired easily during daily activities by using simple grammatical structures and basic vocabulary (Cummins, 1979a, 1981b, 1984, 1991a). Although English native speakers already have BICS when they start school, ELLs take one or two years of second language immersion in English to obtain it (Collier, 1989; Cummins, 1981a, 1981b, 1996, 2000). This language ability may deceive teachers and parents, as the ELL student is able to carry a conversation with ease; therefore, they may assume s/he can be mainstreamed into regular classrooms. However, the student will not be able to earn good grades as s/he lacks CALP in order to understand and process complex language and abstract ideas.

Meanwhile, ELL students must learn Discrete Language Skills, such as phonological, literacy, and grammatical and orthographic skills, vocabulary, cultural assumptions, values, and themes that are embedded in each language and culture, as well as story structure and rhetorical features, as these may differ across languages (Cummins, 1979a, 1981b, 1984, 1986). Although ELL students can acquire these skills while learning vocabulary and conversational literacy, there is very little language transfer to other academic language areas like linguistic concepts, vocabulary, sentence memory, and word memory (Geva, 2000; Kwan & Willows, 1998).

On the other hand, most school work requires understanding and knowledge of low-frequency vocabulary words, abstract ideas, and high cognitive abilities such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation that depend on much more complex oral and written language skills. Cummins has identified this language proficiency as CALP (1979a, 1981b, 1984, 1991b, 2002). One important characteristic of CALP is that is context reduced; it is this language proficiency that is needed for reading, decoding, and academic writing language.

CALP is a complex process for all students, but especially for ELLs who may take at least between five to seven years to reach advanced oral proficiency and be at par level with their English native speakers’ peers (Hakuta, K., Goto Butler, Y., & Witt, D., 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997). However, exposure to English does not assure

ELLs academic proficiency. Thus, CALP must be explicitly taught in all areas of language (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing).

SNS instruction supports ELLs' literacy skills in Spanish and English, as cognitive academic language learned in L1 can be transferred to L2. This is important, as content knowledge acquired in the native language does not need to be relearned in the second language. Additionally, aspects common to most languages such as phonological awareness, word reading, concept of printed language and reading comprehension can transfer from one language to the other. Furthermore, this transfer of knowledge is reciprocal; hence second language learning should not interrupt ELLS' cognitive development (Collier, 1995). Therefore, for ELLs to continue developing their native language while learning L2 makes sense, as ELLs cannot afford to wait to learn concept knowledge until they have acquired English.

### Methodology

This study aims to answer the following question: In what way Hispanic student participation in SNS program is associated with student academic achievement? The study used a pre-established dataset provided by the Florida Department of Education of Central and South Florida individual district, school and student data at the high school level for three cohorts of students followed through high school. FCAT scores and student demographics were used, as well as individual district and school data on racial/ethnic student, number of ELL students, number of students receiving FRL, and individual courses offered. The study examined all Hispanic ELL students in Central and Southeast counties who attended 12<sup>th</sup> grade during each year from 2006/2007 through 2009/2010 and then they were tracked back through their entire high school experience starting in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Data analysis was done on the differences in average academic achievement across groups of students who have been exposed to the SNS classes and those who have not. This was implemented by first testing to see if the average FCAT was higher for the group of Hispanic ELL students who participated in SNS classes with that of those Hispanic ELL students who did not participate. This was done with a difference of means t-test with the adjustment for different sized samples (Shavelson, 1996).

The study uses a regression framework to model the academic achievement of students measured by their individual FCAT scores. Specifically, the model used in this study has FCAT scores as academic achievement on the left hand side, and school characteristics, student demographics (including ELL-Hispanic status), and a variable which indicates if the person has participated in SNS class or if this class is available depending on the regression model. This can be written for any student in a school  $k$  as the following regression equation:  $A_{ik} = \alpha_1 + \alpha_2 X_i + \alpha_3 X_k + \beta SNS_{ik} + \varepsilon_{ik}$

The first term on the right hand side is a constant. The second variable  $X_i$  represents characteristics of the student like their sex, race, FRL status and ELL status. The third variable is  $SNS_{ik}$  which indicates if the student had participated in a SNS class at some point. In a second regression model, this is modified to represent only the availability of the class in contrast to actual attendance. This is done to see if there are any big differences which could indicate that Hispanics who participate in SNS program might be different from those who do not in ways for

which the study cannot control. The last term is random error term which is assumed to have a normal distribution and an average of zero, as is usual in simple regression analysis (Shavelson, pp. 198-203).

The value of  $\beta$  tells us the way SNS classes are correlated with academic outcomes. Assuming that students are able to attend this type of class for reasons that are not related to their academic outcomes, a positive and significant value of  $\beta$  can be taken as evidence that suggests a role for SNS in promoting academic achievement among Hispanic ELL students. In other words, the correlation can be interpreted as a causal relationship under the assumption that students are assigned to schools in a way that is unrelated to the availability of SNS courses or how much they would benefit from them.

The study measured student educational achievement by using student’s FCAT scores. The FCAT is a criterion referencing assessment in mathematics, reading, science, and writing, which measures student progress toward meeting the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) benchmarks. The FCAT is part of Florida’s statewide assessment programs; it started in 1998 in order to improve student achievement by using higher educational standards. The FCAT has been administered to students in grades 3-11 and measured student achievement based on the SSS. All students attending school and working toward a standard high school diploma, including ELL students and students with disabilities, must take the FCAT.

**Data Analysis**

The study examined how student participation in SNS classes is associated with academic achievement. The study first compared the average Math and Reading FCAT scores of Hispanic ELL with that of non-ELL students in Central and Southeast Florida. Table 1 shows Hispanic ELL students do not do well in the FCAT, as on average they received 13.35 points less in Math than non-ELL students, and 25.12 points less in the Reading section.

Hispanic ELL students	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Math FCAT Score	3,8548	314.15	41.55	100	500
Read FCAT Score	3,9428	285.88	54.03	100	500
Non-ELL students	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Math FCAT Score	286,265	327.50	39.60	100	500
Read FCAT Score	290,006	311.00	50.40	100	500

Table 1: Average FCAT scores of Hispanic ELL students and Non ELL students.

It may be argued that the 25.12 points difference in Reading FCAT scores may be due in part to the lack of English language proficiencies and cultural exposure to English literature and American current affairs, topics that are the content of the Reading FCAT. On the other hand, the Math FCAT score difference is almost half the difference of the Reading FCAT. While Hispanic ELL students may continue developing their Math skills as expressed in higher Math FCAT scores, their scores remain lower than the average Math FCAT score received by

non-ELL students. This may be due to the lack of English language proficiencies to decode word problems, as well as understand and follow FCAT instructions.

The next step was to analyze how Hispanic ELL students who participated in SNS program performed in the FCAT. The interaction between FCAT scores and Hispanic students who report speaking Spanish at home and participate in SNS was examined using linear regression. Table 2 shows that Hispanic ELL students who reported speaking Spanish at home and participated in SNS program received almost 2.43 points more in their Math FCAT scores than those that did not take SNS classes. The t value (5.74>1.96) is significant and indicates that participating in SNS classes may have a positive effect on academic achievement represented by Math FCAT scores. It also points out that being biliterate may support and enhanced academic achievement in Math.

Math FCAT	Coefficient	Standard Error	t	P> t
Took SNS	2.43	0.423	5.74	0.00
Constant	312.99	0.292	1971.17	0.00
Number of Observations =38.548				
R-squared = 0.001				

Table 2: Linear regression for FCAT Math scores of all ELL students who speak Spanish at home, and SNS participation.

Furthermore, these results remain unchanged when controls for student income levels represented by Free Reduced Lunch (FRL) and gender are included in the regression (Table 3), indicating that this is not simply that students taking SNS are scoring differently because they are observably different along these dimensions.

Math FCAT	Coefficient	Standard Error	t	P> t
Took SNS	2.78	0.421	6.60	0.00
FRL	-11.90	0.608	-19.58	0.00
Gender	4.95	0.421	11.78	0.00
Constant	320.70	0.632	507.13	0.00
Number of Observations = 38,548				
R-squared =0.0142				

Table 3: Linear regression for Math FCAT scores of all ELL students who speak Spanish at home, FRL, and Gender.

On the other hand, Hispanic ELL students participation in SNS program did not have a significant effect on their Reading FCAT scores (Table 4), but at the same time participation in SNS classes had a negative effect on their reading scores. These students scored 2.38 points lower in their Reading FCAT scores than those Hispanic ELL students that did not participate in SNS classes.

Reading FCAT	Coefficient	Standard Error	t	P> t
Took SNS	-2.38	.544	-4.37	0.00
Constant	287.02	.376	761.9	0.00
Number of observations = 38,548				
R-squared = 0.00				

Table 4: Reading FCAT scores of all ELL students who speak Spanish at home.

When income levels (FRL) and gender were added to the model, Reading FCAT scores improved slightly for those students who participated in SNS (Table 5). Thus, overall Hispanic ELL students' participation in SNS curriculum negatively affected their Reading FCAT scores.

Reading FCAT	Coefficient	Standard Error	t	P> t
Took SNS	-2.202	.541	-4.07	0.00
FRL	-19.216	0.782	-24.57	0.00
Gender	-1.065	0.540	1.97	0.04
Constant	304.012	0.813	373.80	0.00
Number of observations = 39,428				
R-squared = 0.0157				

Table 1: Reading FCAT scores of all ELL students who speak Spanish at home, FRL and gender.

Nevertheless, as Table 6 shows Hispanic ELL student participation in SNS classes did not affect students overall FCAT scores.

	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max
Took SNS	18,234.0	300.6	41.9	100	450
No SNS	20,080.0	300.4	45.4	100	457

Table 6: Average FCAT scores of Hispanic ELL students that participated in SNS and those that did not participate in SNS

### Results and Conclusion

The results of this study were found to be aligned with Cummins' Language Interdependence theory, as Hispanic ELL students may benefit from participating in SNS curriculum while at the same time continuing to learn English. The most important attribute of these results was the association found between L1 maintenance and development, and Math academic skills. The study argues for the possibility of cognitive development occurring at deeper levels due to L1 maintenance, and expressed through abstract and logical thought such as Mathematical proficiency. Although participation in SNS curriculum may delay English acquisition as expressed in Hispanic ELL students' lower FCAT Reading scores, students' overall academic achievement in their FCAT scores was not affected. However, these results need to be taken cautiously as they are contingent on Hispanic ELL students' previous schooling experience in their native country, as well as on the assessment design of FCAT.

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Daniel Mecado

**Excerpt from Dissertation: Instructional Strategies Used to Provide Equal Learning Opportunity for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners**

### **Abstract**

The participants for this study were 10 deaf and hard of hearing English as a second language learners from a higher education institution. The use of appropriate instructional design strategies for deaf and hard of hearing English as a second language learners requires that instructional designers, faculty, and educational institutions understand what accommodations and strategies should be included in the curriculum to provide an equal learning opportunity in a second language. This study gathered information about deaf and hard of hearing learners' perceptions from a hybrid learning experience and recommendations of how to design better hybrid English courses to accommodate their needs. The literature examined deaf and hard of hearing protective laws, instructional design, online delivery approaches, web content accessibility, adaptive technology and assistive technology, and universal design that supported hybrid English courses for deaf and hard of hearing learners.

### **Introduction**

The population for this research consisted of ten deaf and hard of hearing English as second language learners. Mainstream classrooms historically have not been designed for deaf and hard of hearing learners especially if the class was interactive or discussion oriented (Cavender, 2010). Cavender's study was to find solutions for deaf and hard of hearing learner to have an equal access to education and the resources needed to learn effectively with the use of technologies. Findings were that the technologies used empowered the deaf and hard of hearing learners to solve their own accessibility problems and take control of their own access needs (Cavender, 2010).

This study explored the deaf and hard of hearing learners' perceptions and recommendations for a hybrid course. The deaf and hard of hearing learners' perceptions and recommendations provided information to instructional designers on how to effectively design hybrid English courses to provide an equal learning opportunity and to accommodate their needs through Web accessibility. Several studies (e.g., Irlbeck, Kays, Jones, & Sims, 2006; Lang, Biser, Mousley, Orlando, & Porter, 2004; Long et al., 2007; Napier & Barker, 2004; Sims, 2006) suggested that learners' input was important to the design process.

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibit institutions from discriminating against students with disabilities with regard to access to educational programs and facilities (Richardson, Long, & Woodley, 2004b). Providing appropriate instructional opportunities to deaf and hard of hearing learners requires that instructors understand what accommodations and strategies should be included in the curriculum. Although fully online courses have been found to be appropriate for deaf and hard of hearing learners, hybrid courses which are part face-to-face and part online instruction have become an online learning tool to institutions entering the online arena (Martyn, 2003). Therefore, gathering learners' perceptions about their experience from a hybrid English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course in this study contributed to the research on how to design and create better hybrid ESOL courses. Deaf learners' perceptions might help understand factors that could influence motivation and learning, which in turn might lead to the improvement of the strategies and productive outcomes for teaching at the postsecondary level (Lang et al., 2004).

Two federal laws assure that persons with disabilities have equal access to postsecondary educational opportunities (a) the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and (b) the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §701 *et seq.* determined that it was unlawful for federal programs or agencies or any programs that received federal funds to discriminate against persons with disabilities (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794 and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended provide specific guidance for postsecondary institutions regarding deaf and hard of hearing students. The regulations specify reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, program accessibility, effective communication with people who are vision or hearing impaired, and accessible new building construction and alterations.

Section 508 stipulates that employees and members of the public, including postsecondary students with disabilities, have access to electronic and information technology provided by the Federal government (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005). The purpose of Section 508 was to eliminate barriers in information technology, open new opportunities for people with disabilities, and encourage the development of technologies that will help achieve these goals (Laws, n.d., para. 1). While mandates for equal access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities exist, a policy report from the National Council on Disability (2009) reported that data are needed to determine the success of the programs that have been implemented to provide persons with disabilities equal access to education (para. 3, Education).

### **Instructional Design for Equal Access to Educational Opportunities**

Equal access to educational opportunities and technology in education has increased as a result of the federal mandates discussed in the previous section for all individuals despite the disabilities a person may have (Lee & Templeton, 2008). As a result of the increase in deaf and hard of hearing learners, postsecondary institutions will be required to provide educational technologies to accommodate individually the needs of the learners (Lang & Steely, 2003). Instructional designers will be instrumental in providing access to technology that will improve access to an equal education for students with disabilities (Joiner, 2010). Instructional design is a systematic and

reflective process of translating principles of learning and instruction into plans for instructional materials, activities, information resources, and evaluation (Smith & Ragan, 1999).

Instructional designers can follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (2006) that emphasizes the importance of providing barrier-free access to persons with disabilities (Lilli, 2001). Instructional designers can also use web accessibility guidelines when designing online courses for deaf and hard of hearing learners (Wisdom et al., 2006). Wang (2006) found that learning outcomes were better when students with disabilities were included in the design process. Martin (2009) found that information about deaf students' learning styles was necessary because learning styles would influence the communication services to be included in the instructional designs. While research has shown the importance of including information from deaf and hard of hearing learners when designing instruction, Richardson, Long, and Foster, (2004a) indicated that additional research is needed to assess the effectiveness of instructional design that includes technology for deaf and hard of hearing students.

## **Statement of the Problem**

There are multiple laws that protect and identify deafness and hearing loss as disabilities. There are also guidelines instructional designers use to make content accessible to the learners. The guidelines were relevant to this study because they emphasized the equality of online accessibility to people with disabilities (Shawn, 2010b). While there were regulations that specified how instruction must be fully accessible with the use of technology for deaf and hard of hearing learners, the concern was that the regulations did not stipulate the instructional strategies that should be used with the technology or specify the combination of technology that worked best for deaf and hard of hearing learners.

Researchers (Lang et al. 2004; Long et al., 2007; Napier & Barker, 2004; Irlbeck et al., 2006; Sims, 2006) suggested that learner's input was important to the design process. Not getting the deaf and hard of hearing learners' input was a problem because it gave no idea of whether students' needs had been met. When developing accessible instructional designs, researchers supported including students (Cavender, 2010; Friedman & Bryen, 2007; Irlbeck et al, 2006; Martin, 2009; Wang, 2006; Zabala et al., 2004). Distance learning and hybrid courses have been found to be as effective as mainstream classrooms for deaf and hard of hearing learners (Collins & Pascarella, 2003; Mallory et al., 2003).

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to gather information about deaf and hard of hearing English as a second language learners' perceptions of a hybrid learning experience and describe recommendations as to how to design better hybrid English courses to accommodate their needs. The learners' perceptions served to help instructional

designers determine how hybrid courses can be designed to better accommodate their needs (Long et al., 2007). In addition, researchers (Lang et al. 2004; Long et al., 2007; Napier & Barker, 2004; Irlbeck et al., 2006; Sims, 2006) suggested that learners' input was important to the design process to meet students' needs. The hybrid learning has the probability of enhancing the students' deaf and hard of hearing learners' perceptions, learning experience, and provide a richer learning environment than either just online or just face-to-face (Lang et al. 2004; Long et al., 2007; Napier & Barker, 2004).

### **Research Questions**

The following questions guided this study.

1. What are the deaf and hard of hearing learners' perceptions of a hybrid learning experience?
2. What recommendations do the deaf and hard of hearing learners suggest on how to design and what should include a hybrid ESOL courses effectively to accommodate their needs?

The results of this study can benefit the deaf and hard of hearing ESOL learners and instructional designers by acknowledging the learners' perceptions of a hybrid learning experience, web content accessibility, and recommendations for how to effectively design hybrid English courses to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing learners' needs. Deaf and hard of hearing learners were included in the evaluation phase of the instructional design process.

### **Nature of the Study**

This study focused on deaf and hard of hearing undergraduate ESOL learners that were enrolled in an eight-week hybrid course. The study was designed to identify the deaf and hard of hearing learners' perceptions of an online learning experience, hybrid learning interventions used for the course, web content accessibility, and recommendations of how hybrid ESOL courses could be designed effectively to accommodate their needs.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework that supported this research was based on the universal design theory. The theory of universal design was implemented as a form of instruction that consisted of practical design and use of inclusive instructional strategies to benefit a wide range of learners including learners with disabilities (Scott, McGuire, & Embry, 2002). Universal design for learners is defined by the National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities (2010) as the design of products and environments to be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. According to the Center for Universal Design (2008) universal design makes every effort to incorporate people with disabilities into the mainstream and assistive technology attempts to meet the specific needs of individuals. Universal design for learning is an educational framework that optimizes learning opportunities for all individuals to gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for

learning (Rose & Meyer, 2002, 2006; Rose, Meyer, & Hitchcock, 2005). Universal design benefits learners with disabilities and learners without any disability.

### **Data Collection and Methodology**

Three data sets were collected. First, data were collected from one-to-one semi-structured interviews with each of the learners. The interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed for analysis. Second, were the perception questions that consisted of three categories, the first category of questions were about the experience and perception of an ESOL hybrid course, traditional course, closed captions, American Sign Language interpreter, videos, Blackboard, email, and discussion forum. The second category dealt with the basic design principle of the ESOL hybrid course in relation to the organization of the pages, the content alignment on the pages, items that were close together were related, paragraph format, each page looked like it belonged to the same page, and the elements tied all parts together. The third category was concern with the web content accessibility, the closed captioned feature, content was readable and understandable, American Sign Language interpreter, Blackboard management system and videos ensured content was accessible, and the navigational buttons provided easy accessibility to the content of the ESOL hybrid course. The perception survey question used the following five point Likert scale, 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree for each item. The perception answers were analyzed to find common threads with the qualitative data. Third, participants' personal reflective journal entries were analyzed to identify themes in the entries to answer the research questions. The ESOL learners' personal reflective journal entries focused on explaining their perceptions of (a) online learning experiences of the hybrid course, (b) hybrid learning intervention, (c) accessibility of the course, and (d) recommendations of how hybrid courses can be effectively designed to accommodate learners' needs. The personal reflective journal entries were completed from the second through the fifth week of the course. The focus group transcript was the fourth data analyzed. There were seven ESOL learners that participated in the focus group session. Some of the focus group questions were, which tools did they use the most, were the instructions for each unit clear and easy to follow? explain, how effective was the interaction with other ESOL learners from the hybrid course, which delivery method of instruction did they prefer, what ways the different types of technologies used in the ESOL hybrid course and course materials facilitated the accessibility of the course, and how can an ESOL hybrid course provide and equal learning opportunity for deaf and hard of hearing learners, were you satisfied/dissatisfied with the hybrid course? Explain, and would you recommend other ESOL deaf and hard of hearing learners to enroll in this half online and half face-to-face (ESOL hybrid course)? Why or why not?

This qualitative case study employed a triangulation process to learn more about their perspectives on hybrid learning for deaf and hard of hearing learners. The use of multiple data sources improves the quality of a study (Flick, 2007). The findings were based on an analysis of data collected from 10 ESOL learners in an eight week hybrid course. The study was conducted in a Part of Term course, an 8 week course, it was a hybrid course designed for first year college students. The learners ranged in age from 16 to 35. Their native language is Spanish, and they are from a low income middle class. The degree of deafness among the (10) ESOL learners were from

unilateral hearing loss-can hear from one ear but not the other (4), post-lingual deafness- the person develops the deafness after the speech and language is acquired (3), and heredity-people are born deaf (3).

### **Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

A total of 12 themes emerged from the data analysis of the interviews, journals, perception survey, and focus group questions. Eight themes were derived from the qualitative data and four themes were derived from the quantitative data. The eight themes derived from the qualitative data are Theme 1: Positive perception of a hybrid learning experience, Theme 2: Participation experience in a hybrid course and traditional course, Theme 3: Liked face to face with professor and sign language interpreter, Theme 4: Online course to access anytime and study own time, Theme 5: Experience with classroom equipment and laboratory, Theme 6: Learners liked the learning management system of Blackboard with closed captioned videos and sign language interpreter, Theme 7: Instructional design strategies helped to achieve an equal learning opportunity and an effective and equal learning experience, and Theme 8: Learners felt important and part of the hybrid course and made them feel closer to each other. All eight themes answered and supported research question 1 of what are the deaf and hard of hearing learner's perceptions of a hybrid learning experience.

The following four themes were derived from the quantitative data. Theme 9: Traditional courses vs. hybrid courses, Theme 10: Best hybrid intervention features, Theme 11: Effective basic design features, and Theme 12: Web content accessibility.

The eight qualitative themes were supported by the data gathered from the interviews, journals, and focus group questions and sustained research question 1. The 4 quantitative themes were supported by the perception survey questions these are: traditional courses vs. hybrid English courses, best hybrid intervention features, basic design effective features, and blackboard and Web content accessibility.

The learners described their experiences of how they learned with face-to-face and online instruction. The learners reported that the experience with the hybrid ESOL course was very good, felt that the course complied with the reasonable accommodations for hard of hearing or deaf learners, helped a lot to have an interpreter, the closed captions facilitated learning, having a sign language interpreter helped to communicate and understand the course better. The course was designed to accommodate the learner's special needs thanks to the videos and the communication with the professor. The closed caption videos made the learners feel like they were part of the group because they were understanding the course content at the same pace of the other participants. The closed captions made them actively involved with the lesson because they could relate to it the same way as the other learners. One learner's comment further demonstrated that the learning experience was more effective with the online course, which supported research question 1. The learner reported that he really liked the online portion of the course because it allowed him to work at his own pace, whenever he was available, and this allowed him to do a better job.

All the learners agreed that the communications had improved with the professor and other learners. The learners' perceptions indicated that the instructional design strategies used in the hybrid course for this study helped and accommodated the deaf and hard of hearing needs. The learners expressed satisfaction with Blackboard, which

facilitated and provided Web access to the hybrid course. In addition, 50% of the learners expressed that they preferred the online hybrid course versus the face-to-face class instruction because there were more resources available online than those that were provided in the classroom setting. For this research study 50% of the learners preferred the face-to-face and 50% preferred the online course. Those learners that preferred the face-to-face instruction reported that, if there was something that they did not understand, the professor could explain it at the moment and the learners would receive an immediate response rather than waiting for an answer via email, texting, discussion forum, or phone. The 10 learners liked the face-to-face classroom because they felt they had direct contact with the professor and the American Sign Language Interpreter. This feeling of having the professor nearby gave the learners a sensation of confidence and made them feel better about themselves in the course. All of the learners felt very comfortable with the professor and sign language interpreter in the classroom. The American Sign Language Interpreter was a very important asset to the design of the hybrid course.

### **Implications of the Findings for Practice**

As result of the findings, it can be suggested that the use of instructional design strategies used in this research were to accommodate the needs of deaf and hard of hearing English as a second language learners. Based on the results, instructional designers might consider: promoting an equal learning opportunity for deaf and hard of hearing learners at the educational institutions to comply with Sections 504 and 508. Taking advantage of the findings of this study and applying the instructional strategies employed in this research would likely empower the deaf and hard of hearing learners to solve their own accessibility problems and take control of their own access. Including deaf and hard of hearing learners in the evaluation phase of the instructional design process. Including deaf and hard of hearing learners when creating and designing Web pages. Complying with Sections 504 and 508 standard and Web Content Accessibility (1999) to ensure Web content accessibility.

Instructional designers could provide easier instructional strategies techniques to meet the deaf and hard of hearing needs. The faculty and instructional designer should consider the deaf and hard of hearing learners' perceptions to provide for an equal learning and online instruction accessibility. Share and consider the information obtained from the deaf and hard of hearing evaluations to improve the design of ESOL courses.

### **Conclusions**

Conclusions are drawn from 10 learners' perceptions from this study based on the perceptions and learning experiences, equal learning opportunity, and recommendations of how to best design hybrid English courses to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing learners' need. The learners believed that they benefitted from the instructional design strategies that were used to build the hybrid course for this study. All ten learners agreed on that they enjoyed working with the learning management system of Blackboard. The videos with closed captions and sign language interpreter were of great assistance to the learners and for the course because the videos provided accessibility to the content. The face-to-face instruction with the professor and the sign language interpreter in the



classroom appeared to be the most preferred feature by the learners. However, the learners pointed out that they participated more in the hybrid course than in a traditional course.

The literature review has shown the importance of including information from deaf and hard of hearing learners when designing instruction. This qualitative case study examined the perceptions from 10 deaf and hard of hearing learners to determine their learning experiences of a hybrid course. The learners also made recommendations about how to design hybrid ESOL courses effectively to accommodate their needs. Educational technology has the capability of improving deaf and hard of hearing students in the academic mainstream; however, mainstream classrooms are not adequately equipped for deaf learners (Luft et al., 2009). Universal design recognizes the unique individuality of each learner and the need to accommodate the differences of each (Center for Applied Special Technologies, 2003).

Instructional designers, instructors, faculty, administrators, and educational institutions need to select suitable strategies to place into practice a universal design for deaf and hard of hearing learners in a digital multimedia environment of instruction and select appropriate strategies for the type of delivery of instruction intended to use.

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Dr. Alla Kourova

The Implementation of The Bologna Process In Russia

## **Introduction**

The Bologna Process is a bright example of European integration. It is aimed at the development of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Bologna Process started in 1999. It is usually seen as a European response to the challenges of globalization and the dominance of the American education system (Baidenko, 2010 - 45). In 2003 Russia, realizing the importance of being involved in the life of the world community, joined it.

The EHEA is based on common educational process, measures of its quality assurance and improved student and academic mobility, in order to deepen European integration, and provide high-qualified specialists equally educated in all countries joined the Process, which in turn will raises the competitiveness of Europe on the global market of higher education.

The Bologna Declaration, given the start to the reform, was signed by 16 European countries in 1999. It underlined the following main principles of EHEA (Bologna Declaration, 1999):

1. Comparable degrees (the Diploma Supplement);
2. Two main cycles of education: undergraduate and graduate (where completing of undergraduate level is also relevant to the labor market);
3. A system of credits (ECTS);
4. Student and staff mobility;
5. Co-operation in quality assurance;
6. Straightening of European dimension in higher education.

The adoption of them will make the European market of higher education better in level of qualification, transparent and more attractive for students and employers (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005: 54).

The Berlin Communiqué (2003) established the follow-up structure of the Bologna Process and expanded the number of participants to 40, including Russia.

## **Historical Background**

Nowadays the Bologna process incorporates 47 countries and the European Commission, with the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE, ESU, UNESCO-CEPES, Education International, ENQA and BUSINESSEUROPE, as consultative members.

The Bologna process itself has two-level structure. The first level is the Ministerial Conference, which includes representatives from each member country and is gathered every two years in order to review the progress of the reform (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005: 46). The second level consists of follow-up groups (Communique 2003): the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) that assembles in between Ministerial meetings to ensure the realization. It involves delegates of all members of the Bologna Process and consultative members. There is also a Board and the Bologna Secretariat.

The Bologna reform was to end due to 2010 but for the number of factors and reasons it did not happen on time. The Bologna Process is of great importance for Europe and joined states for the educational, economical and political opportunities it represents.

Students are considered one of the driving forces of the Bologna Process hence they should be highly involved in it as equal partners, even in higher education governance (Communique 2003). The Bologna Process considers higher education as the “market of education services” where Diploma demonstrates the qualification of a student (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005: 54). Comparable degrees are of great importance because ideally it will give the members of the Process the chance to get education and obtain a job “in any EU country regardless of the place where the education was received” (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005, 55, 64).

The Bologna Process was started in 1999 which is only 12 years ago, hence there are not much analytical work done in this area, especially there is a lack of analysis of the reform in the transition countries (Kwiek, 2004: 34). The implementation of the Bologna Process in Russia was discussed in several reports made by Russian state representatives, for instance by Russian-European Center for Economic Policy. And despite these papers highlight some problems; they are aimed at demonstrating how much was done, when in practice the results are far from obvious. Likewise, the research papers were focused on main HEIs in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, but not in the periphery where great number of institutes are not involved in the Bologna Process at all.

Still the issue of implementing the Bologna system in Russia is covered in literature. Its various aspects are studied by leading experts in the field of education. The peak of the attention of scientists and researchers to Bologna process was in 2005, two years after its adoption in Russia. From 2006 to 2010 (the preliminary date of the finalization of the reform) the discussion went on, however, the volume was significantly smaller, which means that the fundamental change of the Russian system of higher education stopped after 2005.

The perception of the Bologna process by the Russian scientists and society can be divided into two groups: optimists and pessimists (Baidenko V.I.), but Baidenko also underlines the constructive direction, presented by

experts of RECEP and reflected in their work «The Bologna Process and its Implications for Russia. The European Integration of Higher Education». This publication reveals the fundamental importance of the Bologna process for Russia and considers it a positive effect of globalization and an opportunity for Russia to implement modernization of the educational system. They suggest that it can help Russia to take more valuable position in the international relations, not only because of supply of raw materials and the significance of the territories (Baidenko, 2010 - 56). An important feature of the publication is that besides underlining the principal issues of education reform, they propose the road-map of implementation of the Bologna process in Russia on the basis of the principle of conservation of authenticity and national traditions (Baidenko, 2010 - 46). Additionally, they analyze successful examples of application of the Bologna system in Russian universities.

But many experts note the academic resistance to this process, explaining that by the probability of "undermining the traditions of fundamental education in Russia" because of the reforms in European style (V.I. Baidenko, N.V. Polyakov, B.C. Savchuk). Therefore research center of the issues of the quality of specialists' training under the guidance of Professor V.I. Baidenko every year publishes a report on the progress of the reform, identifying and analyzing new problems of this phenomenon and suggesting recommendations. As the main disadvantages of this process V.I. Baidenko considers the academic performance: student-centered education, multi-level education, the transition to a credits system, etc.

In the book "The "soft path" of Russian universities entry to the Bologna Process" A. Melville offers a different version of what is happening, connecting the low speed of implementation with the lack of funding and the attempt of the state officials "to carry out the Bologna process on a voluntary basis by the faculty staff" (Melville A. 2005).

The reason Russia joined the Bologna Process in 2003 (Communique 2003) was to straighten its integration with Europe and to reinforce itself in the field of "soft power" (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005: 9). As for inner causes, the reform is the way to modernize of educational sphere as well as the way to enhance economic, social and administrative reforms (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005: 9). The transition from "severely controlled system" to market economy after the collapse of the Soviet Union led to "chaotic conditions" of economy (ACA 2005: 6), and as a result to deprivation of the educational system where state management of content and quality of education and responsibility for graduates employment were replaced by too many institutions (state and especially non-state) of higher education - 1249 HEIs in 2001; 1823 HEIs in 2004 - offering various study programs without giving guarantees that Diploma would be sufficient for the labor market (ACA 2005, 12). As a result employers are not interested in sponsoring universities or its research work for it is not connected with practice (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005, 55). For the lack of unification of today's educational system and lack of transparency of its quality, employers tend to hire not the one who got the degree but the one whom they know (ACA 2005: 13).

Consequently, it leads to the absence of objective competition on a labor market and degradation of social, economical and political situation; and unattractiveness of Russia for both foreign students and employers

(Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005: 12). Therefore joining the Bologna Process and adoption of its principles can rehabilitate Russian higher education system. In Russian context it will bring:

- Integration of educational space;
- Enlargement of educational institutions;
- The increase of HEI's activity in widening of exchange programs;
- Greater access to English-language programs (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005, 63).

But it also means the need to get into the new level of informatization; and reassessment of organizational structure of education both on the national level and on the level of universities (such as regional and municipal one, for they are not present in that system).

One of the main restraining mechanisms and structures of the management system of the reform implementation on the Federal level is financial redistribution. The Ministry of Education and science is the main structure responsible for realization of state policy on education and its decision-making on the federal level (ACA 2005, 16). But the Ministry itself, its Departments, the Russian Education Supervision committee, the Russian rectors union and other submitted structures pursue both the short- and long-term objectives. The long-term objective is to match the education with the needs of market economy, but on account of the existing organization of Russian education and high level of corruption the short-term one surpasses it which results in administrative inefficiency (Pursiainen, Medvedev 2005, 13, 60).

EHEA countries are supposed to spend 60% of their regular education funding on the implementation of the reform. And in the frame of the Bologna Process Russia gets additional funding (the numbers are not available for public). This financial situation together with short-term objective of Russian bureaucracy provokes rent-seeking behavior and law enforcement. Thus the European way of introducing the reform does not work in Russia.

The Ministry of Education and science issued the order according to which HEIs that have not implemented the Bologna Process from 2011 were cut off from state funding. But the funds originally devoted to universities stayed at higher levels, and thus institutions of higher education could not properly put the reform into practice. It stimulated "a reform on paper" character of the Bologna Process in Russia, where even the united Internet database on the list of Universities, and courses they offer in Russia was not developed. And still Russian HEIs do not use ECTS system and "do not accept the disciplines that have been taught abroad" because the home university would then have to issue the student's diploma with "unknown academic credits" and to take responsibility for their quality (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005: 68).

For the Russian higher education system is under-financed (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005: 55), it could not motivate the academic staff to be involved in the reform. Conversion from 5-years one-cycle system to 4+2 requires upgrade of curriculum and development of new courses. But the organization of education fails in remuneration of teachers and its structure. The academic staff already receives the "scanty pay", and as the design of new courses does not strengthen teachers' position in terms of employment, and seems to be unpaid, they are not interested in involvement to the Bologna Process (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005, 55, 60). Moreover a part of courses are supposed

to be in English, but the universities do not finance the programs for improvement of teachers' qualification; consequently the knowledge of English still remains a huge problem (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005: 60).

Students are one of the driving forces of the Bologna Process, hence they should be highly involved in it as equal partners, even in higher education governance (Communiqñ 2003). But in Russia students either do not know about the Bologna Process, or do not want or can not participate. They still can apply for 5-years program, and they are not willing to enter 4-years Bachelor program because the Bachelor degree is still not considered as sufficient for work by the employers (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005: 48, 56). Despite that the process of transition to two-cycle degree system started in 1992 with the law "On higher education into the Russian Federation", the number of all students "enrolled in the two cycle degree system" in 2008-2009 was 9, 4% (Russian report, 2008, 6). As for mobility programs, students are not encouraged to participate, moreover there is a number of serious obstacles to study abroad: lack of information and exchange programs (ACA, 2005, 32, 37, 41); high transactional costs; financial problem; difficulties in recognition of ECTS credits and courses afterwards, and "the necessity to take academic leave" (ACA, 2005, 37; Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005, 15); complicated visa procedure is also referred as an obstacle (ACA, 2005: 21; Russian Report, 2007-2009).

The Bologna Process considers higher education as the "market of education services" where Diploma demonstrates the qualification of a student (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005, 54). Comparable degrees are of great importance because ideally it will give the members of the Process the chance to get education and obtain a job "in any EU country regardless of the place where the education was received" (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005, 55, 64). But so far, a half of Russian Diplomas are considered to be fake (even in Russia), because of the number of HEIs and high level of corruption (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005, 55). Therefore, the Bologna process could not attract more funding from potential employers. Thus essential part of Russian participation in the Bologna process should be focused on convincing other member-states that "the expected results [of our education] are reliable" (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005, 56). The introduction of European Diploma Supplement, that can assure foreign partners in quality of Russian education, remains at low level: only 99 HEIs (less than 1%) can issue it; and only 31379 graduates (2% of the total number of graduates) received it in 2007 (Russian report, 2008, 27).

The monitoring of the Process in Russia also leaves much to be desired. Every year the Ministry of education and science assigns more than 400 000\$ for controlling the results, but the structures originally responsible for promotion of the Bologna Process are not able to make real estimation of quality of the results except financial ones. That, in turn, means that how much money the International office has earned is more important than how many courses were designed in the frame of the reform and how popular they are among foreign students. Together with the realization of the Bologna Process the Ministry of Education and science is responsible for annual monitoring of traditional inner educational activity such as the number of graduated specialists, how much was spent on their training and so on. The indicators of the monitoring remain from the command economy of the Soviet time and do not respond to the present circumstances of educational market (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005,15). The research institutes that could examine new conditions and suggest new monitoring system, were dismissed (Pursiainen, Medvedev, 2005, 55).



It is worth noticing that Russia is not the only country where the introduction of the Bologna process has faced serious obstacles (Black Book, 2005). In 2009 the Ministerial Conference in Leuven-Louvain-la-Neuve was the first time when specialists began to explain these problems by under-funding of the reform (Communique 2009). European Students' Union (ESU) in its annual report "Bologna with Student Eyes Bologna" provided an overview of the discussion on funding of the project (ESU 2010). According to it during the first 10 years of the project, starting in 1999, the obligation of financial support had to be taken by society, including students who had to deal with the raised tuition fee. Originally it was assumed that each state should spend 60% of its budget for education on the implementation of the Bologna process. These measures did not contribute to the development of the project, and therefore the experts started to talk about the Bologna process as a commercial project, aimed at "transforming the higher education into profitable business" (Galkina, E., Melville A., ESU).

When in 2010 the reform was not finalized (Communique 2010) the financial question started to be considered seriously, but special meeting devoted to him, had place only in September 2011 (International conference on Funding of Higher Education Yerevan, Armenia). The meeting recognized that the attention to the issue of finance since the beginning of the process was unacceptably low, and the fact that at the moment it consists only of the money allocated on the national and regional levels should be dealt with. The main recommendation proposed by participants was "to stimulate the creation of the European space for dialogue in the field of higher education funding» (International conference 2011).

Successful resolution of financial issue can become the needed push for the final implementing of the Bologna process and preventing the transformation of higher education into business taking advantage of students, as well as helping to create a favorable image of the Bologna system in the eyes of the academic community.

However the financial issue is not the only issue of the Bologna Process. In the book *The Bologna Process for US Eyes: Re-learning Higher Education in the Age of Convergence* Clifford Adelman researches the Bologna process from the U.S. position and looks for what experience of Europe can be used in the US. Talking about how the reform developed, he highlights the fact that the intention to implement it before 2010 met with resistance, innovation and additional partners, putting its completion about for another decade (Adelman, 2009, 2). He also revealed the problem of nonequivalent ratings and university programs participating in the process and the prospects they offer. Therefore, a student from a high-ranked university will not be interested even in the short-term study on the periphery, whereas students from the periphery will strive to the best universities, which would create an imbalance of the new system, and will give a boost to the "brain drain» (Adelman, 2009: 174). The author analyzes the Bologna process as a bright example of integration that could be used in other regions. He also provides data on similar efforts between U.S. and Latin America (Adelman, 2009, 170). He argues that the challenges faced by Europe (recognition of diplomas, level of education, the system of credits, etc.) are highly similar with those in the United States (Adelman, 2009, 208).

In the article *The Emergent European Educational Policies under Scrutiny: the Bologna Process from a Central European perspective* Marek Kwiek analyzes the Bologna process from the Central European countries point of view, emphasizing that this initiative is Euro-centered. Kwiek draws attention to the different level of

development of the countries involved in the process, dividing them into the original 15 EU member-states and countries in transition. In this regard, he argues that it is necessary to undertake the research on implementing the Bologna process in transition countries, as they face with not only the new challenges identified in the Declaration, but also with the problems that arose after the fall of Communism. The existing recommendations are not clear in the context of the transition states, and therefore the Bologna process can not be successfully implemented. The specific recommendations for these countries need to be developed in order to prevent the probability of the higher education reform being implemented only in paper. In addition, the author emphasizes the importance of changing the meaning of the institute of higher education and its transformation into the engine of economic growth (Kwiek, 2004, 26).

**As the main problems of the Bologna Process *Kwiek* outlines the following:**

- \* Declarative key of the documents;
  - \* The huge gap between good intentions of Ministers of Education and the reality of the system of higher education in most transition states;
  - \* The exaggerated hopes on state funding;
  - \* The duality of principles of the Bologna Process combining cooperation and competition, whereas the universities in transition states can not compete with the higher education institutions in the Western Europe (Kwiek, 2004, 29).
- To sum up, the Bologna Process has a long way to go in Russia and transition countries, but if the existing problems are not taken into account the implementation of the reform will not be successful.

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## Book Review

Les Potter

Dr. Mary Renck Jalongo's Early Childhood Language Arts, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, Pearson

I will try and describe this very informative book to the reader and why it should be used by language arts faculty in teacher education programs. The textbook is designed for the child from birth to eight years of age. The people that should be reading and using this book are teacher education faculty and their pre-service teachers. One distinctive of this textbook from other early literacy books in the field is the book includes oral language rather than just literacy in print. Since Early Childhood Language Arts is in its 6<sup>th</sup> edition, I believe the author must be doing something right. This book also includes: listening, speaking, reading, writing and also includes the fine arts with an emphasis on diversity. When I reviewed this book, I was pleasantly surprised to see the large amount of writing focused on diversity, especially for the English Language Learner. I believe this is very important for the novice teacher because (as I read in the book) there are over 169 different languages spoken in schools in the United States every day. Today, children of color make up 44 percent of America's children, and will be the majority by 2019. Information like this and how to teach our diverse students literacy is very important and I was glad to see it so well written. The book is easy to read and understand for even the newest of teacher education majors.

Structurally, the book contains "fast facts" that addresses current research and dispels common misconceptions in education. I found this to be very useful as I believe education majors need to know information about their profession. Each chapter defines the key topic to be addressed, such as the home literacy environment or narrative and expository texts. After learning the terminology central to the chapter, the students focus even more into the topic through the case material. There are sections in each chapter that contain real-world case material so pre-service teachers can relate with other professionals in the field as well as with their children's families and the students themselves. There is an overview of developmental perspectives of the chapter content. Common core is now the buzz word and the book goes into depth about how the material relates to the common core standards in each chapter. There is plenty of good information that pre-service teachers can learn and use in their own classrooms. The book is written through researched based literacy strategies that the author weaves throughout the chapters. The following features are all designed to provide explicit, practical research-based guidance for teachers of young children.

Links with Literature-this feature leads pre-service teachers to classical and contemporary high-quality children's literature across various genres. It uses multicultural, multiethnic, and international children's books and also provides links to multicultural and international resources.

English Language Learner-this feature provides the very latest research-based recommendations for working with students who are acquiring English.

How do I...?-this feature offers step-by-step explanation of how to perform a particular task, such as introducing new vocabulary words or planning a standards-based lesson.

For each chapter, the Instructor's Manual features the chapter focus, chapter objectives, key terms, student learning experiences, and teaching and learning resources, along with a sample syllabus and a sample project. The Test Bank includes new, scenario-type test items similar to those on the national teacher examination (but not necessarily for Florida's teacher exams). There is also PowerPoint presentations designed for the pre-service using the text, the PowerPoint Presentation consists of a series of slides that can be shown as is or in different formats. The textbook format is well laid out and easy to follow. All chapters have a numerous segments that tie into the main heading. Chapters range in length generally from 20-30 pages which I believe is important for the pre-service teacher to be able to read easily for one assignment.

Part One- Language Learner in Context with two chapters that include: 1) Appreciating Diversity and Education the Young Language Learner and 2) Optimizing Every Child's Language Growth Through Family Literacy.

Part Two- Oral Language with four chapters that include: 3) Understanding Language Development in Early Childhood, 4) Helping Young Children Become Better Listeners, 5) Supporting the Speaking Ability of the Very Young, and 6) Using Narrative and Expository Texts to Foster Growth in Literacy.

Part Three- Literacy with Print with three chapters that include: 7) Fostering Growth in Emergent Literacy, 8) Supporting Early and Independent Reading, and 9) Leading Young Children to Literature.

Part Four- Written Language and Symbol Systems with four chapters that include: 10) Drawing and Writing to Communicate, 11) Using Media Influences and Applying Technology, 12) Developing and Managing a Language Arts Program, and 13) Documenting Children's Progress in the Language Arts.

I found this textbook to be a very useful tool for the instruction of literacy and language arts for young children of all cultures and diversities. If you are a college literacy or language arts instructor in the teacher education program, I would recommend you secure a copy of Early Childhood Language Arts and review it yourself. I think you will be pleasantly surprised too.

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**Laura Kuschuck**

**A Personal Experience: Being a College Level Deaf student.**

Laura was born hearing and became deaf as an adult in her thirties, by which time she had already begun to read lips as a compensation to her hearing loss. After ten years of learning to lip read she became comfortable using it as a last resort. In fact because she can speak quite well people tend to forget she is completely deaf or think she is lying, until they try to get her attention from behind. Laura has learned American Sign Language and still learns more everyday as she meets people from different areas of our country. There are “accents” or different signs used in different parts of the country; not enough to hinder communication between deaf people, but enough to confuse someone who is new to the language or area. She also uses Pidgin Signed Language (PSE) and on occasion Signed Exact English (SEE). American Signed Language however is the only official and recognized language of the deaf population here in America.

For the past three years Laura has been a paid peer tutor at a local state college and truly enjoys helping the students. She is currently in the Bachelor of Education Program studying to become a Special Education Teacher with the state certificate / endorsement to teach American Sign Language (ASL) as a second language in the school systems grades K-12. Her long term goal is to earn a Master’s and Ph.D. in ASL / Deaf Studies and continue to professionally develop in Special Education. She has two hearing children who are considered to be CODAs (Child of a Deaf Adult). Both children have learned to sign.

There is a difference between Deaf and deaf in the culture and community. Deaf with a capital “D” is a cultural description and a way of living not just being hard of hearing or medically deaf. The deaf with a lower case “d” is a medical or physical description. This has nothing to do with the culture unless the person decides to become part of the deaf community. Many people become deaf and hard of hearing as they age; this is not the same as those in the Deaf community unless the person makes a decision to be Deaf. The term “Hearing Impaired” is one that was given to the deaf population by the hearing population. Many deaf people do not consider themselves to be “disabled” or “hearing Impaired”; those labels were given to them by the hearing community.

Laura’s personal experiences as she lost her hearing and went from wearing hearing aids to no longer benefiting from them has been enlightening to say the least. Hearing aids are a visual indicator to people that when seen tell them, the person is deaf or hard of hearing. They become more attentive to the person wearing them. Deaf people have no physical characteristics to show they are deaf. However once we try to communicate with someone it becomes apparent. Many times a deaf person will become so frustrated, that he or she finds it easier to not speak at all or even to sign when out. Many times a deaf person is forced to resort to writing to communicate his or her needs in stores, gas stations, restaurants and doctor’s offices. The most common responses Laura gets are ones of annoyance or sympathy. Laura has experienced everything from being ignored to being treated like a child, to being treated like an idiot.

As a college student, she has had to be her own strongest advocate to get the accommodations that she needs and, that are legally her right to have. According to Laura almost every semester she has to teach at least one of her teachers how to teach a deaf student. Sometimes it is a disheartening struggle and others; it is simply a matter of the teacher sharing information in the correct format.” It has been her experience that classmates will gravitate away from her for group projects and the teacher has to assign her to a group. People tend to think she needs to have her hand held to get things done. Sometimes she gets a classmate who feels the need to help her like you would an “exceptional” child, or that she isn’t smart enough to do the work herself. Laura has had to prove her value as a person and student every semester she has been a student. There have been a few faculty and staff who do not see her as disabled and she is grateful to be seen as a person and not just as a “Disabled” or “hearing impaired” student. When she is treated with respect as a student and person she gives it back and the motivation to succeed becomes stronger.

Earlier it was mentioned that she is also a tutor at the college for ASL American Signed Language and she loves it. She still has to prove to the new students as well as new co-workers either that she is capable or that she is deaf, because they forget. Once her co-workers and the students get used to her, sometimes they forget she is deaf. Recently in the past few years American Sign Language has been recognized as meeting foreign language requirements for most if not all Associate of Arts degrees (A.A.) at many colleges. This is a huge step for the deaf community in being recognized as a culture. However there are still colleges who do not recognize the language as meeting these requirements and will force a transfer student to take another language. This becomes very upsetting to the student especially if they are connected to the deaf community.

One of the hardest things to achieve in the deaf community is a good education and a solid academic future. There are deaf residency and day schools for deaf children and college students, but observation shows that they are few and far between. Many times in Public education deaf students are pushed into vocational schools to learn a trade. Those that go through the public school system have a very different experience from those who go through the deaf schools. It has been noted by many deaf people in the community that, public schools focus on accessibility and meeting the minimum requirement to educate the deaf student as a disabled student. Many time deaf students are mislabeled as learning impaired or slow. This is not the case, often, they just do not have the communication skills to gain the information needed to learn the material and progress as the other students do. When teaching a deaf student it is important to know the method of communication they use at home and out in the world. As a teacher this may mean the student has to learn to use signing, or read and write in order to gain the knowledge being taught.

If you look at a deaf student in any grade as an ESOL student based on their communication skill level, and accommodate the student accordingly, the foundation to learning for that student will be stronger. As a pre-service teacher in the field, Laura has worked with a few deaf children in the public schools and found that communication is the biggest barrier. Many times the deaf child lives in a house with no use of sign language or interaction by the parents other than the most basic. Some children have hearing aids but have to learn to use them and accept them. This is an adjustment to a young child and will affect their behavior in the classroom. Signing is a great resource to

help a deaf or hard of hearing student learn to read and write. These same modifications can be adapted for other “disabled” students as well. Some autistic, or down syndrome children pick up on signing faster than speaking or communicating within” normal” parameters (Personal observation, 2012). Any child with a disability that affects communication could benefit greatly from the use of signing. It has been observed often that adding sign language to the student’s communication skill set removes a lot of anxiety towards school, and opens the way for the learning process. (Personal Observation).

The deaf schools give the students a sense of community and belonging. In these schools the message sent to the student is one of encouragement and support. The students from these schools have a stronger sense of who they are and what they want out of life. However the level of education as compared to that of a public school is a matter of debate amongst the deaf community. Some feel public school is better, others, Deaf residency or day school is better.

Not all deaf students are educated equally or in some cases fairly. Educators truly need to understand the communication methods available to deaf students and encourage those skill sets as early as possible. This is important to set the foundation for a positive attitude toward education. Students need to feel that they are seen, that they matter to the school, their teachers and their friends and family.





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