BENEFITS OF A TRANSITIONAL LEVEL OF ESL ENGLISH IN HIGH SCHOOL:
THE MASTER’S RESEARCH PROJECT

by
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A Master’s Research Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the addition of a transitional ESL English class with cooperative learning strategies. The effectiveness was measured by the comparison of test results of the Stanford Nine Achievement Test (SAT 9) and Arizona Student Assessment Program (ASAP) scores of twelve students enrolled in the transitional ESL English class in the first year it was added to the ESL curriculum at Paradise Valley High School.

The significance of the scores of the SAT 9 were compared in order to assess if the additional year of ESL English at the transitional level made a difference in student achievement. Results were taken from the scores of 1997 and 1998. During the time period between the fall semester of 1997 to the spring semester of 1998 the students were enrolled in the transitional ESL English class utilizing cooperative learning strategies. The raw scores were evaluated after this time period. In addition, the ASAP results were examined. Unfortunately, the scores were only available for 1998.

The scores of the SAT 9 offered noteworthy improvement in the area of reading and especially in reading comprehension. Most areas of the test showed very little or no significant change. The one exception was in the area of grammar which showed a noticeable decline. The researcher found the study to be inconclusive and recommended follow-up study in a year after students have been enrolled in mainstream classes.
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CHAPTER 1
THE PROBLEM

Introduction
The English as a Second Language learner needs a bridge to help with the transition into a mainstream classroom. The point at which the ESL student exits the ESL program and enters the mainstream curriculum will be addressed in this paper.

Current literature notes the findings of various leading researchers in the ESL field. The works of Collier (two-way communication process theory), Cummins (BICS/CALP communication/learning skills theories), Krashen (input/output language acquisition theory), O’Malley and Chamot (CALLA cognitive language acquisition strategies) and Wong-Fillmore (social impact learning theory) particularly address this subject of second language learning at this transitional time. Additional insight is provided by the findings of Slavin and Kagan in their strategies of cooperative learning as it relates to working with these unique students. The formation of a transitional level ESL class would allow for an additional opportunity to incorporate the findings while working with such students and provide them with tools for reaching optimum achievement in the mainstream classroom.

Development of the Problem
In the 1997-98 school year Paradise Valley High School offered a class at the transitional level for the first time. It was the intent of the instructor of the class to acquaint transitional ESL students with both the necessary terminology as well as the required study skills expected in a regular English class. Cooperative learning techniques could be implemented to enhance learning. There exists the hope that the need for the
recognition of the transitional level could also be applied on a district level as enrollment in the ESL program increases.

Students placed immediately into mainstream classes from advanced ESL English tend to struggle with the written form of English as well as expectations overall. The teacher bases instruction on the concept that most students, if not all, are starting at the same level of proficiency. In the experience of the researcher this has never been done even while teaching English 1-2 in the mainstream curriculum. It is incorrect to assume this while working with students who transfer from the ESL program into the mainstream.

Based on the experience of the researcher, frequently the background of the mainstream teacher does not include specialized ESL training. This means that the first problem is recognition of the situation. In addition to the recognition of the problem, action needs to be directed toward solving the problem. The proper teaching strategies must be incorporated into the lessons in order to include the special ESL student. Often this is an area which requires additional help from an ESL teacher as well as utilizing the knowledge of latest research. A transitional level of ESL should allow exiting ESL students to enter mainstream English classes with increased competency.

Teacher familiarity with the expectations of the final level, be it advanced or transitional, of ESL would be a definite advantage in working with the ESL student. Additionally the learning environment of the student would be more comfortable with such teacher understanding, and therefore the affective filter might be lower. Teacher expectation would include the sensitivity to the student's unique needs. However, teacher expectations would need to remain high for these students.

A transitional level course should prepare a student with the additional benefit of specific terminology required to achieve greater understanding of the subject matter in the mainstream English classes. The use of advanced study skills in English would enable an easier transition to a mainstream English class for the ESL student. Hopefully the threshold entrance into mainstream would be such that more cognition would occur.

The origination of transitional bilingual education (TBE) is not to be confused with
what is meant by transitional level ESL. TBE dates back to 1980 at which time all subjects were taught in the native language with a goal of mainstreaming within two to three years. There was never any focus on learning English as an additional language at that time. The additive concept was included in developmental bilingual education (DBE) programs. The idea of an additive concept included the goal of developing English proficiency in addition to the student’s native language. Such an idea allowed the student to become bilingual, or fluent, in two languages. This became a favorite of educators because the student was able to reach the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) within five to seven years (Cummins, 1981).

According to district records Paradise Valley Unified School District began its ESL program in 1985. It began with a minimal enrollment and has continued to grow steadily. The curriculum has been reworked several times up to the 1997-98 school year. The district continues to attempt to find solutions in meeting the needs of a diverse population.

The use of specific strategies employed to involve transitional ESL students to learn English will hopefully make the difference in success or failure for these students as they prepare to enter mainstream. The language a student learns first is defined as L1. L2 is the second language learned. Through the use of the latest research regarding L1 and L2 language acquisition, as well as the incorporation of cooperative learning principles in the classroom, a student should be aligned for successful learning of English. Similarly, the employment of a two-way bilingual setting utilizing both L1 and L2 languages with cooperative strategies also offers an excellent opportunity for success. The inclusion of the proper teacher training for approaching the task with reasonable expectations should allow the student to achieve more. Overall sensitivity to cultural differences of ESL students will allow the affective filter to be such that they should feel more comfortable and eventually confident in their learning.

Need for the Study

Based on the experience of the researcher there exists a crisis point in the life of
ESL students at Paradise Valley High School. A void exists between the type of learning in the ESL program and that which takes place within the walls of a regular classroom. The struggle which transitional ESL students at Paradise Valley High School experience could be eased considerably with the implementation of a course designed to fill such a void. A transitional level course of ESL which focuses on successful language acquisition strategies would create such a bridge.

By supplying the terminology necessary at the transitional level the ESL students should begin the mainstream classes equipped with the benefit of tools for success. Increased knowledge of terminology in English should lessen anxiety in the regular classroom. In the experience of the researcher, while working with ESL students in the mainstream classroom, it is acknowledged that study skills and additional background should enable the students to be more comfortable in their quest for further acquisition of English and thus better enable them to learn at the rate of the regular class. Presently a student departs the ESL program after completing advanced ESL English without any help whatsoever once he or she becomes mainstreamed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the addition of a transitional ESL English class with cooperative learning strategies. Effectiveness will be measured by test results from SAT 9 and ASAP scores.

Research Question

Does the addition of a transitional level ESL English class improve student achievement in regular English as measured by test scores on ASAP and SAT 9 tests at Paradise Valley High School?
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Affective filter=emotional aspect in learning (Krashen, 1996)
BE=Bilingual Education.
BICS=Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (Cummins, 1981)
CALA=Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994)
CALPS=Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (Cummins, 1981)
Cooperative Learning=working/learning as a group
DBE=Developmental Bilingual Education
ESL=English as a Second Language
IEP=Individual Education Plan
Immersion=learning a language while studying in the same language
Input/Output=acquisition of information/dispersal of information (Krashen, 1981)
IPT=Individual Proficiency Test
L1=home or first language
L2=second language
LAD=language acquisition device (Chomsky, 1987)
LEP= Limited English Proficiency
Mainstream=regular tract classes
Socioaffective filter=the social/emotional factors in learning (Dulay & Burt, 1978)
TBE=Transitional Bilingual Education
Threshold hypothesis=the cognitive level of L1 impacting L2 (Cummins, 1976)
Transitional=level between advanced ESL English and regular mainstream English
Two-way=the utilization of L1 in learning L2 (Collier, 1986)
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction
The mainstream English classroom represents a leap for the Limited English Proficient (LEP) student as s/he transfers out of an English as a Second Program (ESL). Because former ESL students are expected to work side by side with students in a regular English classroom, it seems obvious that there needs to be more attention exploring strategies to enable such a transition to be smoother. It is the intention of the researcher to provide findings that use cooperative learning strategies in addition to language acquisition theories to discover ways to create an optimal learning environment for such a student.

Theories of Cooperative Learning
Transitional classes are offered to prepare students to become proficient enough to be able to be mainstreamed into a regular classroom with English only speaking students. Cooperative learning provides a strategy which appears to be extremely beneficial to the transitional ESL student (Slavin, 1981). It allows for socialization to occur at the same time as learning within a traditional classroom (Kagan, 1990).

Cooperative learning involves three basic elements: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, and individual accountability. This type of learning requires that students be able to work within small groups utilizing interpersonal skills. Cooperating with each other and utilizing the language skills required allows for the opportunity for language acquisition to take place. In order to speed up the transitional process of utilizing English only cooperatively working in small groups should be very beneficial to all parties (Johnson, 1988). Cooperative learning could become an enriching experience for the English-only speaking students as they would grow in their language
skills and gain multicultural understanding (Collier, 1995).

English as a Second Language grew rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s when increasing numbers of foreign students started entering the United States. More textbooks were developed and methods courses were added by 1976. However, in the early days ESL was taught as a sink or swim situation (Crawford, 1995). Early in the twentieth century students were immediately immersed in all content areas. Later this was labeled as submersion (Cohen, 1976). Low overall achievement was the result. Both the subject of native language maintenance as well as the difference between home and school were not addressed.

A common misconception is that two years is sufficient time to learn a second language (Cummins, 1981). The best opportunity for transitional accomplishment is between fourth through twelfth grade when immigrants arrive with a solid educational background including well developed cognitive academic skills in the first language. They are able to transfer these skills when they reach the basic interpersonal communication (BIC) level in the second language (Ovando, 1985).

Content area classes taught in a student's first language help to keep the student on grade level while the second language proficiency is occurring. The student is taught at grade level and the concept of self-worth is in tact. Students are usually able to achieve basic interpersonal communication (BIC) with regular fluency after two years. However, cognitive aspects of second language proficiency (CALP) require as many as five to seven years (Cummins, 1981).

Stern (1963) first made a distinction between one and two-way bilingual instruction. One-way bilingual education means one language group is schooled in their native language, without emphasis toward learning a second language. Two-way bilingual education refers to an integrated model in which speakers of both languages are placed together in a bilingual classroom to learn each others’ language and work together academically (Collier, 1995). According to Collier (1995) two-way instruction is thought to be the most interesting choice for our school systems today.

According to Johnson (1990), cooperative learning is an old idea. The Talmud
declares that in order to learn one must have a learning partner. Up until the late 1930's John Dewey promoted cooperative learning in American education. Thereafter, interpersonal competition entered into educational theory. In 1940 Morton Deutsch led further research and discovery at John Hopkins University with Robert Slavin and others continuing the work (Johnson, 1990).

In cooperative learning teams are composed of heterogeneous skills and ability levels (Kagan, 1990). Students learn to appreciate the different skills of others and the values of these skills. They will learn to work with and about people from other backgrounds (Collier, 1995). Growth in the area of human relations will occur naturally such as how to depend on others, learn from others, and stand up for their own rights (Tiedt, 1990).

Banks (1989) wrote that one solution to multicultural education is knowledge that it is a process incorporating the idea that all students have an equal opportunity to learn in school. He further states that research indicates language learning is a developmental process that goes through predictable stages. We first acquire language as children through meaningful interactions within our social and physical environment (Banks, 1997).

Two suggestions for improving literacy include support for the students' home language and making connections to the community.

In urban areas students may be of as many as a dozen different ethnicities. Teachers in these settings will often have to develop a repertoire of strategies. These strategies will include organizing instruction using different kinds of grouping, such as peer work groups, partners, and teacher-led small groups. Teachers may also wish to interact with students in a variety of formats—by inviting students to share answers in a small group or in private, individual conferences, not just in the front of the whole class. (Au, 1996, p. 3)

Slavin (1983) cites ten studies relating to the effects on mainstreaming. Schools are expected to teach students academics and to help them develop strong social values. They can accomplish both by using cooperative learning processes in classrooms according to Slavin. Such small groups are carefully structured to include high and low achieving students, whites and minorities, males and females. He states that students who have used cooperative learning develop positive social values and behaviors.
If teachers use cooperative learning they should appreciate the opportunity of working with individual students while others are doing small-group work. The research has shown that their students attain high academic achievement and promote positive social values and behaviors.

Recent research stated in the Congressional Quarterly (1996) suggests that two-way bilingual education is our most sophisticated approach in solving the continual struggle of finding a perfect answer to the growing problem of how to teach English to our growing non-English speaking population. Non-native English-speaking students are mixed equally within a classroom with native English speakers. Usually they are taught one way half the day with the remainder of the day in the other language. With such an approach both types of students result in being bilingual as well as achieving at grade level for other subjects.

Cooperative learning would have to be used in such a developmental approach to learning. In 1994 when Congress reauthorized the Bilingual Education Act it formed a single category out of transitional bilingual and developmental bilingual programs for alternative instruction. Language alone is the focus so that LEP students may be taught in their first language as well in order to make them proficient in English.

Due to the shortage of teachers for such programs in bilingual approaches ESL is the favored choice (Banks, 1997). Pull-out programs are widely used and communication based. Teachers must create a non-threatening environment in which contextual learning may take place and the student is able to comprehend the speech through physical cues (Krashen, 1996). Thus the trend in federal bilingual-education seems to be in the direction of a variety of methods, including English only instruction, teaching LEP students in both English and their native language, but most important of all, to encourage language maintenance of the first language with bilingual learning with students in a two-way class (Collier, 1996).

In an article entitled “Restructuring the Urban High School: The Phoenix Model,” Terry T. Clapp discusses how South Mountain High School in Phoenix implemented a restructuring in 1992 utilizing the core plan subject area for the eighty-eight percent
minority students. The core consisted of two or more teachers sharing the same students for ninety minute intervals. This enabled teachers to monitor students’ progress.

Anna Uhl Chamot (1983) published her concerns in the *Tesol Quarterly* in September in an article entitled “Toward a Functional ESL Curriculum in the Elementary School.” As far back as 1983 there was questioning regarding the various methodological approaches. Follow-up studies of ESL students need to be completed to show how well they achieve after they are mainstreamed. The problems are not unique to a particular grade level but are rather common to all. Whether the level of instruction is elementary, middle or high school the search goes on to try to find the ideal solution for meeting the needs of this particular group of students. It is an ongoing search for relevant strategies which will facilitate an easier way for them to learn English.

Through cooperative learning strategies it is possible for ESL mainstreamed students to work with the native English speaking students within a classroom. Attributes which are both common to all, as well as those which vary between approaches, have been listed by Neil Davidson (1994). Common attributes include a common task or learning activity, small-group learning, cooperative behavior, interdependence and individual accountability. Variables would include the grouping procedure, structuring of positive interdependence, teaching of relationship, or collaborative skills (Davidson, 1994).

The processing of social skills and group dynamics would vary in the use of cooperative strategies (Appendix A). The overall climate of the class setting will vary through team and trust building. In addition it is necessary to realize that the attention to student status by the teacher is a variable as well as the role at different phases. The group itself will vary as the structure defines itself with its own communication pattern utilizing leadership roles which might be rotated or shared. Student interaction will also vary as they work in small groups (Davidson, 1995).

Kagan (1992) has developed various cooperative structures including the three-step interview, round table, numbered heads together and pairs check. Evaluation of the
students' progress is quite different within the confines of a cooperative environment. The traditional means will not fit the objectives of group work. Therefore included is a chart (Appendix B) from Neil Davidson (1995) which illustrates how Contemporary Evaluation and Authentic Assessment go hand in hand with cooperative learning. The formation of a core class including both ESL students and native English speaking students could become a solution to the transition problem (Collier, 1995). By utilizing the strategies of cooperative learning they could complement each others' learning. The socialization process would occur due to the fact that students are working together toward common goals. The isolation that ESL students typically feel could be relieved through this process. This is an ideal situation meeting both the needs of the ESL student as well as the possibilities for growth of a regular English student (Collier, 1995).

The research of Davidson and Kagan, as well as Collier, have shown that cooperative learning strategies have been considered to be the ideal solution to the continual problem of how to educate the increasing numbers of students in our schools who speak another language as their first one. Further research needs to be completed to indicate whether there is conclusive data from actual studies isolating the use of cooperative learning within such a mixed classroom. At this point the research is encouraging for both the use of cooperative learning and the formation of a core class of both ESL and native English speaking students.

Theories of Language Acquisition

In the study of dual language it becomes necessary for language to be thought of in three perspectives: linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics (Fillmore, 1976). Sociolinguistics is the study of how language works in society. This has to do with the interactions of people everyday which includes school and the classroom. Any effective dual language program should also address theory and research. The linguistic theory of language acquisition can be summarized by reviewing the ideas of several varying philosophies.

There are two types of language, conversational and academic (Cummins,
1982). Krashen (1982) believes we acquire language when we understand what people say or read to us.

Basic Interpersonal Communication (BIC) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) are terms designated by Cummins (1979). The terms refer to students in a bilingual school setting. His theory states that BIC is usually what is tested for in the proficiency of LEP students and what enables them to master the outside world via complex conversation. BIC requires approximately two years. The CALP draws from the cognition of context-reduced language. According to Cummins, it requires abstract thinking and linguistic clues which will therefore take as long as five to seven years to master. Research supports that there appears to be a common proficiency for both L1 and L2 (Cummins, 1981b).

Threshold hypothesis is another term originated by Cummins (1976). Cummins states that the cognitive development at the threshold of L1 and the subsequent proficiency in L2 are related to the success of the student. This also refers to the additive versus subtractive concept of bilingualism held by Lambert (1984). Cognitive development is best when additive bilingualism occurs to enhance the cognitive development of L2 by maintaining it in L1. This should lead to a greater proficiency of L2. On the other hand, subtractive bilingualism or the loss or lowering of cognition in L1 would have an adverse effect on the cognition in L2 (Cummins, 1976).

According to Cummins (1981) second language acquisition includes the several stages. The silent stage is an observational time to simple listen and then eventually make one word responses. Body-kinesthetic approaches are included at this time. Next is the early production stage which means adding a word at a time and practicing patterns. Sentences are open ended at that phase. Visuals and body-kinesthetics are also important. In the speech emergence/production stage context is taught with comprehensible input through the use of games and reading and writing taught with a whole language approach (Cummins, 1981). At the intermediate fluency stage the focus is on communicative listening skills including transitional activities of listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Finally, fluency continues to develop through basic
interpersonal communication skills and cognitive/academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1981).

In 1981, Krashen designated a second language acquisition theory which included a theory of monitoring which showed that adults have two independent systems; one of acquisition versus one of learning. As children, the acquisition process occurs naturally, however, in learning it is formally introduced with rules in schooling (Krashen, 1981).

Another hypothesis of Krashen’s for acquisition includes the utilization of input from the teacher which the student then internalizes. Krashen states that much of the intake of L2 happens socially in daily life which is different from that which is actually learned through schooling. Children experience natural input during L1 acquisition through the caretaker speech or that which is provided by adults who communicate with them (Krashen, 1981).

The term socioaffective filter describes the social as well as emotional factors which will affect the learning of L2 (Dulay and Burt, cited in Collier, 1995, p. 8). According to Krashen it is recognized by most educators that L2 acquisition is related to the self-esteem and self-confidence of the student. He also states that low anxiety, high motivation, and an outgoing personality have positive influences on L2 acquisition (Krashen 1981).

Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), is another of the philosophies for language acquisition as perceived by O’Malley and Chamot (1994). CALLA involves three components: topics from major content subjects, the development of academic language skills, and explicit instruction in learning strategies of both content and acquisition of language. The CALLA approach is helpful in providing strategies for transitional ESL or bilingual programs to move to grade-level content classrooms and actually assist in the success of such students (O’Malley and Chamot, 1994).

The social factor theory in language acquisition is acknowledged by Lily Wong Fillmore (1985). She recognizes three necessary components for learning which include
social processes, linguistic processes, and cognitive strategies. She, like Cummins, also realizes the role interaction that *input* and *output* play on second language acquisition. Variations in student proficiency in learning another language will result from differences in personalities, cognitive abilities, and social skills (Fillmore, 1985).

Bilingual children are able to counteract any negative biases by feeling a sense of prestige about their two language (Saville-Troike, cited in Snow, 1992, p. 131). It is actually a cognitive asset to be bilingual. Students should be considered as gifted rather than remedial, which is often the case. The fact is that these students lack the same cultural background as American students although they may indeed have strong academic skills in their own language (Snow, 1992).

Collier (1995) states that acquisitions of L1 and L2 are a lifelong practice. It is the interaction outside out school that brings cognitive development. The strongest predictor of academic success involves proficiency in L1 and a certain socioeconomic status. She notes that if a student has been formally schooled and therefore reads, writes, speaks, and listens well in his/her first language, then it appears that he/she has an easier time in his/her L2 acquisition. Collier (1995), like Snow, recognizes that the sociocultural factor influences academic development, language development, and cognitive development.

Additionally, Collier (1996) has developed a prism including a socio-cultural center with L1 and L2 language development, L1 and L2 cognitive development, and academic development in both L1 and L2 (Appendix C). She concludes that cognitive development at home is also important. Cognitive development can be achieved through asking questions, making decisions, discussion of daily activities, sharing of values, moral support, and goal setting. Various household responsibilities of shopping, cooking and cleaning involve cognition and help the process of developing language skills. Family activities involving travel and heritage also increase cognition of the L1 in the home. Maintaining such a high level of L1 only enhances the ability to achieve the same level of L2 (Collier, 1995).

The importance of the cognitive development of L1 is also upheld by the
authors of the CALLA method of language acquisition (O’Malley and Chamot, 1994), which is found to be most effective in high school. The home language and culture is to be respected. The prior knowledge that the students bring is also activated along with teaching strategies needed for developing thinking skills and problem solving ability (O’Malley and Chamot, 1994).

A program designed by Collier (1995)) indicates that foreign language learners profit from having classes with native speakers. The interaction that occurs can also help in that they have familiarity with the students’ L1 (Collier, cited in Young, 1996).

Young (1996) discusses the mainstreaming issues by citing Nancy Clair: “Mainstream teachers need to understand second language acquisition, and they need to change their beliefs, values and attitudes toward ESL students.” (p. 18) It is obvious that it helps to be sensitive to the issues confronting such students, but it is also necessary to have specialized skills in order for mainstreaming to be a positive experience. As teachers we can help newly mainstreamed ESL students to bridge the language gaps that exist throughout the curriculum. According to Clair (1995) everyone gains as the diversity in culture and linguistic ability within the classroom brings on new challenges.

Teachers can provide interaction within their classrooms as they project an image of manager/entertainer (Gebhard, 1996). By doing so they are able to lower the student anxiety level and thus increase comprehension. Through the use of activities for students to use English as a means of communication, the problem of engagement is resolved. ESL students ability to learn the rules of our culture is again identified in an article entitled “A Road to Success for Language Minority High School Students” (Dulay and Burt cited in Freeman, 1992). The article shows us how social interaction leads to language development. As students work in groups they have the tendency to use language more. In addition they take more risks and help each other to learn. All four modes of language (writing, listening, reading and speaking) are used and can be applied to any content area. Working together students and teachers achieve a feeling of success by maintaining the belief they they will indeed become successful.
With regard to the subject of composition in an ESL classroom, it has been noted by Johns (1990) that language becomes an outgrowth of the community for which a text is written (Gebhard, 1996). ESL students have difficulty in using language of the community when they do not understand the context for language use or the audience in which the language is spoken. In time they surrender their own language to attain that of the target community which would be English.

Collier (1996) discovered that bilingual students score highly in problem solving, creativity, divergent thinking and higher level thinking. With such findings she formulated the 50/50 theory or simultaneous literacy development in both languages for second language acquisition. The term *two-way*, which is research term used by Collier, means that an enrichment process occurs involving both languages. The two-way or dual language plan involves three parts. First, all students become bilingual in two languages as they gain acquisition of the curriculum through the two languages. Secondly, academics are studied at grade level. Finally, two-way instruction opens the opportunity to form cross cultural attitudes as well as academic competency.

Congress reauthorized the Bilingual Education Act of 1994, replacing the definition used in the one of 1984. LEP students are now to be instructed in English and their native language for proficiency in English, while mastering subject matter at the appropriate grade level. The development of the native language of LEP students at the same time sanctions two-way bilingualism. Two-way is the sophisticated mix of native and non-native language students in the same classroom. Courses are taught in one language in the morning and in the other in the afternoon. The students should become bilingual if taught by well-trained teachers (Crawford, 1995).

It is the sociocultural factors which revolve around relations between groups which should influence the schooling of ESL students (Collier, 1995). In order to have success in second language acquisition there needs to be quality interaction with native speakers in a respectful environment as equals with other students (Collier, 1995). The mutual respect can be achieved through cooperative learning or peer interaction, which helps to
make it more natural for language minority students to function well within the structure of the mainstream classroom (Wong Fillmore, 1989). The social/affective strategies which involve interaction with another person are also included in the studies of Chamot and O’Malley (1994) with their CALLA methods.

As the turn of the century approaches we will have approximately twenty-five percent of language minority students entering our work force (Collier, 1995). It seems only rational to identify them as an invaluable resource which should also be schooled in our English language in such a way as to make them successful in today’s world. Through the conscious use of the socioaffective filter by educators, such a dream could become reality (Chamot and O’Malley, 1994).

There is a need for the continued development and maintenance of social and cultural bridges between the language minority student’s home life and school life. An awareness of how language is used in the home community will enable educators to be sensitive to school genres that are different. Efforts to equalize the social and linguistic process of majority and minority students within the school setting will also produce positive results for all students in the classroom and, ultimately, in society. (Banks, 1997, p. 293

Summary

In the attempt to strengthen the achievement of a transitional ESL student it is important that the instructor utilize cooperative learning strategies to involve students fully in their learning. These strategies in combination with second language acquisition theory of including the value of the L1 of the student as they learn their L2 of English strengthens this endeavor. A two-way classroom may be an ideal way to create the ideal affective filter for learning English as a second language. The instruction of a transitional level classroom should include these as well as other theories of language acquisition including CALLA, social/emotional impact, input/output, and BIC/CALP in order to help prepare a student for a mainstream English one.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the addition of a transitional ESL English class with cooperative learning strategies at Paradise Valley High School. The scores on the Arizona Student Assessment Program (ASAP) tests as well as the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT 9) will help to identify any increase in English proficiency following the completion of the ESL English transitional class. The transitional level class of sixteen students was taught utilizing the strategies of cooperative learning as well as the latest language acquisition theories. Testing was from the spring of 1997 when the students were in the advanced level, and from the spring of 1998 while in the transitional class. The eventual goal would be the placement of all students into mainstream English classes.

Research Design

This study is a descriptive type, as defined by Merriam and Simpson (1995), which describes systematically the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest. It seems the logical choice for determining the benefit of adding a transitional level of ESL English at Paradise Valley High School. Results of pre and post testing will be used in assessing the outcome of a year of concentrated English instruction prior to being mainstreamed into regular English classes.

Sample and Population

The sample chosen included those students enrolled for the 1997-1998 school year in a transitional ESL English class at Paradise Valley High School. The enrollment in the class was sixteen students including ten of Hispanic background. Five students were of Asian ancestry and only one was Western European. Eleven students were
male and five were female.

The students have either exited the advanced ESL English level class or tested to this level on the basis of their SAT scores or teacher recommendations. The grade equivalency ranged from the ninth through the twelfth grades. Five students were at the senior level, two at junior, eight at sophomore, and one at freshman. Ages range from fourteen to nineteen. The primary home languages included Spanish, Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Filipino, Swedish and Persian. The students will receive the additional English instruction during the transitional year prior to being enrolled in mainstream English.

The advanced level of ESL in the Paradise Valley Unified School District is taught with a similarity to a regular English class. Oral and listening skills, as well as writing with emphasis on longer compositions, are included in the syllabus. In addition readings in American literature are studied.

The ESL transitional English class stresses the writing process. World literature, which is included in the freshman text, is the focus of the reading. Emphasis is on the comprehensive analysis of the literature utilizing more advanced vocabulary. Oral skills are enhanced through formal speeches and effective group communication. Study skills involving note taking and critiquing are included with the goal of improvement. The primary purpose of this class is that students gain English skills needed for success in a regular English course, post high school education, or their career.

**Instrumentation**

Instrumentation used in the study included the administration of the ASAP and the SAT 9 tests. The purpose of the two types of tests was to determine success of the additional level of ESL transitional English. The score on the SAT 9 represents an indication of the ability to function well in English. Reassessment of proficiency level is done every year unless the student is new and then the student is assessed only after two years in the program.

The recommended goals of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other
Languages (TESOL) are included in the Scope and Sequence of the district. There are general goals for all leaners in the district which include: 1) To use English to communicate in social settings; 2) to use English to achieve academically in all content areas; and 3) to use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways. The goals are also aligned to the State of Arizona Board of Education standards for reading and writing in English. There are no specific state standards for ESL at this time.

The Mission Statement adopted by the district for the ESL Scope and Sequence reflects the overall goal of language acquisition. Equally important is the motivation for the ESL student to stay in the program by increasing his/her self-worth and self-confidence for continued learning. The exit criteria for the ESL program means scoring above forty percent on the SAT as well as teacher recommendation based on observation and other means of authentic assessments.

An objective type of referencing is accomplished with the SAT, as opposed to the ASAP, which is more subjective and not normed. Idea Proficiency Test (IPTII) scores help to determine the English proficiency level of the ESL student. At the level of “E” a student is just at the point of exiting the program. A level of “F” means that the student can be placed in a fluent English speaking (FES) category. The higher level of “M” means that the student has actually mastered the English proficiency test.

When an LEP student enters school with a language spoken at home other than Spanish then they are asked to fill out the Structured Interview Form. The questions in the interview are translated so that the questions are asked in the first language and then translated back into English. The interviewer is also allowed to make comments for clarification.

SAT scores (SAT 9) are used in grades two through twelve. Teacher verification and parent consultation are needed when a student is only orally fluent in English. There appears to be a typical pattern of oral fluency but lack of actual reading comprehension in many ESL students. The oral assessment is given every two years. The SAT is given every year. Above the fortieth percentile on the SAT means a student is identified as non-LEP.
Ranking below the fortieth percentile on the SAT 9 means an oral assessment is taken as well as IPTs in reading and writing. When a student falls below the forty-first percentile on the SAT screening in reading comprehension an oral assessment of English fluency is given. An oral assessment may also be given in Spanish as well as the IPT III in reading and writing. The student is identified as LEP and through the primary language assessment the student is placed in the ESL program and is then reassessed every two years.

**Procedure**

Students were tested with both the ASAP and the SAT 9 in the spring of 1998. Emphasis on vocabulary and study skills in English during the transitional level should help to prepare the students to achieve better results this year than the prior one. Scores from the prior year (1997) will be reviewed to determine if any improvement in English proficiency has been attained. Transcripts will also be studied to note significant changes in grades overall.

**Assumptions and Limitations**

It is assumed that there will be data from the prior year for each of the students. Furthermore, it is assumed that all students will take the tests and answer to the best of their ability.

Variable proficiency in each student’s L1 will affect the results in terms of growth. There is also no way to measure the baseline English proficiency for each student. The various ethnic and educational backgrounds and languages will differ.

Another variation is one of age. Students placed in a transitional level are not going to be of the same age. Prior knowledge and schooling will also vary greatly.

The class enrollment is subject to change. There are changes in enrollment at school expected as well as in the selection of appropriate class levels. Students in the program overall tend to have erratic attendance records.
Method Of Analysis

The results of the ASAP and SAT was compared to those of the previous year. Tracking of the students through the use of their high school transcripts will show the level of achievement in English in the ESL program including the transitional level class. Any level of English proficiency achieved in a regular mainstream classroom will be an indication of their success prior to the implementation of the new transitional level. The number of years in the ESL program at Paradise Valley High School could also indicate relevant findings.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Demographics

Sixteen students enrolled in the transitional ESL English class were studied according to test scores available for 1997 and 1998. Additionally, their transcripts were reviewed to determine location of previous schooling as well as a history of academic achievement in English during this time frame.

The Stanford 9 test was administered in the spring of 1997 and again in the spring of 1998. Test results were available for seven students for both testing years. One of the seven students had the results from 1998 only due to being new to the district from Sweden. The group consisted of eleven boys and five girls. They represented the countries of Mexico, China, Hong Kong, Sweden, the Philippines, and Iran. Their first languages (L1) included Spanish, Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Filipino, Persian and Swedish. Previous schooling experiences included students who had been in the Paradise Valley District throughout their high school years. Three graduating seniors did not take the tests. Two of the three had also been in the program for two years. The one student transferred from another district in the Phoenix area. One student transferred from Mexico and another from China, via Eloy, Arizona.

Another senior student was enrolled in the fall semester and then transferred. She had completed her junior year in the program and prior to that had also attended another school in the area. One student that was ranked as a senior entered at the junior year level from Yuma, Arizona. She also departed at the end of the first semester and therefore no scores were reported.

A freshman student attended a district middle school and was enrolled in their ESL program. Of the two juniors one was in the ESL program throughout his high school years at Paradise Valley. The other entered at the freshman level from California
Missing
The category of prewriting change was 0.1. Composition itself was a significant change of minus 0.68. Editing reflected another change of 0.15.

**Figure 1: Standford 9 Results**

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In the results of the SAT 9 (not shown in Figure 1) it is particularly relevant to note that all ten Hispanic students tested at below grade level in all subject areas. Also of importance is the fact that five Asian students and one western European student consistently tested at post high school (PHS) in math. The Swedish and Iranian students also scored PHS in language prewriting. The Iranian student also scored PHS in both language and composition. He was the only student at grade level in his basic battery score as well.

1998 ASAP Students A and G, both seniors, failed to show any scoring on the Stanford 9. It is interesting to note that student G passed the ASAP in both reading and writing and graduated. Student A failed the reading and did not take the writing portion and graduated. Student H and J passed both forms of the ASAP, but did not take the Stanford 9 in 1997. Therefore, it was impossible to make any comparisons of their scores. Student C failed both forms of the ASAP but took only two portions of the Stanford 9 in 1998. Student B did not take the Stanford in 1997.

Unfortunately the results of the ASAP were only available for one year as shown in Figure 2. Eight of the twelve students passed the reading assessment part of the test. Four students failed and two new students did not take the test. Six students passed the writing assessment part with only two failing to master it. Four students did not even attempt the written part.

**Figure 2: 1998 ASAP Results**

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</tbody>
</table>
Transcripts. Upon reviewing the transcripts of the class it is noted that not all students completed advanced ESL English 5-6 prior to enrolling in the transitional level. There were seven students (B, F, J, K, L, M, and O) in this category. Their grades ranged from A to F as shown in Figure 3. Two students (F and O) entered from mainstream English 1-2 with grades of grades of D/D. One student (K) entered transitional ESL after completing ESL English 1-2 with grades of A/A and another student (L) after being in ESL English 3-4 with grades of C/B. Two (B and J) were not registered in the school prior to this year. Five students (A, H, J, L, and N) were registered for only one semester of transitional English (7). Four (A, H, L, and N) of which were seniors. Three (A, H and N) of the students graduated. The end of year transcripts reflected that four (B, E, F and G) out of ten students improved a letter grade in the spring semester. Only one student’s (O) grade dropped, but that was from B+ to B. Two students (K and P) maintained an A both semesters. Also two students (C and D) maintained an F for both semesters. They are not registered for the fall of 1998.

**Figure 3: Transcript Data of Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Fall 1996 Adv ESL 5</th>
<th>Spring 1997 Adv ESL 6</th>
<th>Fall 1997 Trans ESL 7</th>
<th>Spring 1998 Trans ESL 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (12)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (10)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (10)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (11)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G (12)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (12)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (12)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P (10)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English 1</th>
<th>English 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F (10)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J (10)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O (10)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K (10)</td>
<td>ESL 1 A</td>
<td>ESL 2 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L (12)</td>
<td>ESL 3 C</td>
<td>ESL 4 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M (11)</td>
<td>ESL 7 F '96</td>
<td>ESL 8 D '96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (9)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

The information gathered represents a partial study due to the fact that the ASAP scores for 1997 were unavailable for individual students. Transcripts of the spring semester of 1998 reflected an enrollment of two additional students at the transitional level who did not take the ASAP test. Eleven students remained in the class for second semester. Eight were at the sophomore level. Two students were moved into mainstream English 2 at the end of the first semester, however, both dropped out of school before completing the second semester. The reasons appear to be other than academic.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the study was to try to determine the effectiveness of the addition of a transitional ESL English class with cooperative learning strategies. In the 1997-98 school year Paradise Valley High School offered this class for the first time and therefore some of the long term results are unknown in August of 1998. In order to conduct an adequate study it will be necessary to include additional test scores and transcripts upon availability in another year. The report is based on the findings at this time with full understanding that this will in fact be limited in scope. The unavailability of some test scores also made the study limited.

It is the nature of any ESL class to have students transfer in and out of school, therefore, tracking is always going to be difficult with any specific class of these students. Additionally, it was discovered by the researcher that the district has no means of tracking individual scores on the ASAP from year to year and thus the scores for 1997 were unavailable. Conclusions were drawn on the basis of the data available with the knowledge that the study could be more conclusive if more data had been provided.

Conclusions

The study remains inconclusive to date. It was difficult to notice any pattern reflecting overall improvement of student achievement after the initial year at the transitional level of ESL English. Any correlation to a score differential from the previous test results of the SAT 9 did not reflect any specific findings with the exception of an overall improvement in reading comprehension on the SAT 9 scores from 1998. Scores on parts of the test increased and others decreased. It was therefore impossible for the researcher to draw any specific conclusions without additional
information and further study.

Students were placed at this transitional level from various backgrounds. Some had been in the district ESL program all through high school. Others transferred in from other area schools or just entered the district or the country itself. The level of proficiency in the L1 of the students also varied. The variety of seven different L1 languages spoken in the home also made a difference.

The assessment of actual use of language acquisition theories mentioned requires actual daily classroom observation. It was impossible to check on the value of the use of cooperative learning without individual interviews or questionnaires. An interview with the teacher of this class did, however, provide the knowledge that cooperative grouping strategies proved helpful for all.

The Stanford 9 test results showed extreme variations. Some student scores actually decreased from the previous year. The one consistent fact was that in math many students scored PHS (post high school) and did so consistently. It is the opinion of the researcher that standardized tests showed very little as to the overall student profile and offered questionable reliability. One must have more information regarding the complete background of each student in order to more accurately assess the value of a transitional year of ESL English.

Several other factors were noted to have an effect on the results of this study. Only one senior score was included on the Stanford 9 test. The Stanford 9 test was objective in nature. The ASAP, on the other hand, represented an opportunity for ESL students to write in English. Thus the ASAP appeared to be a more reliable assessment tool in terms of demonstrating written English proficiency. The difference in style could relate either a higher or lower score on the objective and the possibility of poor scoring on the writing. The comfort level with the material being tested, as well as the classroom environment, could also affect the testing. For instance, this year the SAT 9 test was administered to all the ESL students together in one large group.

Reading Comprehension is the one category which reflected consistent improvement by all but one student. In fact, the category of reading itself showed
overall improvement. The background of the teacher includes a master’s degree in reading. Also the content of the course was literature based which closely followed the scope and sequence for mainstream freshman English 1-2. Vocabulary, however, did not show any significant improvement with two higher and one lower score as well as three basically the same. Five of the scores were incomplete and therefore incomparable.

Language composite scores reflected the lowest improvement. This demonstrates that there is a need to focus on grammar in the future. The course is literature based and therefore it is not surprising that reading became the major focus. The other tested areas of prewriting, composition, and editing also reflected a lack of overall improvement.

Recommendations

Following the progress of the students for another year would appear to be very beneficial in trying to determine any overall improvement in both test scores as well as academic achievement. First of all, it would be of major benefit if the district could track the students individually with their ASAP scores which are reported to the state. The third year scores on this assessment would be interesting after the time spent in a mainstream English class. It could prove invaluable in assessing progress of an ESL student.

Secondly, a follow-up study of those students who moved into mainstream English would provide the necessary data to assess the benefit of the additional transitional level. One of the students is registered for Senior Communications which is a less intensive senior level English class. Five are registered for regular junior English. Another student is enrolled in sophomore level mainstream English. The reviewing of their transcripts would provide accurate information regarding their GPA and their ability to achieve in the mainstream.

Finally, an in-depth study of students who were placed directly into mainstream English after exiting from advanced ESL English, without the benefit of the additional
transitional level of instruction, could provide significant data as to the relevancy of adding such a level to the ESL curriculum. This information could then be compared along with the results of this study to date.
REFERENCES


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Teaching English to non-English speakers...offers a wide range of techniques. 1996. CQ Researcher, Congressional Quarterly, Inc. 6 (3): 54.


APPENDIX A

SMALL-GROUP COOPERATIVE LEARNING MODEL
STUDENT ENERGY

ACTIVE LEARNING

AFFILIATIVE NEEDS

PEER INTERACTION

SMALL-GROUP COOPERATIVE LEARNING

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

SELF-ESTEEM

INTERGROUP RELATIONS

HOTS

SOCIAL SKILLS

SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

NEIL DAVIDSON, 1991
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Traditional Evaluation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Contemporary Evaluation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Authentic Assessment</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong> judge how well student performed</td>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong> help teachers and students understand how well students performed</td>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong> help teachers and students make decisions about teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>judgment made when learning has already taken place (summative)</td>
<td>judgment made when learning has already taken place (summative), using as full a range of indicators as possible</td>
<td>on-going collection of data on the basis of which on-going decision can be made (formative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score on quiz, test, or standardized test</td>
<td>performance: student demonstration on any given occasion: oral, written, visual and/or physical</td>
<td>competence: what student can do in real-world situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a product: mark, grade, judgment which can be on a curve</td>
<td>an on-going process which measures performance through mark, grade, judgment that is criterion-referenced or based on a rubric</td>
<td>a process of feedback as to how close student is to pre-set criterion/rubric for performance improvement or refinement (includes processing from self, group and/or teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adult-oriented, for teachers to report to parents</td>
<td>adult and student-oriented to report achievement at a given time or cumulatively</td>
<td>adult and student-oriented to track progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score on quiz, test, gradebook (e.g. 9/10, C-85%) report cards standardized tests teachers with written reports</td>
<td>using scores as well as teachers’ and students’ written reports</td>
<td>portfolios: * data from self, peers, teachers * samples of individual and group work * audio video tapes * writing samples * anecdotal information * sample report cards narrative feedback form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(with special thanks to Neil Davidson, U of Maryland)
APPENDIX C

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR SCHOOL

DIAGRAM