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The Effect of a Listening/Speaking Curriculum on the
Achievement of Adult

Mario Martinez de Castro

THE EFFECT OF A LISTENING/SPEAKING CURRICULUM
ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ADULT
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

DISSERTATION

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by

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* * * * *

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Mario Martinez de Castro

Barry University, 2009

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ABSTRACT

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of a listening/speaking curriculum on the academic achievement of adult English Language Learners (ELL). This study evaluated the effect of a listening and speaking curriculum on the academic achievement of ELLs. The focus of the study was on the discrepancies encountered in student listening and reading test scores. The effectiveness of the curriculum was measured by comparing reading and listening test scores of the students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking program to the scores of those students taking the courses in the traditional format. Studies of this nature are instrumental in helping educators to better meet the needs of this growing student population in the country which may have implications on the motivation and persistence of students.

Method

The study was quantitative and implemented a casual-comparative research design to determine whether a relationship existed between the experimental treatment and the achievement of adult ELL. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the data analysis. Descriptive statistics were presented with regard to the gender and ethnicity of the participants. The mean gain was analyzed using independent *t*-tests at the .05 level

of significance to assess differences, if any, between the experimental group and control group on the dependent measure.

Findings

The results showed that the academic achievement in listening of students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum was significantly higher in comparison to the students who did not participate in the curriculum. In contrast, no significance was found on the academic achievement in reading of the same student population. The results of this study showed a positive link between academic achievement of students and the participation of these in classes that incorporated a targeted listening/speaking curriculum.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

This study evaluated the effect of a listening and speaking curriculum on the academic achievement of adult English Language Learners (ELL). The study focused on the discrepancies encountered in student listening and reading test scores, which not only create frustration among educators but also has an adverse effect on the motivation and persistence of students to complete the educational program.

Statement of the Problem

Since 1992, limited-English-proficient (LEP) student enrollment has nearly doubled. Most recent data from the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA) indicate that there are close to five million students identified as LEP (NCELA, 2003). The number of LEP students, primarily Hispanic, has doubled in the last decade. These skyrocketing numbers of LEP students underscore the importance of ensuring that students' academic success become a reality and that educators provide them with every opportunity to excel.

There are indications in recent years that the needs of these adult ELL are not being fully met. Despite the best efforts of adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers, dropout rates among adult ESL students remain a problem, and achievement is at best inconsistent (Mathew-Aydinli, 2008). Looking at the largest linguistic subgroup among adult ESL learners, the results of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) have shown that in the 11 years since the previous national survey in 1992, the English prose and document literacy levels of Hispanic

adults in the United States have fallen significantly (18% and 14%, respectively) and their quantitative literacy scores have remained unchanged (Kutner, Greenberg, & Baer, 2005). Another recent analysis shows that of foreign-born adult Hispanics, approximately 73% speak English “less than very well,” and for Asian adults, 40.4% fall into this category (Fry & Hakimzadeh, 2006).

States such as Iowa, Connecticut, and California, as well as Florida utilize a standardized instrument called Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) for placement and promotion purposes of students identified as adult ELL. Statistics indicate that a large percentage of the student population of a large metropolitan school district is successful in the reading section of the CASAS instrument, yet fail to be promoted due to their inability to perform similarly on the listening section of the same test (School Improvement Plan, 2006). Differences have been encountered in excess of 20 points between students’ reading and listening scores (School Improvement Plan). Such results cause frustration to both students and the teachers who constantly struggle to enhance their listening and speaking curriculum. It was the opinion of this researcher that students can greatly benefit from a targeted listening/speaking curriculum with the adequate allocation of resources to ensure availability of instructional material. Moreover, these resources need to be accompanied with the appropriate teacher training to ensure the successful implementation of a listening/speaking curriculum.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a listening and speaking curriculum on adult ELL. The effectiveness of the curriculum was measured by

comparing reading and listening test scores of the students in the program to the scores of those students that took the courses in the traditional format.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this study was Noam Chomsky's Theory of Universal Grammar (UG). Noam Chomsky originally theorized that humans were born with a hard-wired language acquisition device (LAD) in their brains (Chomsky, 1975). He later expanded this idea into that of Universal Grammar, a set of innate principles and adjustable parameters that are common to all human languages. According to Chomsky, the presence of Universal Grammar in the brains of humans allows them to deduce the structure of their native languages from mere exposure to it.

Research on universal grammar has had a significant effect on the SLA theory. A key question about the relationship of UG and SLA is: Is the language acquisition device posited by Chomsky and his followers still accessible to learners of a second language? White, extensively delineates and explains this relationship in his 2003 book titled *Second Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar*. Research suggests that language acquisition becomes inaccessible at a certain age as evidenced by Eric Lenneberg's (1967) Critical Period Hypothesis, and that adult learners increasingly depend on explicit strategy-based instruction to target specific language skills such as listening and speaking. In other words, although all of language may be governed by UG, older learners might have great difficulty in gaining access to the target language's underlying rules from language exposure alone.

Adult ELLs are unique in their characteristics and learning styles, needs, and preferences. Therefore, in addition to Chomsky's UG theory, this study also drew on a

theoretical connection to Malcolm Knowles's (1984) Theory of Andragogy. According to Knowles, adults learn differently than young people. But more importantly, their reasons for learning are very different. With the Theory of Andragogy, Knowles attempted to explain why adults learn differently than children and suggests teaching methodology that meets the needs of the adult learner.

Furthermore, since this study investigated the effectiveness of a listening/speaking curriculum on the achievement of adult English language learners, a direct theoretical relation can be traced to research-based instructional theories that promote second language acquisition in adults. Stephen Krashen's (1982) Monitor Theory as well as Michael Sharwood Smith's (1991) Input Enhancement Theory may prove useful in the improvement of adult ELL's listening competencies.

Research Questions

The two research questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. What is the effect of the listening/speaking curriculum on student listening achievement?
2. What is the effect of the listening/speaking curriculum on student reading achievement?

Null Hypotheses

The 12 null or statistical hypotheses are the following:

H_{o1} : There is no difference in listening achievement between students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_02 : There is no difference in reading achievement between students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

Additionally, a comparison of test results was made in order to determine if there were differences among students based on ethnicity and gender. Therefore, the following 10 null hypotheses were also tested:

H_03 : There is no difference in listening achievement between male students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_04 : There is no difference in reading achievement between male students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_05 : There is no difference in listening achievement between female students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_06 : There is no difference in reading achievement between female students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_07 : There is no difference in listening achievement between Hispanic students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_08 : There is no difference in reading achievement between Hispanic students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_09 : There is no difference in listening achievement between White students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_010 : There is no difference in reading achievement between White students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_011 : There is no difference in listening achievement between Black students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_012 : There is no difference in reading achievement between Black students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

Background and Significance

The population of adult immigrants, refugees, migrant workers, and naturalized citizens studying nonacademic English in the United States is large and growing (Mathews, 2008). In the United States, nearly 45% of the adults enrolled nationwide in state-administered adult education programs attend ESOL or English literacy classes, with the official number of such students approximately 1.2 million in 2003-2004 (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 2006), thus making this the fastest growing segment of learners in adult education programs (Yang, 2005).

Combined with the large numbers of adults studying English in privately sponsored programs, volunteer literacy services, community-based programs, or workplace English classes, these adults represent a significant student body. They also represent a group of learners with unique expectations and needs (Mathews).

For too long the skill of listening has been relegated to a secondary position in the English language teaching classroom (Miller, 2003). This is due, in part, to the fact that a considerable amount of research has been conducted in reading, writing, and speaking the language. This type of research has not only influenced the approaches to teaching the English language but has also influenced how textbooks are written. In this researcher's opinion, there appears to be a lack of interest in the skill of listening. Some of the reasons for this lack of interest come from the fact that speaking was always considered a more "valuable" skill to focus on in the classroom; researchers and teachers have often considered listening to be something which could just be "picked up" or "what comes naturally." Since teachers and researchers themselves have not been taught listening skills, they see little need for developing a specific research agenda or approaches to teaching listening. It is indeed interesting that the skill of listening has not received wider attention in the past given that it is the language skill most often used in everyday life (Miller, 2003).

There is increasing political discussion and thus interest in learning language skills and subsequent employability of these adult ELL. From the President on down, the correlation between postsecondary education and training—for which adequate English skills are essential—and economic stability is frequently argued (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008). The apparent inconsistency between such an agenda for adult education and the

realities of achievement raises immediate and important questions about the nature of language learning and teaching with respect to this student population.

Research Design

For the purpose of this study, a causal-comparative design was used. More specifically, a nonrandom control group design was utilized. Two groups were observed in the study: an experimental group in which the treatment was administered and a control group in which the treatment was not administered to compare differences in student achievement. Pretesting occurred at the time of placement in the school district where this study was conducted. Posttesting of both groups occurred on the designated testing schedule currently in place at the educational institutions in this study.

Definition of Terms

Adult English Language Learners (ELL) are students over the age of 18 enrolled in state-administered adult education programs of English as a Second Language or English literacy classes. These students were not currently participating in any K-12 instructional program. ELL is used in this study for one or multiple learners (singular and plural).

Ethnicity relates to being Hispanic, White, or Black as self-disclosed and reported by the student during the registration process.

Gender is either male or female as self-disclosed and reported by the student during the registration process for this study.

Listening/speaking curriculum in this study is defined as a series of textbooks and media resources published by Oxford University Press. The student textbook contains a variety of lessons that addresses different topics and common everyday situations that

correlate with the listening standard prescribed by the state-mandated curriculum. Besides the textbook and media resources, there was a teacher's guide book that recommends a series of teaching strategies and provided instructors with assessment instruments to use at the end of each lesson. Finally, there were writing exercises as well as speaking activities for every lesson of the curriculum.

Student achievement was defined in this study as a score on the listening and reading sections of CASAS.

Assumptions of the Study

It was assumed that the quality and rigor of the coursework delivered to all study participants, whether in the control and experimental groups, were similar. It was also assumed that all participants in this study were motivated to improve their English language proficiency as demonstrated by their attendance and participation in all elements of the coursework. Furthermore, it was assumed that students would dedicate time outside of the classroom to complete assigned homework. It was also assumed that teachers for both the experimental and the control groups were equally enthusiastic and qualified in the methodology of teaching adult English language learners.

Limitations of the Study

In studying the difference in achievement among various groups of students, it is important to understand and recognize as a limitation that the instructor, as designer of the course, will determine the learning resources, instructional techniques, and activities. This variability among courses as well as instructors means that no two courses were identical. This study was conducted at only three selected schools in a large urban district that were not randomly selected. The researcher did not exert any control over the

placement procedures that were in place at the selected educational institutions. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to other school districts in rural settings or those that are not composed of the same or similar socio-demographic characteristics.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of a listening/speaking curriculum on student achievement as it related to academic achievement of adult English language learners. Presented as a quantitative method study, the research focused on the impact of the listening/speaking curriculum on academic achievement of students through a mean pretest and posttest score. Academic achievement was defined as a mean score on the listening/reading component of the CASAS test.

Quantitative research questions were formulated to take a closer look into the null hypotheses. Assumptions of the study were presented as well as limitations were presented to eliminate any bias or misconceptions. Finally, key terms that were found in the study were also defined.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Language acquisition is the study of the processes through which learners acquire language. By itself, language acquisition refers to first language acquisition, which studies infants' acquisition of their native language, whereas second language acquisition deals with acquisition of additional languages in both children and adults. Second language acquisition is the process by which people learn a second language in addition to their native language(s). The term second language is used to describe the acquisition of any language after the acquisition of the mother tongue. Second language acquisition may be abbreviated SLA or L2A for L2 acquisition (Hylteston & Abrahamson, 2003).

Acquiring a second language occurs in systematic stages. Much evidence has been gathered to show that basic sounds, vocabulary, negating phrases, forming questions, using relative clauses, and so on are developed (Spada & Lightbown, 2002). This development is independent of input and learning situation in the classroom or on the street. It is also generally applicable across a spectrum of learners from different language backgrounds.

Success in language learning can be measured in two ways: likelihood and quality. First language learners *will* be successful in both measurements. It is inevitable that all first language learners will learn a first language, and with few exceptions, they will be fully successful. For second language learners, success is not guaranteed. For one, learners may become fossilized or *stuck* as it were with ungrammatical items. Fossilization occurs when language errors become a permanent feature as stated by

Canale and Swain (1980), Johnson (1992), Selinker (1972), and Selinker and Lamendella (1978). The difference between learners may be significant. Finally, as noted in research, L2 learners rarely achieve complete *native-like* control of the second language. Acquiring a second language can be a lifelong learning process for many. Despite persistent efforts, most learners of a second language will never become fully *native-like* in it, although with practice considerable fluency can be achieved.

In this chapter, an overview of the research conducted to date on language and second language acquisition is provided. The chapter commences with a review of Larry Selinker's proposed Theory of Interlanguage, and from it the emergence of Noam Chomsky's Universal Grammar (1975) as the theoretical framework of this study. A review of Eric Lenneberg's (1967) Critical Period Hypothesis as it relates to adult English language learners is provided. In the review of the literature, the researcher provides an overview of the limited research available on Adult English Language Learners and discusses Malcom Knowles' (1984) Theory of Andragogy as it relates to adult learning styles and preferences. Finally, after discussing the research conducted on the skill of listening, the review of the literature covers two well documented theories on strategy-based instruction to promote second language acquisition in adults.

Interlanguage

An Interlanguage is an emerging linguistic system that is developed by a learner of a second language (L2) who is not fully proficient in the language but is only approximating the target language preserving some features of the first language (L1) in speaking or writing the target language and creating innovations. An interlanguage is based on the learner's experiences with the L2. It can fossilize in any of its developmental

stages. The interlanguage consists of L1 transfer, transfer of training, strategies of L2 learning (e.g., simplification), strategies of L2 communication, and overgeneralization of the target language patterns.

Interlanguage is based on the theory that there is a "psychological structure latent in the brain" which is activated when one attempts to learn a second language. Larry Selinker proposed the theory of Interlanguage in 1972, noting that in a given situation the utterances produced by the learners are different from those native speakers would produce had they attempted to convey the same meaning. This comparison reveals a separate linguistic system. This system can be observed when studying the utterances of the learners that attempt to produce a target language norm. Interlanguage is perhaps best viewed as an attitude toward language acquisition and not a distinct discipline (Chomsky, 1975). By describing the ways in which learner language conforms to universal linguistic norms, interlanguage research has contributed greatly to one's understanding of linguistic universals in SLA and the development of Nativist theories such as Universal Grammar (Chomsky, 1975).

The Nativists and Chomsky's Theory of Universal Grammar

Much of the nativist position is based on the early age at which children show competency in their native grammars, as well as the ways in which they do (and do not) make errors. Infants are born able to distinguish between phonemes in minimal pairs, distinguishing between bah and pah, for example (Yang, 2006). Children also seem remarkably immune from error correction by adults, which Nativists say would not be the case if children were learning from their parents (Pinker, 1994).

According to Noam Chomsky, the mechanism of language acquisition formulates from innate processes. This theory is evidenced by children who live in the same linguistic community without a plethora of different experiences who arrive at comparable grammars. Chomsky thus proposed that, "all children share the same internal constraints which characterize narrowly the grammar they are going to construct" (Chomsky, 1977, p. 98). Since people live in a biological world, "there is no reason for supposing the mental world to be an exception" (Chomsky, 1977, p. 94). Chomsky also believed that there is a critical age for learning a language as is true for the overall development of the human body.

The Chomskyan approach towards syntax, often termed generative grammar, studies grammar as a body of knowledge possessed by language users. Since the 1960s, Chomsky (1975) has maintained that much of this knowledge is innate, implying that children need only learn certain parochial features of their native languages. The innate body of linguistic knowledge is often termed Universal Grammar. From Chomsky's perspective, the strongest evidence for the existence of Universal Grammar is simply the fact that children successfully acquire their native languages in so little time. Furthermore, he argued that there is an enormous gap between the linguistic stimuli to which children are exposed and the rich linguistic knowledge which they attain referred to as the "poverty of the stimulus" argument (Chomsky, page 96). The knowledge of Universal Grammar would serve to bridge that gap. For over 50 years, linguists Noam Chomsky and the late Eric Lenneberg have argued for the hypothesis that children have innate, language-specific abilities that facilitate and constrain language learning.

Chomsky's theories are popular, particularly in the United States, but they have never been free from controversy. Criticism has come from a number of different directions. Chomskyan linguists rely heavily on the intuitions of native speakers regarding which sentences of their languages are well-formed. This practice has been criticized both on general methodological grounds, and because it has (some argue) led to an overemphasis on the study of English. As of now, hundreds of different languages have received at least some attention in the generative grammar literature (Chomsky, 1965; Matthews, 1965; Niss, 2002), but some critics nonetheless perceive this overemphasis, and a tendency to base claims about Universal Grammar on an overly small sample of languages. Some psychologists and psycholinguists, though sympathetic to Chomsky's overall program, have argued that Chomskyan linguists pay insufficient attention to experimental data from language processing, with the consequence that their theories are not psychologically plausible. More radical critics have questioned whether it is necessary to posit Universal Grammar in order to explain child language acquisition, arguing that domain-general learning mechanisms are sufficient.

Age and Second Language Acquisition: Lenneberg's Critical Period Hypothesis

The possible existence of a "critical period" for language acquisition is another Nativist argument. Critical periods are time frames during which environmental exposure is needed to stimulate the innate language learning mechanism in the human brain. Nativists argue that if a "critical period" for language acquisition exists, then language acquisition must be spurred on by the unfolding of the genome during maturation.

According to some researchers, the defining difference between a first language (L1) and a second language (L2) is the age at which the language was learned. Linguist

Eric Lenneberg used second language to mean a language consciously acquired or used by its speaker after puberty. In most cases, people never achieve the same level of fluency and comprehension in their second languages as in their first language. These views are closely associated with the Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967). Linguist Eric Lenneberg stated, in a 1967 paper, that a critical period of language acquisition ends around the age of 12 years. He claimed that if no language is learned before then, it could never be learned in a normal and fully functional sense. This was called the Critical Period Hypothesis.

SLA theories explain learning processes and suggest causal factors for a possible CP for SLA, mainly attempting to explain apparent differences in language aptitudes of children and adults by distinct learning routes, and clarifying them through psychological mechanisms. Research explores these ideas and hypotheses, but results are varied: some demonstrate pre-pubescent children acquire language easily, and some that older learners have the advantage, and yet others focus on existence of a CP for SLA. Recent studies (e.g., Zhao & Morgan, 2005) have recognized that certain aspects of SLA may be affected by age, though others remain intact.

Adult English Language Learners

A review of the literature points to limited research on the specific adult population of English language learners. Despite the number of published studies coming out of such diverse countries as Australia, Canada, England, and the United States, the vast majority of research with adults in ESOL context still tends to surround those learners in higher education contexts (Mathew-Aydinli, 2008). Unfortunately, the differences between most ESOL students in higher education and adult ESOL students in

non-academic contexts are so vast, that research with one group has often little significance or relevance to the other. This argument is equally true for research on adult basic education or adult literacy, which erroneously contain many misplaced ELL. This mistaken inclusion of ELL into those classes, created for native English speakers, interferes with the intended research since the needs of ELL are very different from the needs of native English-speaking adults. There remain, therefore, many channels of inquiry that have yet to be explored with adult ELL (Mathew-Aydinli).

Several studies (e.g., Buttaro, 2002, 2004; Carpenter, 2005; Gault, 2003; McVay, 2004; Menard-Warwick, 2005a, 2005b) have looked at the experiences of Hispanic ELL in the United States, and a common element found was the critical role of the family in promoting learner success. Other common features in these studies can be generalized to a broader adult ELL population, including the need to support ELL by providing child care facilities, academic and work counseling, and help with transportation. For the classroom, recommendations were made to balance newer androgogical approaches with more traditional teaching methods (that the students may expect and value), to set goals together, to address the students' realities and not the assumptions of what they might be, to address the students' speaking and listening needs first before reading and writing the language, and, if possible, to consider a combined classroom or one-on-one tutorial approach to teaching (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008).

It is unfortunate that adult ELL studying non-academic English remain an understudied population. Equally unfortunate is the fact that existing research studies often lack a theoretical base, and thus remain disconnected from one another. No study to date has looked at the full scope of research on this particular population of learners to

understand the exact extent of how they have been neglected in the literature or to provide an accurate picture of what research does exist (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008).

Andragogy

Andragogy applies to any form of adult learning and has been used extensively in the design of organizational training programs. Knowles' (1984) Theory of Andragogy is an attempt to develop a theory specifically for adult learning. Knowles emphasized that adults are self-directed and expect to take responsibility for decisions. Adult learning programs must accommodate this fundamental aspect.

The Theory of Andragogy makes the following assumptions about the design of learning: (a) Adults need to know why they need to learn something, (b) Adults need to learn experientially, (c) Adults approach learning as problem-solving, and (d) Adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value. In practical terms, andragogy means that instruction for adults needs to focus more on the process and less on the content being taught. Strategies such as case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation are most useful. Instructors adopt a role of facilitator or resource rather than lecturer or grader.

Adult learning is voluntary; there is no compulsion involved when adults learn and therefore motivation is not usually a problem. Adults tend to seek out learning opportunities. Often life changes, such as marriage, divorce, a job change, termination, retirement or a geographical change serve as the motivation for the adult to seek new learning opportunities (Knowles, 1984).

Adults often seek out learning opportunities in order to cope with life changes. They usually want to learn something that they can use to better their position or make a

change for the better. They are not always interested in knowledge for its own sake.

Learning is a means to an end, not an end in itself. These adults bring a wealth of information and experiences to the learning situation. They generally want to be treated as equals who are free to direct themselves in the education process (Knowles, 1984).

Adult Learning Styles and Preferences

Adult language learners have many competing concerns that arise from their adult responsibilities to support themselves and their families. Teachers often consider these concerns distractions that further disadvantage adults who have already passed a critical period for language acquisition (Gass & Selinker, 2001). However, adults in addition to the more developed cognitive skills they bring to language learning tasks bring a wealth of life experiences on which to build on (Gass & Selinker). In addition, they often bring a high level of motivation born of those same life experiences and adult responsibilities (Shreet, 2007). The question, then becomes, how can one take advantage of the ways in which adults learn from that of children and the ways in which adult learners differ from one another? In the 1970s, Knowles developed a theory about the concept of *Andragogy*—the idea that adults and children learn differently and that the differences can be used to design more effective teaching strategies for adults (as cited in Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1997). This concept was originally developed by Alexander Kapp in 1833. In Kapp's view, the core principles of *Andragogy* consist of the learner's need to know his or her self-concept, prior experiences, readiness to learn, orientation toward learning, and motivation to learn. Adults, unlike children, need to know how their learning will benefit them, must see a clear connection to their life situation with a personal payoff, and must have some measure of control over their learning situation (as

cited in Knowles et al.). Classes for adults are most effective when their syllabi clearly outline the learning objectives, specify the practical outcome of accomplishing those objectives, and allow the students input into how the objectives will be achieved. Knowles also believed that individual differences between adults affect their learning. The andragogical learning principles are tempered by an array of other factors that affect learning behavior (Knowles, 1997).

Three Approaches to Learning Styles

During the past several decades, a host of theories have arisen about adults' learning styles, pointing out the differences in the ways adults learn. Some of these theories involve cognitive styles, such as how individuals go about gathering information (visual/auditory/kinesthetic) or processing information; some relate to personality factors, such as tolerance for ambiguity, approach to risk taking, and introversion versus extroversion. Educators in both the academic and the corporate worlds have shared their experiences working with adults who have various learning styles. Much of the information available relates to three approaches to learning styles: (a) sensory information gathering, (b) Kolb's (1984) learning styles, and (c) Myers-Briggs personality types (Keirse, 1998).

Sensory Information Gathering

Sensory information gathering refers to the way in which learners prefer to learn and most readily absorb information, whether visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. Visual learners learn well when presented with written texts charts, diagrams, and illustrations. Auditory learners prefer to take in information by hearing it and do well when they can engage in incorporating listening and speaking skills. Kinesthetic learners are hands-on

learners and do well when motion is involved. They prefer activities during which they can move around, write or draw, manipulate data, and work with tools (Knowles et al., 1997).

Kolb's Learning Styles

Kolb's (1984) learning styles are an extension of his theory of experiential learning. According to Kolb, adults learn by cycling through four stages: experience, observation and reflection, abstract conceptualization, and experimentation. Kolb categorized learners into four groups based on their preferences for various stages of the learning cycle, labeling them convergers, divergers, assimilators, or accommodators (as cited in Shreet, 2007). Kolb's categories identify learners who crave learning activities involving problem solving and decision making. They also identify teachers acting as coaches rather than lecturers. The categories also identify which learners find lectures and verbal explanations useful, which prefer an emphasis on theory over practical applications, and which work well in groups or prefer working individually (Campeu, 1998; Klob, 1984).

Myers-Briggs' Personality Types (MBTI)

Myers-Briggs' personality types, based on Jungian psychology, group people into 16 types based on their responses to items on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Keirse 1998), which measures preferences in the areas of introversion/extroversion (I/E), sensing/intuition (S/N), thinking/feeling (T/F), and perceiving/ judging (P/J). Learners in each personality type see and interact with the world differently, depending on their type of learning style and the learning situation they find themselves in. As expected, introverts (Is) prefer individual learning tasks while extroverts (Es) prefer

group activities. Sensing learners (Ss) like detailed explanations of concepts, while intuitors (Ns) prefer to use inductive reasoning to draw their own conclusions. Thinkers (Ts) prefer step-by-step logical presentations, while feelers (Fs) prefer to learn through discovery. The 16 types are further grouped into four temperaments that, according to the theory, describe an individual's preferences for such things as practical application versus theory, risk taking, analytical tasks, and group work (as cited in Shreet, 2007).

Skill of Listening

More than 40% of the daily communication time of adults is spent on listening, 35% on speaking, 16% on reading, and only 9% on writing (Burely-Allen 1995). Although listening has been a relatively neglected skill in terms of research and how it is introduced to language learners, it is now beginning to receive more attention (Miller, 2003). In the past few years, several major practical and theoretical texts have been published specifically dealing with listening skills (e.g., Buck 2000; Mendelson & Rubin 1995; Nunan & Miller, 1995; Rost, 2002). In conjunction with these books, there is now a greater awareness among teachers that educators have to help learners develop their listening skills rather than rely on the skill developing itself. The question of how to help learners develop effective listening skills brings attention to the methods educators use and the type of materials introduced to learners (Miller).

Listening is an active process of selecting and interpreting information from auditory and visual cues (Rubin, 1995). Listening is also a critical element in the competent language performance of adult language learners. Language learners need multiple exposures to listening and speaking activities in order to develop their listening and speaking skills. Communicative and whole language instructional approaches

emphasize the integration of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in ways that reflect natural language use, but opportunities for listening and speaking require structure and planning if they are to support language development (Flores-Cunningham, 1999).

Outside the classroom, listening is used twice as often as speaking, which in turn is used twice as much as reading and writing (Rivers, 1981). Inside the classroom, speaking and listening are the most often used skills (Brown, 1994). Both skills are recognized as critical for functioning in the language context both by teachers and by learners. These skills are also logical instructional starting points when learners have low literacy levels (in English or in their native language), limited formal education, or when they come from language backgrounds with a non-Roman script or a predominantly oral tradition (Flores-Conningham, 1999). Furthermore, with the drive to incorporate workforce readiness skills into adult ESOL instruction, practice time is being devoted to such speaking skills as reporting, negotiating, clarifying, and problem solving (Grognet, 1997).

Dora Johnson's 2001 annotated bibliography of 12 works on *Second Language Acquisition* (SLA) in adults investigated the linguistic processes of adults learning a second language. It is not restricted to studies on adults in nonacademic settings and does not include adult ELL studies investigating things other than linguistic processes of learning. These studies, Johnson noted, were generally "observational" and dealing with program issues. Although Johnson's focus is understandable, it leaves the field still lacking in any comprehensive picture of adult ELL research from which to draw conclusions (as cited in Mathews, 2008).

Strategy-Based Instruction and Second Language Teaching Methodology for Adults

For adult ELL in the United States, the basic reason for learning English is to use the language for practical purposes. It is not to know about grammar or sophisticated details of English syntax or the cultural aspect of the land where the language is spoken. All of these have their place, but knowing a language involves being able to put all of these pieces together in order to read for work or enjoyment, participate in conversations with others who speak the language, or accomplish other tasks using English, the new language to them (Van Duzer & Kenyon, 2003).

Learners' most direct source of information about the target language is the target language itself. When they come into direct contact with the target language, this is referred to as input. When learners process that language in a way that can contribute to learning, this is referred to as intake (White, 1987). Two theories that stress the enhancement of input with the desire to increase the amount of intake are worth mentioning in this study. These theories are Stephen Krashen's (1982) Monitor Theory and Michael Smith's (1991, 1993) Input Enhancement Theory.

Krashen's Monitor Theory

Generally speaking, the amount of input learners take in is one of the most important factors affecting their learning. However, it must be at a level that is comprehensible to them. In his Monitor Theory, Krashen advanced the concept that language input should be at the "i+1" level, just beyond what the learner can fully understand. This input is comprehensible, but contains structures that are not yet fully understood. This has been criticized on the basis that there is no clear definition of i+1,

and that factors other than structural difficulty (such as interest or presentation) can affect whether input is actually turned into intake.

The distinction between acquiring and learning was made by Stephen Krashen (1982, 1985, 1996) as part of his Monitor Theory. According to Krashen, the acquisition of a language is a natural process; whereas learning a language is a conscious one. In the former, the student needs to partake in natural communicative situations. In the latter, error correction is present, as is the study of grammatical rules isolated from natural language. Not all educators in second language agree to this distinction.

Sharwood Smith's Input Enhancement Theory

Michael Sharwood Smith (1991) coined Input Enhancement as a concept in second language acquisition that is commonly used to signal methods that an instructor uses to make selected features of a second language more salient for learners in such a way as to facilitate acquisition. It may be contrasted with similar but not identical to concepts such as *motherese* or *teacher talk* where the main aim is to make the language comprehensible and where acquisition is not necessarily intended or is at least not the primary motive. It includes but is not limited to a number of techniques such as not reducing vowels, slowing down the rate of speech, more repetition, less pre-verbal modification and more post-verbal modification, use of gestures, visual stimuli, and the use of video as well as explicit traditional techniques drawing the learner's attention more overtly to how the language system works. Sharwood Smith distinguished between *external input enhancement*, as previously illustrated, and *internal input enhancement* where particular aspects of the target language become salient at a given stage simply as a result of some natural developmental process outside the learner's control and not

because of outside intervention (Sharwood Smith, 1993). A great deal of research has taken place on input enhancement, the ways in which input may be altered so as to direct learners' attention to linguistically important areas. Input enhancement might include bold-faced vocabulary words or marginal glosses in a reading text.

Chapter Summary

The number of dissertations being written on the adult ELL population has been growing in recent years and suggests that the numbers of future published works will increase as well. A problem with the research on adult ELL concerns the nature of the research that is now being conducted. Whether or not one considers this a problem depends on one's perspective on research and on the methodological and epistemological approaches one embraces. Currently, most studies being conducted are of an ethnographic nature, are case studies, or involve qualitative data collection methods. Unfortunately, several of these studies would benefit greatly from the advice of articles on standards setting in qualitative research such as that of Chapelle and Duff (2003) or Mathews-Aydinli (2008).

It is unfortunate that such studies may not be given the attention that they deserve in the current political environment, which prioritizes quantitative, experimental data collection and analysis. Research on adult ELL will have the greatest ultimate impact when it can be used to influence education policy or funding. Efforts must be made at this time to produce research that policymakers are more likely to consider. Most researchers can agree that different research approaches and methodologies all have their place and time, and the optimal route to constructing a comprehensive body of scholarly knowledge is for such diverse approaches to build on and complement one another. So, although

descriptive studies play an important role in identifying factors and issues of importance for a certain group of learners, qualitative studies can provide deeper understanding about these factors and the connections between them. In addition, quantitative studies can attempt to test for significance in these relationships (Mathews-Aydinly, 2008). Ultimately, if the diverse research studies being conducted on adult ELL are to become a body of literature, researchers will need to adopt consistent standards of quality, commonly recognized themes of inquiry, and a more evenly balanced diversity of methodological approaches. The findings from this body of literature will undoubtedly contribute to the knowledge of how this population learns and should therefore be taught.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

Little research has been conducted on the effect of using a listening/speaking curriculum as a means of increasing language acquisition in limited English proficiency students. The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in student achievement as indicated by test scores on the CASAS instrument between adult students who participate in classes that incorporate a listening/speaking curriculum and students registered in classes that do not utilize this curriculum as a means of language learning. This chapter includes a description of the research design and discusses the rationale for the approach. In addition, the setting of the study, the selection of participants, and the instrumentation are described.

This study determined if there were differences in adult student achievement as measured by the CASAS instrument between students who participated in a listening/ speaking pilot program in selected classrooms and those who did not participate.

Research Questions

The two research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What is the effect of the listening/speaking curriculum on student listening achievement?
2. What is the effect of the listening/speaking curriculum on student reading achievement?

Null Hypotheses

The 12 null or statistical hypotheses were the following:

H_01 : There is no difference in listening achievement between students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_02 : There is no difference in reading achievement between students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

Additionally, a comparison of test results was made in order to determine if there were differences among students based on ethnicity and gender. Therefore, the additional 10 null hypotheses were also tested:

H_03 : There is no difference in listening achievement between male students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_04 : There is no difference in reading achievement between male students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_05 : There is no difference in listening achievement between female students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_06 : There is no difference in reading achievement between female students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

*H*₀7: There is no difference in listening achievement between Hispanic students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

*H*₀8: There is no difference in reading achievement between Hispanic students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

*H*₀9: There is no difference in listening achievement between White students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

*H*₀10: There is no difference in reading achievement between White students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

*H*₀11: There is no difference in listening achievement between Black students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

*H*₀12: There is no difference in reading achievement between Black students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

Independent and Dependent Variables

The independent variable for this study was a listening/speaking curriculum. The dependent variable in this study was student achievement in listening and reading as measured by the CASAS scores. Mean gain scores were used to determine differences in student achievement, if any, between the experimental and control groups.

Setting of the Study

The setting for this study was two adult vocational schools in a large metropolitan urban school district. They were two of several adult vocational centers in the school district that target the educational needs of an ethnically diverse community. Some of the most highly attended classes at these institutions are within the adult ESOL program. Most of the students registered in these courses were newly arrived adult immigrants with diverse cultural as well as socioeconomic backgrounds

Sample and Sampling Procedures

The participants in this study were students registered in the English literacy (EL) program, also known as ESOL at the targeted school sites. Adult learners come to the classroom with a variety of prior educational and life experiences (Van Duzer & Kenyon, 2003). In acquiring English literacy, learners require different curricula and instructional strategies depending on whether they acquired literacy in their own language or are literate in a language that uses the Roman or a non-Roman alphabet (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003). Learners also differ in their opportunities for language acquisition outside the classroom. For example, students may work in jobs where contact with native English speakers requires them to use English, or they may work in jobs with very minimal contact with others workers—particularly English speakers. Some learners are able to

attend class several times a week but others only once a week. A couple hours of instruction a week is a very limited amount of time and insufficient for developing English language proficiency.

Participants were nonrandom assigned by the counseling department to the classes as this is a customary practice. By doing so, a convenience sample was created for members of both the experimental and control groups. The control group consisted of a total number of 82 participants. In the experimental group, a total number of 66 participants were utilized

Half of the classes in this study incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum (experimental group) and the other classes did not use such a curriculum (control group). The experimental group received instruction with the listening/speaking curriculum for a minimum of 1 hour a day. The duration of the treatment period was 16 weeks or the equivalent to an academic trimester. As previously addressed, all participants were given a pretest at the beginning of the 16-week summer term of the 2007-2008 school year. Subsequently, a posttest was administered as customary practice for the purpose of promotion of students in the same school district. Mean gain scores, between the pretest and posttest were calculated. An independent *t*-test at the 0.05 level of significance was utilized to compare the mean gains of both the experimental and the control groups.

Instrumentation

Since 1998, federal guidelines have stated that assessment procedures to fulfill the accountability requirements of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) must be valid, reliable, and appropriate (U.S. Department of Education, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2003). As the field of adult ESOL instruction moves towards content

standards, program staff and state and national policymakers need to be able to make informed choices about appropriate assessments for adults English language learners.

Traditionally, achievement testing has been defined as assessing whether students have learned what they have been taught. Today, as the field of education institutes standards, assessment frameworks look not only at what students know about the language, but also at what they can do with it. For adult language learners, that means using the language in everyday life. The goal of learning then is to develop proficiency (Van Duzer & Kenyon, 2003).

For the purpose of this study, the CASAS instrument was utilized to measure gains in student achievement as this is the state-mandated instrument currently in effect both for placement as well as for advancement in ESOL programs in the State of Florida. CASAS is the state-mandated instrument currently in place for adult English language programs in Florida. The system is used by public educators and private industry throughout the United States. The system is created and supported by a nonprofit organization also referred to as CASAS. The CASAS competencies form the basis of the CASAS system. The competencies are defined as essential life skills adults need to function successfully in the community, the workplace, and the classroom. The competencies identify more than 300 essential skills needed to be successful members of families, communities, and the workforce. The more than 300 competency statements provide the basis for the content of CASAS reading and listening tests, and serve as curriculum guidelines.

The functional contexts of CASAS test items include applied reading, math, and listening in a variety of adult life and work situations. CASAS multiple-choice tests

measure basic skills in a functional context for adults and children and are constructed from a test-item bank containing over 5,000 test items. Each test item has an established difficulty level based on extensive field testing and analysis. The psychometric methodology used to establish this difficulty level comes from the Rasch model of Item Response Theory (IRT). Through this methodology, each test item is assigned a difficulty level on a common scale. Tests constructed from the test item banks have been field tested with adult basic education (ABE) and English as Second Language (ESL) learners, as well as adult high school learners. Tests are available at various levels from special education for developmentally disabled adults (Levels 2A-5A) to adult basic education (Levels A, B, and C) through high school completion (Levels D and E).

Validity and Reliability

The 2004 *CASAS Technical Manual* provides descriptive background and psychometric information about the test item banks of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System and selected tests developed from the banks. The manual is intended for state and local agency personnel as well as measurement specialists who seek specific technical information about the development and appropriate use of CASAS test instruments. The CASAS technical manual describes the validity and psychometric properties of the CASAS test-item banks.

Detailed evidence relating to the validation of the identified competencies is presented in this manual from several national studies including the States of Iowa (1995), Indiana (1996), and Connecticut (1997). CASAS test items are linked directly to these competencies, ensuring a direct link to curriculum content. This, in turn, allows test results to inform instruction, program improvement, and policy. The test-item banks can

be used to construct tests for a variety of assessment purposes, including placement or appraisal, diagnosis, monitoring progress, and certifying competency attainment at specified benchmarks. CASAS item banks have no misalignments between measurement content and instruction and that the item and test instruments constructed from the banks accurately measure all skills necessary to certify a certain range or level of skill (*CASAS Technical Manual*, 2004). Psychometric studies offered in this technical manual relate to the unidimensionality of the test-item banks, parameter invariance, and differential item functioning (DIF).

The Iowa Adult Basic Skills Survey: Final Report was performed in Iowa in 1995. In order to ensure that the CASAS assessment tools were meeting Iowa's needs, the survey asked respondents to rate how critical various basic life and employability skills and competencies were to an adult's ability to function in today's society and workforce. The sample included 3,483 individuals representing five stakeholders groups. The data show 30 of the 55 specific competency statements rated at the top or high priority level defined as 70% or more of respondents rated as very important or important.

A second study conducted in Indiana and reported in *Validation of Foundation Skills* (Indiana Department of Education, 1996). This study included 688 respondents from business and industry, adult education providers, and adult learners. The respondents were asked to rank the importance of 92 competency statements taken from the CASAS competencies and the Indiana Department of Education Proficiency Guide and to rank the top four competency areas from the list of 11 competencies. The overwhelming consensus of the survey respondents was that the most highly rated competency was to understand basic principles of getting a job. The competency

statements in the top 15 were either among the CASAS competencies or closely related to other CASAS competencies (*CASAS Technical Manual, 2004*).

The third study was conducted in Connecticut and reported in *Targeting Education: The Connecticut Adult Basic Skills Survey (CASAS 1997)*. This study used the same survey instrument as did Iowa in the aforementioned cited paper of 1995. The stakeholder groups for this study together accounted for 4,245 respondents. The data show that 35 of the 55 competency statements deemed high priority or top priority. There were 17 competency statements in the mid-priority skill range and only three in the low-priority range.

Research on the dimensionality of the CASAS item banks was conducted in 2002-2003 on both the Life Skills Series and the Employability Competency System Series. In the case of the listening tests, dimensionality analysis was conducted on the intact set of test items. Item response data was available for 20,738 students over 11 forms. Item response data for the analysis of the listening tests were available from 21,077 examinees over 5 forms and 145 listening items. Of the 11 correlations between raw scores, only one was below .50 and four were above .60. The correlations were not disattenuated due to the magnitude of the total combined alphas (*CASAS Technical Manual, 2004*).

Data Collection and Processing Procedures

Guidelines for conducting research were followed with permission from Barry University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which was obtained prior to conducting any part of the research. Upon receiving consent from the IRB, the data gathering and recording procedures for the study began. Data were collected from a third party and used to obtain the mean gain scores to be used for the pretest and posttest results and were

anonymous. Data regarding gender and ethnicity of all participants were gathered from the third party as well. A Third Party Confidentiality Agreement was used for collection of the data. Once the data were collected, they will be kept for five years in a secure, locked cabinet protected from any possible disclosure and then destroyed. There was no contact made with any student in the data collecting process or during any portion of the study. No identifiable information was obtained thus maintaining participant anonymity. All guidelines and protocols required by the IRB were followed at all times to assure the integrity of the research.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were presented with regard to the gender and ethnicity of the participants. The mean gains were analyzed using independent *t*-tests at the .05 level of significance to assess differences, if any, between the experimental group and control group on the dependent measure. SPSS software version 11 was utilized to analyze the data.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the methodology and procedures that were utilized for this study are explained. The design of the study was identified and a quantitative method approach was utilized. The quantitative data were gathered using the participants' mean gain score from the pretest and posttest in listening and reading. A non-random sample of students and classes was utilized.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the data analysis. The null hypotheses were examined using independent *t*-tests. Strict ethical guidelines were adhered to in accordance with the Barry University Institutional Review Board.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter includes the findings from the two research questions that guided this study: (a) What is the effect of the listening/speaking curriculum on student listening achievement? (b) What is the effect of the listening/speaking curriculum on student reading achievement? A comprehensive analysis of the data obtained utilizing descriptive and inferential statistics is provided in this chapter. Academic achievement was defined as a score on the listening and reading sections of Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, also referred to as CASAS in this study. The dependent variables were the listening and reading achievement of students as measured by the CASAS test scores of the participants and the independent variable was the listening/speaking curriculum. CASAS is the state-mandated instrument currently in place for adult English language programs in the State of Florida. The CASAS competencies form the basis of the CASAS system. The competencies are defined as essential life skills adults needed to function successfully in the community, the workplace, and the classroom.

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of a listening/speaking curriculum on the academic achievement of adult English language learners. This study hypothesized that there was a relationship between the participation of students in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and the scores on the listening and reading sections of the CASAS test.

Description of Sample

This study was conducted during the summer session of the 2008-2009 school year. Participating schools selected targeted classes in which to implement the previously cited listening/speaking curriculum. Students were randomly assigned by the counseling department either to classes implementing the listening/speaking curriculum or to those classes that did not implement such curriculum and agreed to take part in this study at the time of registering for the English Literacy classes offered at the school site.

The duration of the treatment period was 16 weeks or the equivalent to an academic trimester. As previously addressed, all participants were given a pretest at the beginning of the 16-week term. Subsequently, a posttest was administered as customary practice for the purpose of promotion of students to the next academic level in the school district in which this study was conducted. Mean gain scores between the pretest and posttest were calculated.

The quantitative research was evaluated using the mean score on the pretest and posttest on the previously cited instrument in reading and listening. An independent *t*-test at the 0.05 level of significance was utilized to compare the mean gains of both the experimental and the control groups. The data were analyzed in order to assess differences in pretest and posttest scores between the experimental and control groups.

Demographic Data

The test scores of a total of 148 students were utilized in this study. In the experimental group, a total number of 66 scores were utilized from which 21 scores were from Black males, 29 from Black females, 5 from Hispanic males, and 11 from Hispanic females. The control group, which consisted of a total number of 82 participants, was

divided among 20 scores from Black males, 40 from Black females, 6 scores from Hispanic males, and 16 from Hispanic females. Insufficient data samplings for White were obtained.

Major Findings

The findings are presented based on the previously identified null hypotheses of the study. Academic achievement was measured by an increase in the mean score from the pretest to the posttest on the CASAS test in listening and reading. The data analysis for the study was completed utilizing the SPSS-11. Data from student test scores were divided into two groups. One (1) was assigned to the experimental group and 2 for the control group. In SPSS there were five variable names. Variable one was *group*, labeled 1 for experimental and 2 for control. Variable two was *gender*, labeled 1 for male experimental, 2 for male control, 3 for female experimental, and 4 for female control. Variable three was *race*, labeled 1 for Black experimental, 2 for Black control, 3 for Hispanic experimental, and 4 for Hispanic control. No variables were utilized for White participants. Variable four was *reading*, labeled *reading gain* and variable five was named *listening*, labeled *listening gain*. Scores were entered into the appropriate cells using the value names. An independent *t*-test was used to calculate the difference between the pretest and posttest scores on the CASAS reading and listening. The significance level was an alpha level of .05.

Null Hypotheses 1 and 2

H_01 : There is no difference in listening achievement between students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_02 : There is no difference in reading achievement between students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

The first t -test utilized the variable named *group* defined by 1 experimental and 2 control. It also utilized variable four *reading*, labeled *reading gain* and variable five *listening*, labeled *listening gain*. The total number of students in the experimental group was 66. The mean score of the reading gain for the experimental group was 5.3485 ($SD = 8.5906$). The mean gain score for the listening achievement gain of the experimental group was 7.7727 ($SD = 9.2433$). The total number of students in the control group was 82. The mean gain score for the *reading achievement gain* of the control group was 5.3171 ($SD = 6.3399$). The mean score of the *listening gain* for the control group was 3.2565 ($SD = 10.8807$).

Table 1

Group Statistics for All Participants

Achievement gain	Experimental and control group	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reading gain	Experimental	66	5.3485	8.59068	1.05744
	Control	82	5.3171	6.33991	.70013
Listening gain	Experimental	66	7.7727	9.24337	1.13778
	Control	82	3.2561	10.88074	1.20158

An independent t -test was used to calculate the differences between the scores in *reading* and *listening* from the experimental and control groups. The level of significance was determined by an alpha level of .05. On the independent t -test for *listening gain* ($t =$

2.682, $df = 146$) and the significance value was .008. A statistical significant difference in *listening* achievement existed between the experimental and the control groups. Thus, the researcher rejected the first null hypotheses. On the independent *t*-test for the *reading gain* ($t = .026$, $df = 146$) and the significance value was .980. A statistically significant difference in *reading* achievement did not exist between the experimental and the control groups. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the second null hypothesis.

Table 2

Independent t-test for Equality of Means in Reading and Listening

<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means					
Gain		<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
Reading gain	Equal variances assumed	.026	146	.980	.0314
Listening gain	Equal variances assumed	2.682	146	.008	4.5166

Additionally, the following four null hypotheses were tested based on the gender of the participants:

H_{o3} : There is no difference in listening achievement between male students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_{o4} : There is no difference in reading achievement between male students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

The second *t*-test utilized the variable named group defined by experimental (1) and control (2). It also utilized variable four *reading*, labeled *reading gain*, and variable

five *listening*, labeled *listening gain*. In addition to these previously mentioned variables, the second *t*-test also utilized variable two *gender*, labeled 1 for male experimental and 2 for male control. The total number of students in the experimental group was 26. The total number of students in the control group was also 26. The mean score of the *listening gain* for the experimental group was 9.0385 (*SD* = 11.4384). The mean score of the *listening gain* for the control group was 3.3846 (*SD* = 7.8997). The mean score of the *reading gain* for the male experimental group was 3.6538 with a standard deviation of 7.4023. The mean score of the *reading gain* for the male control group was 5.0000 (*SD* = 7.2883).

Table 3

Group Statistics for Males Participants

Gain	Males	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reading Gain	Male Experimental	26	3.6538	7.40239	1.45173
	Male Control	26	5.0000	7.28835	1.42936
Listening Gain	Male Experimental	26	9.0385	11.43846	2.24327
	Male Control	26	3.3846	7.89976	1.54927

An independent *t*-test was used to calculate the differences between the scores in *reading* and *listening* from the male experimental and male control groups. The level of significance was determined by an alpha level of .05. On the independent *t*-test for *listening gain* ($t = 2.074$, $df = 50$), and the significance value was .043. On the independent *t*-test for the *reading gain* ($t = -.661$, $df = 50$), and the significance value was .512. A statistical significant difference in *listening* achievement existed between the experimental and the control groups. Thus, the researcher rejected the third null

hypothesis. A statistically significant difference in *reading* achievement did not exist between the male experimental and the male control groups. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the fourth null hypotheses.

Table 4

Independent t-test for Equality of Means for Males

<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means					
Gain		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
Reading gain	Equal variances assumed	-.661	50	.512	-1.3462
Listening gain	Equal variances assumed	2.074	50	.043	5.6538

Null Hypotheses 5 and 6

H₀5: There is no difference in listening achievement between female students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H₀6: There is no difference in reading achievement between female students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

The third *t*-test utilized the variable named *group* defined by 1 experimental and 2 control. It also utilized variable four *reading*, labeled *reading gain* and variable five *listening*, labeled *listening gain*. In addition to these previously mentioned variables, the third *t*-test also utilized variable two *gender*, labeled 3 for female experimental and 4 for female control. The total number of students in the female experimental group was 40. The total number of students in the female control group was 56. The mean score of the

reading gain for the female experimental group was 6.4500 ($SD = 9.2041$). The mean score of the *reading gain* for the female control group was 5.4643($SD = 5.9143$). The mean score of the *listening gain* for the female experimental group was 6.9500 ($SD = 7.5343$). The mean score of the *listening gain* for the female control group was 3.1964 ($SD = 12.0821$).

Table 5

Group Statistics for Female Participants

Gain	Females	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reading gain	Female experimental	40	6.4500	9.20410	1.45530
	Female control	56	5.4643	5.91443	.79035
Listening gain	Female Experimental	40	6.9500	7.53437	1.19129
	Female control	56	3.1964	12.08217	1.61455

An independent *t*-test was used to calculate the differences between the scores in *reading* and *listening* from the female experimental and female control groups. The level of significance was determined by an alpha level of .05. On the independent *t*-test for *listening gain* ($t = 1.737$, $df = 94$) and the significance value was .086. A statistical significant difference in listening achievement did not exist between the female experimental and the female control groups. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the fifth null hypothesis. On the independent *t*-test for the *reading gain* ($t = .638$, $df = 94$), and the significance value was .525. A statistically significant difference in reading achievement did not exist between the experimental and the control groups. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the sixth null hypothesis.

Table 6

Independent t-test for Equality of Means for Females

t-test for Equality of Means					
Gain		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Reading gain	Equal Variances assumed	.638	94	.525	.9857
Listening gain	Equal Variances assumed	1.737	94	.086	3.7536

Furthermore, the following six hypotheses were also tested based on the ethnicity of the participants.

Null Hypotheses 7 and 8

H_{07} : There is no difference in listening achievement between Hispanic students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_{08} : There is no difference in reading achievement between Hispanic students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

The fourth *t*-test utilized the variable named *group* defined by 1 experimental and 2 control. It also utilized variable four named *reading*, labeled *reading gain* and variable five named *listening*, labeled *listening gain*. In addition to these previously mentioned variables, the fourth *t*-test also utilized variable three named *race*, labeled 3 for Hispanic experimental and 4 for Hispanic control. The total number of students in the experimental group was 16. The total number of students in the control group was 22. The mean score of the *listening gain* for the experimental group was 6.3125 ($SD = 9.8503$). The mean

score of the *listening gain* for the control group was 5.5455 ($SD = 16.2091$). The mean score of the *reading gain* for the experimental group was 2.1875 ($SD = 9.9680$). The mean score of the *reading gain* for the control group was 5.3636 ($SD= 4.6756$).

Table 7

Group Statistics for Hispanic Participants

Gain	Hispanics	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reading gain	Hispanic experimental	16	2.1875	9.96807	2.49202
	Hispanic control	22	5.3636	4.67563	.99685
Listening gain	Hispanic experimental	16	6.3125	9.85034	2.46258
	Hispanic control	22	5.5455	16.20913	3.45580

An independent *t*-test was used to calculate the differences between the scores in reading and listening from the Hispanic experimental and Hispanic control groups. The level of significance was determined by an alpha level of .05. On the independent *t*-test for listening gain ($t = .168$, $df = 36$), and the significance value was .868. A statistical significant difference in listening achievement did not exist between the Hispanic experimental and the Hispanic control group. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the seventh null hypothesis. On the independent *t*-test for the *reading gain* ($t = -1.314$, $df = 36$), and the significance value was .197. A statistically significant difference in reading achievement did not exist between the experimental and the control groups. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the eighth null hypothesis.

Table 8

Independent t-test for Equality of Means for Hispanics

<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means					
Gain		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Reading gain	Equal Variances assumed	-1.314	36	.197	-3.1761
Listening gain	Equal Variances assumed	.168	36	.868	.7670

Null Hypotheses 9 and 10

H_09 : There is no difference in listening achievement between White students consistent who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_010 : There is no difference in reading achievement between White students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

The data collected from the participating schools did not reflect a significant number of students who self-disclosed themselves as White. Thus, there was an insufficient number of samples to test hypotheses 9 and 10.

Null Hypotheses 11 and 12

H_011 : There is no difference in listening achievement between Black students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_{o12} : There is no difference in reading achievement between Black students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

The fifth *t*-test utilized the variable named group defined by 1 experimental and 2 control. It also utilized variable four named *reading*, labeled *reading gain* and variable five named *listening*, labeled *listening gain*. In addition to these previously mentioned variables, the fifth *t*-test also utilized variable three named *race*, labeled 1 for Black experimental and 2 for Black control. The total number of students in the experimental group was 50. The total number of students in the control group was 60. The mean score of the listening gain for the experimental group was 8.2400 with a standard deviation of 9.0948. The mean score of the listening gain for the control group was 2.4167 with a standard deviation of 8.1454. The mean score of the *reading gain* for the experimental group was 6.3600, with a standard deviation of 7.9482. The mean score of the *reading gain* for the control group was 5.3000, with a standard deviation of 6.8847.

Table 9

Group Statistics for Black Participants

Gain	Blacks	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reading gain	Black experimental	50	6.3600	7.94820	1.12405
	Black control	60	5.3000	6.88477	.88882
Listening gain	Black experimental	50	8.2400	9.09487	1.28621
	Black control	60	2.4167	8.14548	1.05158

An independent *t*-test was used to calculate the differences between the scores in reading and listening from the Black experimental and Black control groups. The level of

significance was determined by an alpha level of .05. On the independent *t*-test for *listening gain* ($t = 3.541$, $df = 108$) and the significance value was .001. A statistical significant difference in listening achievement existed between the experimental and the control groups. Thus, the researcher rejected the eleventh null hypotheses. On the independent *t*-test for the *reading gain* ($t = .749$, $df = 108$) and the significance value was .455. A statistically significant difference in reading achievement did not exist between the experimental and the control groups. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the twelfth null hypothesis.

Table 10

Independent t-test for Equality of Means for Blacks

<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means					
Gain		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Reading gain	Equal Variances Assumed	.749	108	.455	1.0600
Listening gain	Equal Variances Assumed	3.541	108	.001	5.8233

Chapter Summary

The results of the statistical analysis of the data collected in an effort to determine the effect of a listening/speaking curriculum on the academic achievement of adult English language learners are presented in this chapter. The findings of this study are discussed and supporting data are provided. The data collected was completed utilizing the SPSS-11. The sample consisted of data from 148 students of which 66 belonged to students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking targeted curriculum in the experimental group and 82 students in the control group who did not

participate in the classes that incorporated the previously mentioned curriculum. An independent *t*-test was used to calculate the mean gain difference in student achievement between the pretest and posttest scores in the reading and listening sections of the CASAS test between the experimental and the control groups. Furthermore, four additional independent *t*-tests were used to calculate if such differences prevailed between the genders and the ethnicities of the participants. The significance level was determined by an alpha level of .05 for both reading and listening, respectively.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The focus of this study was on a listening/speaking curriculum and its effect on adult ELL. The intent of the study was to determine the effect of such a curriculum on the academic achievement of these students. For the purpose of this study, academic achievement was measured by an increase in mean gain scores on the CASAS reading and listening instrument. Despite the best efforts of adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers, dropout rates among adult ESL students remain a problem, and achievement is at best inconsistent (Mathew-Aydinli, 2008). The focus of the study was on the discrepancies encountered in student listening and reading test scores which this researcher believes creates frustration among educators and has an adverse effect on the motivation and persistence of students.

Summary of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a listening and speaking curriculum on the academic achievement of adult ELL. The intent was to determine if the academic achievement of students improved due to their participation in classes that incorporated the previously mentioned curriculum. The effectiveness of the curriculum was measured by comparing reading and listening test scores of the students in the program to the scores of those students taking the courses in the traditional format.

Significance

This study provides an understanding of the effect of a listening/speaking curriculum on the academic achievement of adult ELL. There are strong indications that the needs of the growing number of adult ELL are not being fully met nationwide (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008). As cited in the study, statistics indicate that a high percentage of the student population of a large metropolitan school district is successful in the reading section of the state-mandated standardized assessment instrument utilized for placement and promotion of adult ELL students, but these students fail to be promoted academically because of their inability to perform similarly on the listening section of the same assessment instrument. There will always be a need to better serve the instructional needs of the increasingly growing population of adult ELL in the country. Providing targeted-base instruction resources such as the listening/speaking curriculum utilized in this study combined with research-based instructional theories that promote second language acquisition in adults may prove useful in the improvement of adult ELL's listening competencies.

Methods

The test scores of a total of 148 students were utilized in this study. In the experimental group, a total number of 66 scores were utilized. The control group consisted of a total number of 82 participants. The experimental group in this study received instruction with the listening/speaking curriculum for a minimum of 1 hour a day, five days a week. The targeted listening/speaking curriculum was implemented by the classroom teacher who received the appropriate resources and materials as well as periodic mentoring provided by the school district. The duration of the treatment period

was 16 weeks or the equivalent to an academic trimester. For the purpose of this study, the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System instrument was utilized to measure gains in student achievement.

The CASAS competencies form the basis of the CASAS system. The competencies are defined as essential life skills adults need to function successfully in the community, the workplace, and the classroom. The more than 300 competency statements provide the basis for the content of CASAS reading and listening tests and serve as curriculum guidelines.

As previously addressed, all participants were given a pretest at the beginning of the 16-week term. Subsequently, a posttest was administered as customary practice for the purpose of promotion of students in the same school district. Participants were non-randomly assigned at the school site to the researched classes by the counseling department. By doing so, a convenience sample was created for members of both the experimental and control groups. Mean gain scores between the pretest and posttest were calculated. An independent *t*-test at the 0.05 level of significance was utilized to compare the mean gains of both the experimental and the control groups.

Limitations

As with all research, this study had several limitations. The data were collected from a convenience sample that was created from a handful of classes that were currently implementing the listening/speaking curriculum as opposed to a random sample for the generation of the data. Students were selected non-randomly based on their participation or lack thereof in classes that incorporated the targeted curriculum. This was the case for

both the experimental and control groups. Thus, the lack of randomization in the sampling procedures of this study may hinder the generalizability of the findings.

As previously stated in chapter 1 in this study, the limitation that each instructor determines the learning resources, instructional activities and techniques for the delivery of the targeted curriculum was recognized. Therefore, there may not have been consistency in the delivery of the program. Also, there was no control for the effect of the time of day that the course was offered. Furthermore, in one of the ethnic categories “Whites,” the sample was not large enough to test hypotheses 9 and 10, therefore, generalization may not be possible to all ethnic groups.

Discussion

A high percentage of the student population of a large metropolitan school district is successful in the reading section of the CASAS test, yet fail to be promoted due to their inability to perform similarly on the listening section of the same test (School Improvement Plan, 2006). It is the opinion of this researcher that students would greatly benefit from a targeted listening/speaking curriculum with the adequate allocation of resources to ensure availability of instructional material.

The theoretical framework that guided this study was Chomsky’s (1975) Theory of Universal Grammar. Chomsky originally theorized that all humans are born with an innate language acquisition device in their brains. Yet, research conducted by Eric Lenneberg, which followed the development of his Critical Period Hypothesis (1967), suggests that language acquisition becomes inaccessible at a certain age as evidenced by the fact that adult learners increasingly depend not only on targeted curriculum content that promotes critical thinking (Freire, 1970) but on an explicit strategy-based instruction

(Krashen, 1982; Sharwood Smith, 1991) to target specific language skills such as listening and speaking.

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of a listening/speaking curriculum on the academic achievement of adult learners. In pursuit of this purpose, the differences in student achievement as indicated by test scores on the CASAS between students who participate in classes that incorporate a listening/speaking curriculum and students registered in classes that did not utilize this curriculum as a means of learning were investigated in this study. As a result, the research questions that this study attempted to answer were as follows:

1. What is the effect of the listening/speaking curriculum on student listening achievement?
2. What is the effect of the listening/speaking curriculum on student reading achievement?

This study hypothesized that there was a relationship between participation in classes that incorporate the listening/speaking curriculum and the academic achievement of students. Thus, the null hypotheses stated that:

H_01 : There is no difference in listening achievement between students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_02 : There is no difference in reading achievement between students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

By collecting data on the specific demographics, such as sex and gender of each of the participants of this study, the researcher attempted to generate both descriptive as well as inferential statistics to test these other ten null hypotheses:

H_{o3} : There is no difference in listening achievement between male students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_{o4} : There is no difference in reading achievement between male students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_{o5} : There is no difference in listening achievement between female students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_{o6} : There is no difference in reading achievement between female students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_{o7} : There is no difference in listening achievement between Hispanic students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

H_{o8} : There is no difference in reading achievement between Hispanic students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

*H*₀9: There is no difference in listening achievement between White students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

*H*₀10: There is no difference in reading achievement between White students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

*H*₀11: There is no difference in listening achievement between Black students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

*H*₀12: There is no difference in reading achievement between Black students who participate in the listening/speaking curriculum and those who do not participate in the listening curriculum/speaking.

Insufficient data was generated by the sampling process in order to test null hypotheses 9 and 10, which attempted to test the effectiveness of the targeted curriculum on the White student population.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were reached based on the data analysis:

1. A statistically significant difference was found in the listening academic achievement of students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and those who did not participate as demonstrated by an increase in the mean score gain of students from the pretest to the posttest on the CASAS listening section.

2. A statistically significant difference was not found in the reading academic achievement of students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and those who did not participate as demonstrated by the lack of increase in the mean gain score of students from the pretest to the posttest on the CASAS reading section.
3. A statistically significant difference was found in the listening academic achievement of the male students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and those who did not participate as demonstrated by an increase in the mean score gain of male students from the pretest to the posttest on the CASAS listening section.
4. A statistically significant difference was not found in the reading academic achievement of the male students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and those who did not participate as demonstrated by the lack of increase in the mean gain score of male students from the pretest to the posttest on the CASAS reading section.
5. A statistically significant difference was not found in the listening academic achievement of the female students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and those who did not participate as demonstrated by the lack of increase in the mean gain score of female students from the pretest to the posttest on the CASAS listening section.
6. A statistically significant difference was not found in the reading academic achievement of the female students who participated in classes that

incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and those who did not participate as demonstrated by the lack of increase in the mean gain score of female students from the pretest to the posttest on the CASAS reading section.

7. A statistically significant difference was not found in the listening academic achievement of the Hispanic students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and those who did not participate as demonstrated by the lack of increase in the mean gain score of Hispanic students from the pretest to the posttest on the CASAS listening section.
8. A statistically significant difference was not found in the reading academic achievement of the Hispanic students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and those who did not participate as demonstrated by the lack of increase in the mean gain score of Hispanic students from the pretest to the posttest on the CASAS reading section.
9. A statistically significant difference was found in the listening academic achievement of Black students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and those who did not participate as demonstrated by an increase in the mean score gain of Black students from the pre-test to the post-test on the CASAS listening section.
10. A statistically significant difference was not found in the reading academic achievement of Black students who participated in classes that incorporated the listening/speaking curriculum and those who did not participate as

demonstrated by the lack of increase in the mean gain score of Black students from the pretest to the posttest on the CASAS reading section.

Recommendations

Implications for Practice

Findings for this study suggest that a listening/speaking curriculum combined with both strategy-based and theory-based instruction provided academic benefits to adult ELLs. The data revealed that the participation of students in classes that incorporate the curriculum played a significant role in the academic achievement in listening of these students. The results showed significant difference in the pretest and posttest mean scores in listening achievement of students yet did not provide similar results in the reading achievement of these same students. This might be due to the fact that the listening/speaking curriculum does not target the skill of reading.

In an effort to promote the academic achievement of adult students, it is not only possible but also recommendable to mirror this intervention in other adult education sites in the same school district. Initiatives such as the implementation of a targeted listening/speaking curriculum as well as other intervention that are founded in well-documented educational theories and practices, such as the ones utilized as a theoretical framework in this study, can be beneficial to students if implemented and may prove to promote the rest of the language acquisition competencies as well.

Further Research

Based on the findings, the replication of this study is encouraged in other adult education centers as well as other educational facilities that provide services to the adult ELL for more generalizability. Future studies could look at similar programs of English

literacy in a larger setting to include sampling from classes taught at different time of the day as well as other interventions that both foster and promote language acquisition in adults. This research can be a model for others who want to improve the academic achievement of this ever-growing student population. The replication of this study to include subject areas such as reading, math and social studies is recommended in an effort to improve the academic achievement of all adult ELLs in the school district.

Furthermore, it is recommended to utilize a qualitative research methodology to include both students and teachers who participate in the listening/speaking interventions. A qualitative analysis including a case study methodology would shed further insight into the effectiveness of an intervention program such as the listening/speaking curriculum researched in this study. Participants in a case study can be asked to not only describe their perception on the implementation of the targeted curriculum but also to indicate their preferences in the delivery of the content, thereby shedding insight into how to better serve the needs of this understudied population of students.

Chapter Summary

This chapter includes a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, and recommendations. It was concluded that there was a significant effect in the academic achievement in listening of students who participated in the classes that incorporated the targeted listening/speaking curriculum yet no such significance was encountered in the academic achievement in reading of the same group of students. Such was the case for the experimental group as a whole, for the males, as well as the Blacks, but it was not so in the case of the females and the Hispanics researched in this study who did not show a significant difference in academic achievement thereby not allowing the researcher to

reject the null hypotheses corresponding to these two subgroups of the experimental group. Limitations of the study were discussed which may prevent generalizability of the findings in this study to a larger population. Recommendations and implications for practice and further research that include the replication of this study to a larger population as well the development of a study utilizing a qualitative methodology. Employing theory-based and strategy-based interventions such as the listening/speaking curriculum utilized in this study may prove effective in increasing the academic achievement of adult ELL, thus, initiatives such as this are not only recommended but highly encouraged.

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Research with Human Subjects
Protocol Review

Date: April 17, 2009

Protocol Number: 090307
Title: The Effect of Listening/Speaking Curriculum on the Achievement of Adult English language Learners

Approval Date: 4/17/09

Name: Mario Martinez de Castro
Address: 2970 SW 23rd Street
Miami, FL 33145

Sponsor: Dr. Edward Bernstein
School: Education

Dear Mr. Martinez de Castro:

On behalf of the Barry University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have verified that the specific changes requested by the IRB have been made. Therefore, I have granted final approval for this study as exempt from further review.

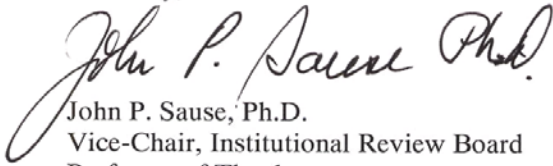
As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved by the IRB. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form.

It is a condition of this approval that you report promptly to the IRB any serious, unanticipated adverse events experienced by participants in the course of this research, whether or not they are directly related to the study protocol. These adverse events include, but may not be limited to, any experience that is fatal or immediately life-threatening, is permanently disabling, requires (or prolongs) inpatient hospitalization, or is a congenital anomaly cancer or overdose.

The approval granted expires on August 17, 2009. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB point of contact, Mrs. Barbara Cook at (305)899-3020 or send an e-mail to dparkhurst@mail.barry.edu . Finally, please review your professional liability insurance to make sure your coverage includes the activities in this study.

Sincerely,



John P. Sause, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Theology
Barry University
11300 NE 2nd Avenue
Miami Shores, FL 33161

cc: Dr. Ed Bernstein

.....
Note: The investigator will be solely responsible and strictly accountable for any deviation from or failure to follow the research protocol as approved and will hold Barry University harmless from all claims against it arising from said deviation or failure.



Miami-Dade County Public Schools

giving our students the world

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May 6, 2009

Mr. Mario H. Martinez de Castro
2970 S.W. 23rd Street
Miami, FL 33145

Dear Mr. Martinez de Castro:

I am pleased to inform you that the Research Review Committee of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) has approved your request to conduct the study, "The Effect of a Listening/Speaking Curriculum on the Achievement of Adult English Language Learners." The approval is granted with the following conditions:

1. Participation of a school in the study is at the discretion of the principal. A copy of this approval letter must be presented to the principal.
2. The participation of all subjects is voluntary.
3. The anonymity and confidentiality of all subjects must be assured.
4. The study will involve approximately 60 MDCPS adult students.
5. Teacher participation is voluntary.
6. Disruption of the school's routine by the data collection activities of the study must be kept at a minimum.

It should be emphasized that the approval of the Research Review Committee does not constitute an endorsement of the study. It is simply a permission to request the voluntary cooperation in the study of individuals associated with the MDCPS. It is your responsibility to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed in requesting an individual's cooperation, and that all aspects of the study are conducted in a professional manner. With regard to the latter, make certain that all documents and instruments distributed within the MDCPS as a part of the study are carefully edited.

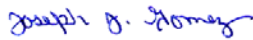
The approval number for your study is 1549. This number should be used in all communications to clearly identify the study as approved by the Research Review Committee. The approval expires on June 30, 2010. During the approval period, the study must adhere to the design, procedures and instruments

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which were submitted to the Research Review Committee. If there are any changes in the study as it relates to the MDCPS, it may be necessary to resubmit your request to the committee. Failure to notify me of such a change may result in the cancellation of the approval.

If you have any questions, please call me at 305-995-7529. Finally, remember to forward an abstract of the study when it is complete. On behalf of the Research Review Committee, I want to wish you every success with your study.

Sincerely,



Joseph J. Gomez, Ph.D.
Chairperson
Research Review Committee

JJG:mp

APPROVAL NUMBER: 1549

APPROVAL EXPIRES 06-30-10

BASIC

TACTICS FOR LISTENING

Second Edition

Jack C. Richards

OXFORD
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Scope and Sequence

Unit	Themes	Skills
1	Names Spelling Titles	Listening for names Listening for details Listening for formal and informal forms of address
2	People Physical appearance	Listening for topics Listening for gist Listening for details
3	Clothes	Listening for gist Listening for details
4	Time Numbers	Listening for times Listening for numbers Listening for letters and numbers
5	Dates	Listening for dates Listening for dates and times Listening for details Listening for gist
6	Jobs	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for attitudes
7	Sports Exercise	Listening for gist Listening and making predictions Listening for frequency Listening for details
8	Locations Household objects	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening and making predictions
9	Family	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for similarities
10	Entertainment Invitations	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for acceptances and refusals
11	Prices Money Shopping	Listening for details Listening for gist
12	Restaurants Food	Listening for details Listening for gist Listening for attitudes

Unit	Themes	Skills
13	Greetings Socializing Parties	Listening for greetings and conversation endings Listening for topics Listening for details Listening for reactions
14	Vacations	Listening for gist Listening for attitudes Listening for details
15	Apartments Rooms Furniture	Listening for gist Listening for details
16	Movies Invitations	Listening for likes and dislikes Listening for gist Listening for attitudes Listening for opinions Listening for details
17	Weather Climate	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening and making predictions
18	Shopping	Listening for gist Listening and making predictions Listening for details
19	Using the telephone	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for attitudes
20	Objects Possessions	Listening for gist Listening for details
21	Directions Streets Places	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for sequence
22	People Friends	Listening for gist Listening for similarities and differences Listening for details Listening for opinions Listening for attitudes
23	Countries Cities	Listening for attitudes Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for preferences
24	Health Illnesses	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for advice

DEVELOPING

TACTICS FOR LISTENING

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Unit 24: Travel	94

Scope and Sequence

Unit	Themes	Skills
1	The weekend Past events	Listening for details Listening for opinions Listening for key words
2	Transportations Taxis	Listening for locations Listening for numbers Listening for details Listening for acceptances and refusals
3	Car rental	Listening for key words Listening for gist Listening for details
4	Parties Meals	Listening for keywords Listening for gist Listening for details
5	Restaurants Meals	Listening for locations Listening for details Listening for opinions Listening for gist
6	Shopping Department stores	Listening for gist Listening for opinions Listening for decisions Listening for details
7	Air travel Instructions	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for opinions
8	Illnesses Remedies	Listening for key words Listening for gist Listening for details
9	Work Jobs	Listening for gist Listening for key words Listening for details
10	Fitness Exercise	Listening for details Listening for reasons
11	Invitations	Listening for invitations Listening for details
12	Small talk	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for sequence

Unit	Themes	Skills
13	Hobbies Pastimes	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for likes and dislikes
14	Shopping Problems	Listening for key words Listening for details Listening for opinions
15	Hotels Services	Listening for key words Listening for details Listening for opinions
16	Movies	Listening for key words Listening for times Listening for opinions Listening for recommendations
17	Fears	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for problems
18	Telephone messages	Listening for information Listening for details
19	Sightseeing	Listening for locations Listening for details Listening for opinions Listening for recommendations
20	Airports	Listening for locations Listening for details Listening for opinions
21	Hotel check-in	Listening for details Listening for requests Listening for opinions Listening for complaints
22	Traffic Transportation	Listening for details Listening for key words Listening for solutions Listening for problems
23	Roommates People	Listening for key words Listening for details
24	Travel	Listening for sequence Listening for key words Listening for details

EXPANDING

TACTICS FOR LISTENING

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Unit 24: Global Issues	94

Scope and Sequence

Unit	Themes	Skills
1	Greetings Small talk	Listening for greetings and introductions Listening for topics Listening for attitudes Listening and making inferences Listening and making predictions
2	Jobs Job interviews	Listening for gist Listening for jobs Listening for details
3	Business	Listening for negative information Listening for gist Listening for details
4	Gadgets Machines	Listening for gist Listening for details
5	People Character traits	Listening for gist Listening for praise or criticism Listening for details
6	Food Recipes	Listening for gist Listening for details
7	Housing	Listening for gist Listening for negative information Listening for details
8	Complaints Neighborhoods Apartments	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for agreement and disagreement
9	Friends Dating Invitations	Listening for gist Listening for details
10	Television	Listening for topics Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for agreement and disagreement Listening for attitudes
11	Cities Travel	Listening for details Listening for gist
12	Cities Improvements	Listening for topics Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for suggestions

Unit	Themes	Skills
13	Holidays Celebrations	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for likes and dislikes
14	Fashion Clothes	Listening for gist Listening for time references Listening for details
15	Preferences	Listening for preferences Listening for topics Listening for agreement and disagreement Listening for details
16	Messages	Listening for gist Listening for attitudes Listening for details
17	Past events	Listening for gist Listening for sequence Listening for attitudes Listening and making predictions Listening for details
18	Vacations	Listening for preferences Listening for details Listening for gist
19	News reports	Listening for topics Listening for gist Listening for details
20	Opinions	Listening for topics Listening for gist Listening for opinions Listening for reasons Listening for details
21	Famous people	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for sequence
22	Food Nutrition	Listening for gist Listening for suggestions Listening for details Listening for sequence
23	Predicaments	Listening for gist Listening for details Listening for attitudes
24	Issues Problems	Listening for gist Listening for comparisons Listening for topics Listening for details