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The Design and Implementation of an Intensive English-as-a-Second-Language Program

Georgina Arguello

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The Design and Implementation of an Intensive
English-as-a-Second-Language Program

by
Georgina Argüello

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Fischler School of Education and Human Services
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Georgina Argüello under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Fischler School of Education and Human Services and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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Abstract

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This study was conducted to examine the design and implementation of an intensive English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program to help students with limited English proficiency improve their English skills and obtain a passing score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). How the ESL course set high expectations for English-language learners and supported them by linking TOEFL courses with academic content was explored.

The researcher developed and facilitated in her workplace an intensive 6-week ESL program for adult students with an intermediate to intermediate-advanced level of English proficiency and assessed the effectiveness of the program that utilized the immersion method and a competency-based curriculum. Standardized, objective measures of the students' language proficiency in English were obtained at the beginning and end of the study. Daily sessions on reading comprehension, listening comprehension, writing, and speaking were designed to help students (a) understand short passages similar in topic and style to academic texts used in North American colleges and universities, (b) understand English as it is spoken in North America, (c) recognize language that is appropriate in standard written English, (d) communicate in English in an academic setting, and (e) write an essay in English on an assigned topic.

Results of the study indicated a significant increase in TOEFL scores of students who were enrolled in the 6-week intensive ESL program. Students' scores increased in all sections of the TOEFL; however, the greatest increases were made in the Writing and Speaking sections of the test. Although all of the students improved their English skills and were successful in the intensive ESL program, only 86% of the students met the English-proficiency requirement for college admission.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Immigration to the United States has sharply increased in the past 30 years (Szelenyi & Chang, 2002). Immigration has become the main driver of population growth in America (Brush, 2006). According to Camarota (2001), “Between 1970 and 2000 the number of immigrants living in the United States has more than tripled, from 9.6 million to 28.4 million” (p. 1). Brush reported that the percentage of immigrants in the U.S. population more than doubled from 4.7% in 1970 to 10.4% in 2000, the largest number ever recorded in the nation’s history and a 43% increase since 1990. Since 2000, there has been a 16% rise in the number of immigrants living in American households. Camarota noted that immigrants now account for more than 1 in 10 U.S. residents (i.e., 10.4%), the highest percentage in 70 years. Lollock (2001) pointed out that 43% of this population is between the ages of 25 and 44, an age range when these immigrants are likely to seek access to higher education.

Historically, the U.S. educational system has played an important role in helping immigrants acculturate to U.S. society. Curry (2004) wrote, “Contemporary immigrants often see education as a way to move past low-level jobs in service industries, health care, and agriculture” (p. 51). More adult immigrants are seeking higher education and training as the changing global economy requires greater levels of education and English-language literacy (Hull, 1997). As a result, colleges and universities throughout the United States are experiencing an influx of immigrants and international students on their campuses. For students who are English-language learners (ELLs), entering and succeeding in U.S. institutions of higher learning involves more than simply studying a new language. Curry pointed out that these “students must also learn the specialized practices of academic reading, writing, listening comprehension, grammar, and speaking

that characterize higher education level communication” (p. 51). These academic literacy practices represent a particular view of the world, uses of language, and ways of constructing knowledge within academic disciplines.

Proficiency in English is one major factor that contributes to the academic success of immigrants and international students who come to the United States to study. According to Harville (1990), one of the primary instruments used by colleges and universities throughout the country to assess English proficiency is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The TOEFL is designed to evaluate the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English. In the 2003-2004 academic year, more than 720,000 people registered to take this test. TOEFL scores are accepted by more than 5,000 colleges, universities, and licensing agencies in 90 countries. In September 2005, a new Internet-based version of the TOEFL, called the TOEFL iBT, was implemented. The TOEFL iBT is used to assess all four language skills that are important for effective communication: (a) speaking, (b) listening, (c) reading, and (d) writing. The test helps students demonstrate that they have the English skills needed to achieve success in a college setting (Educational Testing Service [ETS], 2005a).

The level of English proficiency that most colleges and universities require for students to enter regular college coursework is a minimum score of 550 on the paper-based TOEFL, 213 on the computer-based TOEFL, and 79-80 on the Internet-based TOEFL. Students who do not attain the minimum score set by the institution are either placed in English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs or are automatically denied entrance to the school if the institution lacks provisions for ESL students or borderline students (i.e., those who almost attained the required passing score). Harville (1990) said that students who earn borderline scores initially can attain a passing score on

the TOEFL exam without spending an entire term in an ESL program. In 1980, Muñoz and Pyle (as cited in Harville) found that for 2 consecutive years, 80% of students with borderline scores or higher who enrolled in an advanced TOEFL preparation class at Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, Florida, obtained scores of 550+ on the paper-based TOEFL after taking the course, which ran 3 days per week, 3 hours per day, for an 8-week period, for a total of 72 hours of instruction.

The researcher works for a not-for-profit, fully accredited, coeducational institution that is well known for innovation and quality in both traditional and distance education. This university serves large numbers of adult students and a growing population of traditional undergraduates. To date, the institution has produced approximately 79,000 alumni. Based on 2005 fall-term enrollment, the university is the largest independent institution of higher education in the Southeast and the sixth largest not-for-profit independent educational institution in the nation. The university awards associate's, bachelor's, master's, specialist's, doctoral, and first-professional degrees in a wide range of fields, including (a) business, (b) counseling, (c) computer and information sciences, (d) education, (e) medicine, (f) dentistry, (g) various health professions, (h) law, (i) marine sciences, (j) psychology, and (k) other social sciences. The university's programs are administered through academic centers that are located throughout the state of Florida, including Miami-Dade County (Nova Southeastern University, 2007).

According to Camarota (2001), the Miami-Dade County metropolitan area ranks first in terms of the percentage of immigrants among five other consolidated metropolitan statistical areas in the United States. Camarota wrote, "In 2000, the number of immigrants in Miami totaled 1,647,000, or 42.7 percent of the population" p. 17). Therefore, to achieve a competitive edge in meeting the language needs of

immigrants, it became imperative that an intensive ESL program be established at the researcher's workplace to set high expectations for ELLs while supporting them as much as possible by linking TOEFL courses to disciplinary content.

Nature of the Problem

Inhabitants in developing nations are aware that learning a foreign language, especially English, is of vital importance for them to achieve success in their personal and professional lives. Those who have good command of a foreign language have enormous advantages over those who do not (Mirici, 2003). High hopes and fear-inducing anxieties often accompany immigrants who come to the United States. Many arrive with hopes of pursuing or completing a degree in higher education, but they often encounter a language barrier in the pursuit of their dreams. For example, at the researcher's institution, one of the admission requirements for applicants whose native language is not English is to demonstrate English proficiency by achieving a minimum score of 550 on the paper-based TOEFL, 213 on the computer-based TOEFL, or 79-80 on the TOEFL iBT.

The number of non-English speakers has increased significantly in Miami-Dade County. Many of them wish to pursue or complete degrees in higher education; however, these non-English-speaking students cannot pursue degrees in higher education due to their lack of English skills, which are reflected by failing or borderline scores on the TOEFL. Therefore, the purpose of this research study was to design and implement an intensive ESL program to help limited-English-proficient (LEP) students to improve their English skills and TOEFL scores to qualify them to enroll in any of the undergraduate, graduate, specialist, or doctoral programs at the researcher's university.

According to Harville (1990), colleges and universities that have ESL programs

must extend the time period of ESL instruction beyond what is usually provided for upper level students to help these borderline students attain a TOEFL score of 480+. At many colleges and universities, there is no ESL program, as was the case at the researcher's institution. At the researcher's university, when LEP students were denied admittance to academic programs, admissions counselors referred these students to community colleges or to universities that offered intensive English classes, creating the possibility that these students would not return to the university to earn their degrees.

Background and Significance of the Problem

The United States has historically been a nation of immigrants. In recent years, the U.S. population has become increasingly diverse in language and culture as a result of new waves of immigration, the resettlement of refugees from other nations, and differential birthrates in the sectors of the population that speak languages other than English (Crandall, 1993). According to Kim, Collins, and McArthur (1997), 1990 census data indicated there were approximately 22.5 million adults, aged 18 and older, in the United States who reported speaking a language other than English at home; these people are considered to be language-minority adults. Kim et al. reported that this number reflected an increase of 7.6 million adults since the 1980 census.

The 2005 census showed that Miami-Dade County had a population of 2,376,014 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). The U.S. Census Bureau (2005) reported the following data about languages spoken by residents of Miami-Dade County: (a) 623,701 spoke only English; (b) 1,536,750 spoke a language other than English, and of this number, it was estimated that 742,458 spoke English less than very well; (c) 1,341,991 spoke Spanish, and of this number, it was estimated that 670,747 spoke English less than very well; (d) 171,422 spoke other Indo-European languages, and of this number, it was

estimated that 63,197 spoke English less than very well; (e) 13,543 spoke Asian or Pacific Islander languages, and of this number, it was estimated that 6,155 spoke English less than very well; and (f) 9,794 spoke other languages, and of this number, it was estimated that 2,359 spoke English less than very well.

Language-minority adults live in the United States for many years with varying degrees of English proficiency. Their skills range from complete fluency to practically no knowledge of English. People whose English-language ability is limited may have difficulty getting jobs, completing their education, and obtaining access to social and economic opportunities in the United States (Kim et al., 1997). Language-minority students are found in schools across the country. Therefore, all schools, include institutions of higher education, must be prepared to meet the challenges of a progressively more diverse student population, including students who are not proficient in English (Rennie, 1993).

Bliss (1990) defined LEP students as students with a limited ability to listen, speak, read, and write in English and to “meet basic survival needs and satisfy routine social demands using the language” (p. 171). Many language-minority adults have limited proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking the English language that hinders their ability to function effectively in the workplace and in society (Kim et al., 1997).

Students from diverse backgrounds have diverse needs and goals. Several factors related to students’ first and second language shape their second-language learning. These factors include (a) the linguistic distance between the two languages, (b) students’ level of proficiency in their native language, (c) students’ knowledge of the second language, (d) the dialect of the native language spoken by the students (i.e., whether it is standard or nonstandard), (e) the relative status of the students’ language in the

community, and (f) societal attitudes toward the students' native language (Walqui & Ed, 2000). Students' expertise in their first language is a significant factor in their ability to learn a second language. According to Walqui and Ed,

The more academically sophisticated the student's native language knowledge and abilities, the easier it will be for that student to learn a second language. This helps explain why foreign exchange students tend to be successful in American high school classes: They already have high school level proficiency in their native language. (p. 2)

Research has shown that individuals vary greatly in the ways they learn a second language (Skehan, 1989). ESL programs represent an increasingly important aspect of institutional missions and are the subject of considerable interest and debate. ESL education programs are designed to help language-minority adults to develop the English-language skills they need to pursue further education. Rabideau (1993) opined, "Adult learners in the U.S. need to learn oral English; furthermore, reading and writing should also be an aim of adult education for second language learners" (p. 5).

The U.S. Department of Education (2000) wrote, "If national-origin minority students are not proficient in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English, testing them in English may not demonstrate their ability or achievement skills" (p. 5). In foreign-language acquisition, different learners follow different paths (Galasso, 1999). ELLs are encouraged to learn and use a broad range of language-learning strategies that can be tapped throughout the learning process. This approach is based on the belief that learning is facilitated by making students aware of the range of strategies available for them to choose when learning or using a new language (Cohen, 2003). Strategies are the tools for active, self-directed involvement that is needed for developing communicative ability in a second language (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). With the increasing enrollment of nonnative English speakers in higher education, ESL has become one of the fastest

growing programs in the curricula of community colleges and 4-year higher institutions of higher education (Kuo, 2000). Schuyler (as cited in Kuo), said that a 1998 study of curriculum in community colleges nationwide showed a 38% increase in ESL course offerings between 1991 and 1998.

The U.S. Department of Education (2000) reported that the Office for Civil Rights was established to enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. Title VI is violated if (a) students are excluded from effective participation in school because of their inability to speak and understand the language of instruction; (b) national-origin minority students are inappropriately assigned to classes for the mentally retarded because of their lack of English skills; (c) programs for students whose English is less than proficient are not designed to teach them English as soon as possible, or if these programs operate as a dead-end track; or (d) parents whose English is limited do not receive school notices and other information in a language they can understand.

As previously mentioned, the researcher's university did not offer an ESL program. As a result, LEP immigrants, including those who attained borderline TOEFL scores, were being denied admission to the university's academic programs. These prospective students were being sent to other colleges or universities that offered English remedial courses or intensive ESL programs.

The size of the ELL population in Miami is constantly on the rise due to increased immigration. The rationale for this research study was to study the effect of offering an intensive ESL program to help prospective students improve their English skills and TOEFL scores so that they could qualify to enroll in any of the undergraduate, graduate,

specialist, or doctorate programs at the researcher's institution. The ESL program designed for this study was competency based and was implemented using a total immersion approach to instruction. The study employed data collected from Hispanic adults, age 18 or older, who had an intermediate to intermediate-advanced level of English-language proficiency. TOEFL pre- and posttests were administered to the students to determine the proficiency gained from the course.

The researcher's job title is Assistant Director, Student Recruitment and Enrollment, Management II. The researcher's main responsibilities include (a) devising and executing program development activities for off-campus locations to increase enrollment by 10% to 15% each year; (b) identifying potential new markets for all of the university's programs; (c) developing and implementing new programs for the center; (d) performing market analyses and developing quarterly reports as needed; (e) recommending ways to increase enrollment and improve services; (f) representing the university at conferences, educational fairs, and career days to describe programs to prospective students; (g) providing feedback and suggestions to the center's director regarding customer service, communication, and recruitment programs; (h) establishing and providing information sessions and presentations for marketing programs; (i) establishing an effective recruitment plan for inquiries; (j) traveling to various locations to promote and support the university's programs; (k) performing as back-up site director as needed; and (l) developing and cross-training all center staff in customer service and inquiry follow-up.

Research Questions

In this study, the effects of facilitation techniques used to foster the learning of ESL were examined. Intensive ESL classes were offered to adult Hispanic students who

had intermediate to intermediate-advanced levels of English proficiency. For the purposes of this study, four research questions were addressed:

1. Will a 6-week intensive ESL program help intermediately proficient English students improve their TOEFL scores and their English skills?
2. Is there a significant difference in pre- and posttest TOEFL scores of students enrolled in the intensive ESL program?
3. Upon completion of the intensive ESL program, will students meet the minimum English proficiency requirements for college admission?
4. What are the students' perceptions of the intensive ESL program?

Definitions of Terms

Competency. For the purposes of this study, the term *competency* refers to the ability of learners to demonstrate their learned capabilities after they have acquired a necessary combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities (Chyung, Stepich, & Cox, 2006).

Immersion or intensive program. Language immersion is an approach to foreign-language instruction in which the usual curricular activities are conducted in a foreign language. This means that the new language is the medium of instruction as well as the object of instruction. Immersion students acquire the necessary language skills to understand and communicate about the subject matter set out in the school's program of instruction (Bostwick, 2006). Intensive ESL programs are second-language programs that offer formal instruction at least 4 hours per day, 5 days per week (Harville, 1990).

First (native) language. This term refers to the role of the first language in learning a second language. Huntley (as cited in Burt & Peyton, 2003) described four types of literacy in the first language that affect English literacy development and should

be considered in adult ESL literacy instruction: (a) preliterate, (b) nonliterate, (c) semiliterate, and (d) non-Roman-alphabet literate.

Foreign or second language. This term refers to learning strategies such as specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques used to improve students' progress in apprehending, internalizing, and using a second language (Oxford, 1990).

English as a foreign language. This term refers to teaching English to nonnative English speakers. It may also refer to teaching and learning English in a country where English is not the native language (Harville, 1990).

ESL. This term refers to educational programs designed to help ELLs develop the English-language skills necessary to pursue further education, enter or advance in the job market, and enrich their personal and family lives (Kim et al., 1997).

Proficient. For the purposes of this study, the term *proficient* refers to the ability to listen, speak, read, and write in English. Bliss (1990) defined language proficiency as the "ability to meet basic survival needs and satisfy routine social demands using the language" (p. 171).

Second-language acquisition. Harville (1990) defined second-language acquisition as a subconscious and intuitive process of constructing the system of a language, and Vanpatten (1999) described it as the process people use to learn a language other than their first.

TOEFL. The purpose of the TOEFL is to assess the English skills of people whose native language is not English. Minimum TOEFL scores are required for admission to thousands of colleges in the United States as well as in many other countries where instruction is primarily conducted in English. The TOEFL, which is administered by the Educational Testing Center of Princeton, New Jersey, consists of four sections: (a)

Reading Comprehension, which measures the test taker's ability to understand short passages similar in topic and style to academic texts used in North American colleges and universities; (b) Listening Comprehension, which measures the test taker's ability to understand English as it is spoken in North America; (c) Speaking, which measures the test taker's ability to communicate in English in an academic setting; and (d) Writing, which measures the test taker's ability to write in English on an assigned topic (Capstone English Mastery Center, 2006).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, the evolution of second-language-acquisition theories and the practice of ESL instruction using the immersion method to teach the English language are reviewed. The rationale for using a competency-based curriculum in an ESL program is explained, and the effectiveness of the TOEFL to measure English proficiency levels of nonnative speakers is explored. Literature on the following topics is reviewed: (a) the history and background of second-language acquisition, (b) the immersion method, (c) the subject areas of ESL instruction, (d) competency-based ESL curricula, and (e) the TOEFL. These topics were reviewed because they set the foundation for this study, and they explain why intensive ESL classes are important at the researcher's institution.

History and Background

Second-language acquisition and the teaching and learning of English as a second language are relatively new areas of investigation among educators in the United States, but the concept is not new to education; second-language acquisition can be traced back to ancient Rome where the Romans sought to understand Greek culture (Harville, 1990). Historically, form over function appears to have driven the process of attaining a second language. This can be seen in the methods used to teach Latin and Greek, which entailed mainly a translation method that emphasized the written text. When these two classical languages began to lose their practical applicability at the end of the Renaissance, scholars stressed the knowledge of additional languages as exercises for the mind. Language training was composed of reading, translation, and grammar, with little emphasis on conversational skills (Nakanishi, 2005).

At the height of the Cold War, attitudes about language acquisition began to shift. Educators began to support what is known as the audio-lingual method, which

encourages the use and development of oral communication skills. However, Nakanishi (2005) reported that students often fail to reach a high level of proficiency in oral skills when this method is utilized.

An important issue in American education is the growing number of students who come from non-English-language backgrounds. The existence of this large population group offers a compelling reason for educators to analyze the assessments utilized to identify and classify ELLs. The 1960s marked a new era of involvement by the federal government in the field of education. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 provided support for non-English-speaking minorities, and in 1968, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was amended to include Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act, which prescribed guidelines for bilingual education (Harville, 1990). Concern about proper assessment of bilingual students' English proficiency has spanned more than 3 decades. The 1974 Supreme Court decision in *Lau v. Nichols* confirmed that schools must take affirmative steps to provide equal educational opportunities for students with limited English proficiency. According to Mandarano (2005), the leaders of many school districts have interpreted this decision as requiring some form of native-language instruction for students, hence the growth of bilingual programs.

The most significant influence on current second-language-acquisition programs came from the theories of Chomsky during the 1960s. According to Nakanishi (2005), Chomsky's theory of generative grammar helped to redefine the field of developmental psycholinguistics. Nakanishi noted that Chomsky believed that humans have an innate cognitive capacity for language; thus, language acquisition is a creative, open-ended process. As educators tried to focus on rule formation rather than on developing certain behavioral habits, this theory led to the cognitive approach, which returned second-

language-acquisition pedagogy to teaching via grammar rules and exercises (Nakanishi).

With the 1998 passage of Proposition 227 in California, bilingual education underwent a massive restructuring in an effort to streamline students' transition to English-only instruction. Due to this legal mandate, the state placed stringent accountability standards on school districts that offered bilingual programs, which set precedents for many other states' bilingual programs and increased the need for classification of students' language proficiency through valid and reliable measures (Mandarano, 2005).

ESL instruction evolved from bilingual education. The two approaches share a common goal--to develop students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in a second language. Troike (as cited in Harville, 1990) identified two reasons for the implementation of an ESL program over a bilingual program: Many international or immigrant students want to be taught in a learning environment where English is the language of instruction, and in ESL programs, students of many diverse ethnic backgrounds can be instructed simultaneously regardless of their native language.

As laws were enacted to govern ESL instruction and bilingual education, advancements were taking place in second-language-acquisition theories and practices (Harville, 1990, Nakanishi, 2005). Language-acquisition theories have basically centered around the nurture-versus-nature dichotomy or what Kiyamazarslan (2004) called *empiricism* versus *nativism*. According to Kiyamazarslan, the doctrine of empiricism holds that "all knowledge comes from experience, ultimately from our interaction with the environment through our reasoning or senses" (Introduction section, ¶ 2), and the theory of nativism holds that "at least some knowledge is not acquired through interaction with the environment, but is genetically transmitted and innate" (Introduction section, ¶ 2).

Kiymazarslan further pointed out that theories based on empiricism (i.e., environmental factors believed to be more dominant in language acquisition) include (a) Bakhtin's theory of polyphony or dialogics, (b) Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, (c) Skinner's verbal behavior, (d) Piaget's view of language acquisition, (e) the competition model, (f) cognitive theory, (g) discourse theory, (h) the speech act theory, (i) the acculturation model, (j) accommodation theory, (k) the variable competence, (l) the interactionist view of language acquisition, and (m) the connectionist model.

Environmentalists' theories of language acquisition hold that nurture and experiences are of more significance to development than nature's contribution, but environmentalists do not reject the innate factors completely. The best known examples are the behaviorist and neobehaviorist stimulus-response learning theories of Skinner. Behaviorists' views of language acquisition are that language development is the result of a set of habits. According to proponents of behaviorism, knowledge is the product of interaction with the environment through stimulus-response conditioning (Kiymazarslan, 2004). Kiymazarslan noted that the behaviorist theory claims that both first-language and second-language acquirers receive linguistic input from speakers in their environment and positive reinforcement for their correct repetitions and imitations. Kiymazarslan also pointed out that Skinner's work was highly criticized by Chomsky, a cognitive theorist. According to Kiymazarslan, cognitive psychologists emphasize the importance of meaning, knowing, and understanding and view second-language acquisition as the building up of knowledge systems that can be called upon automatically for speaking and understanding. Cognitivists claim that language acquisition can be automatically attained.

Kiymazarslan (2004) explained that theories based on nativism (i.e., innate factors are believed to be more dominant in language acquisition) include (a) the neurofunctional

theory of language acquisition, (b) the universal grammar theory, (c) Fodor's modular approach, and (d) the monitor model. Among these theories, universal grammar has recently gained wide acceptance and popularity. Kiymazarslan said that universal grammar is more a first-language-acquisition theory than a second-language-acquisition theory. The main purpose of the universal grammar theory is to account for how language works. This theory of language teaching focuses on how vocabulary should be taught.

Second-Language Acquisition and the Immersion Method

Second-language acquisition, which is concerned with how people learn a language other than their first language, focuses on both the processes and products of learning and draws on the disciplines of (a) linguistics, including syntactic theory, pragmatic theory, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis; (b) cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics, including first-language acquisition; and (c) educational psychology (Vanpatten, 1999). Basically, second-language-acquisition instruction focuses on theory construction independent of the context of language learning and independent of the language being learned (Vanpatten).

According to Borjian (1997), second-language learning is a complex process that develops under a diverse set of conditions. Borjian stated that for many years, second-language acquisition has been the subject of debate at both individual and societal levels. Nakanishi (2005) reported that various attempts have been made to provide theoretical constructs to understand how second-language acquisition occurs, including the works of Krashen and Cummins.

According to Nakanishi (2005), Krashen's theory of second-language acquisition, which distinguished between learning and acquisition, has influenced the development of integrated instruction at all levels. According to Krashen (as cited in Nakanishi),

acquisition is an unconscious process where no formal classroom instruction is involved. Language is picked up in natural settings. On the other hand, learning is about conscious knowledge and the application of rules and structures. Krashen (as cited in Crandall, 1994) suggested that a second language is most successfully acquired when the conditions are similar to those present in first-language acquisition, that is, when the focus of instruction is on meaning rather than on form, when the language input is at or just above the proficiency of the learner, and when there is sufficient opportunity to engage in meaningful use of that language in a relatively anxiety-free environment.

Cummins (as cited in Crandall, 1994) advocated a developmental interdependency hypothesis and proposed the concept of the *dual iceberg* or two types of language proficiency, where the skills of different languages reside in the same part of the brain, differing at the surface yet connected at the base: basic interpersonal language skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. Cummins suggested that these two types of proficiency vary according to the degree of context available to the individual and the degree of cognitive challenge of the task. In addition, Cummins noted that there are really two contrasting language skills that can be developed by LEP students: functional English and academic English. Unfortunately, many educators confuse the development of functional English as an indicator of full English acquisition (Nakanishi, 2005). Cummins reported that social language can be acquired in 1 to 2 years, but the level of proficiency needed to read social studies texts or solve mathematics word problems can take 5 to 7 years to develop.

Haynes (2005) believed that all new learners of English progress through the same five stages of second-language acquisition. The first stage, preproduction, refers to the silent period. At this level, ELLs may have up to 500 words in their receptive

vocabulary, but they are not yet speaking. ELLs at this stage need much repetition in English. During the second stage, early production, which may last up to 6 months, students develop a receptive and active vocabulary of about 1,000 words. During this stage, students can usually speak in one- or two-word phrases. During the third stage, speech emergence, students develop a vocabulary of about 3,000 words, are able to communicate with simple phrases and sentences, and will initiate short conversations with classmates. At the fourth stage, intermediate fluency, ELLs have a vocabulary of 6,000 active words, begin to use more complex sentences when speaking and writing, and are willing to express opinions and share their thoughts. At the last stage, advanced fluency, ELLs become “near-native” in their ability to perform in content area learning. According to Haynes, it takes from 4 to 10 years for students to achieve cognitive academic-language proficiency in a second language.

Teaching a second language by complete immersion is certainly not a new concept in education. Baker (1998) defined a structured English immersion program as one in which

English is used and taught at a level appropriate to the class of English learners, and . . . teachers are oriented toward maximizing instruction in English and use English for 70% to 90% of instructional time, averaged over the first three years of instruction. (What Is SEI? section, ¶ 4)

Some characteristics of English-immersion programs include (a) extensive dialogue between teacher and learner; (b) small class sizes; and (c) importance given to listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Baker; Harville, 1990).

Bostwick (2006) defined language immersion as an approach to instruction in which learning activities are conducted in a foreign language. This means that the new language is the medium of instruction as well as the object of instruction. Students in

immersion programs obtain the language skills needed to understand and communicate about the subject matter set out in the school's program of instruction. Bostwick believed that immersion represents the most intensive form of content-based foreign-language instruction. In an immersion program, English may not be the subject of instruction, but it is the medium through which a majority of the school's academic content is taught.

According to Bostwick (2006), immersion is an effective second-language model because (a) language is acquired most effectively when it is learned in a meaningful social context; (b) important and interesting content provides a motivating context for learning the communicative functions of the new language; (c) by integrating language and content, foreign-language learning becomes an important part of a person's social and cognitive development; and (d) an integrated language and content model provides a wide variety of context in which to use the foreign language. In addition, Bostwick pointed out that some goals of an immersion program are to (a) achieve competency in the foreign language (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing), (b) acquire the same language arts skills as students in regular schools, (c) master content area skills and concepts, and (d) gain a greater understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

The immersion method takes an interactive, experiential approach to teaching speaking, listening, reading, writing, and grammar. The major emphasis is on activities that promote involvement and interaction on the part of the learner. Students practice the skills that they are to learn rather than just talking about or hearing about them.

English-immersion programs make considerably less use of another language than bilingual education programs do. Additionally, the immersion method uses a cumulative approach to learning that entails moving from simpler tasks to more complex tasks while focusing on different features of the processes of speaking, listening, reading, writing,

and grammar (Harville, 1990). Integrated language and content instruction are essential in immersion programs to offer a means by which ESL students can continue their academic or cognitive development while they are also acquiring academic language proficiency (Crandall, 1994). Several research studies on immersion education have shown that students in immersion programs consistently meet or exceed academic expectations in the areas of foreign-language skills, first-language skills, content areas, and cultural sensitivity (Bostwick, 2006).

Subject Areas of ESL Instruction

ESL programs aim to help ELLs learn the new language and provide them with the skills to persist in academic coursework and function in society (Kuo, 2000).

According to Harville (1990), the subject areas that are traditionally incorporated into ESL study are (a) reading, (b) writing, (c) listening, (d) speaking, and (e) grammar.

Sometimes, grammar is integrated into the writing component. This instruction is offered with supplementary activities such as language laboratory, reading and writing workshops, and activities that are clearly designed to orient students to U.S. academic, professional, technical, social, and cultural life (Judd-Price, 2006).

Although reading and sometimes, grammar are addressed separately, studies support the idea that writing instruction for ELLs should integrate reading and grammar into the curriculum because of the close relationship of these skills (Harville, 1990).

Reading is an active, complex process of comprehending written language that encompasses many different skills (VanDuzer, 1999). VanDuzer wrote, “Knowing what good readers do and comparing this with the strategies used by learners in their classes will enable ESL teachers to gauge learners’ needs” (p. 4). Salam (2002) defined reading as “an active process in which the reader constructs meaning from a written text” (p. 73).

VanDuzer (1999) recommended the following activities to help ESL learners develop reading proficiency:

1. Learners should read texts that meet their needs and are interesting, such as newspapers and magazines.

2. In order to develop automatic recognition skills, learners who are preliterate or literate in a language with a non-Roman alphabet should be given opportunities to develop letter recognition and sound-symbol correspondence skills. Learners who are literate in their own language may find phonics instruction unproductive unless differences between their native language and English are pointed out. Vocabulary development also plays an important role in reading.

3. Using appropriate strategies for various reading tasks increases comprehension. Some of these strategies include (a) skimming for the main idea, (b) scanning for specific information, (c) predicting what a text is about or what will happen next, and (d) making use of the context and illustrations.

4. Evaluating texts for implicit values and assumptions is another important reading skill.

According to Salam (2002), reading English as a foreign language is very important because it is critical to success in some academic majors, such as medicine and engineering, and it is a useful tool for locating information that may be missed during class lectures. Reading English as a foreign language can improve native-language reading; accelerate foreign-language learning; and improve other language skills, such as spelling and vocabulary.

Salam (2002) defined grammar as “the use of grammatical rules in understanding and creating whole texts” (p. 45). The underlying rationale for the teaching of grammar in

ESL classrooms is multifaceted. Teachers teach grammar to ESL students because it helps the students to produce messages. Without grammar, students cannot speak or write effectively. Furthermore, grammar helps to make language input more comprehensible (Salam). The teaching of grammar is extremely important for students who are at the advanced level of instruction to help them reach native-like levels of proficiency in the second language (Krashen, as cited in Harville, 1990). Formal grammar instruction helps students to recognize specific differences between patterns of word order in the first language compared to patterns of word order in the second language (Harville).

Salam (2002) defined listening as “an active process in which the student constructs meaning from an aural text” (p. 62). This author explained that listening comprehension is important for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, listening is an essential prerequisite for oral communication to take place. Second, listening often influences the development of reading and writing skills and helps to increase students’ vocabulary. Third, the act of listening plays a basic role in academic success because lecture remains the most widely used method of instruction at all levels.

Salam (2002) defined speaking as “an oral process of meaning construction and expression” (p. 67). Speaking plays a crucial role in ESL learning. Because English is used as an international language in many fields, such as diplomacy, trade, and tourism, nonnative speakers frequently find themselves in situations where they have to speak in English. Salam also noted that speaking is regarded by some linguists as the foundation for other language skills.

The last subject area of ESL instruction is writing, which Salam (2002) described as “a collection of separate skills, including letter formation, spelling, punctuation, grammar, organization, and the like” (p. 82). According to Salam, writing has the

following uses and functions in the area of ESL instruction: (a) The ability to write acceptable scientific English is essential for postgraduate students who must write their dissertations in English; (b) writing English allows for communication with large numbers of people around the world; (c) writing provides students with physical evidence of their achievement; (d) writing can enhance students' thinking skills; (e) writing can enhance students' vocabulary, spelling, and grammar; and (f) writing skills are often needed in formal and informal testing.

Competency-Based Curriculum

Research shows that interest in competency-based instruction has been growing for several decades with the purpose of focusing on performance-based learning outcomes (Chyung et al., 2006). According to Chyung et al., the International Board of Standards for Training and Performance Instruction defines a competency as “a knowledge, skill, or attitude that enables one to effectively perform the activities of a given occupation or function to the standards expected in employment” (p. 307). The core of competency-based curriculum design is to ensure that learners will be able to demonstrate their learned capabilities after they have acquired a necessary combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities (Chyung et al.).

A competency-based curriculum is appropriate in an immersion program. In competency-based ESL instruction, language learning is a means for learners to achieve their own individual goals rather than an end in itself (Auerbach, 1986). Curry (2004) described the following factors of competency-based ESL instruction that focus on specific approaches to support ESL students: (a) communicating requirements and expectations clearly, (b) using cooperative learning, (c) teaching contrastive awareness between languages and cultures and between disciplinary discourse conventions, (d)

linking ESL courses and disciplinary content, and (e) creating learning communities.

Auerbach (1986) stated that although a common criticism of a competency-based ESL curriculum is that it allows too much variation in implementation and interpretation, “competency based education has come to be accepted as the state-of-the-art approach to adult ESL education by national policymakers and leaders in curriculum development as well” (p. 411). Chyung et al. (2006) noted that when developing a competency-based curriculum, the following aspects must be addressed: (a) skill-based instruction versus competency-based instruction, (b) the difference between being competent and being an expert, and (c) the context-specific nature of competencies. Chyung et al.’s first aspect refers to the fact that not all skill-based instruction is necessarily competency based. A competency goes beyond a skill; competence is not only about what one knows and can do but also whether one is able to accomplish a task and produce a valuable outcome. The second aspect listed above refers to the fact that being competent is not necessarily the same as being an expert. Competency-based instruction is designed to help an individual reach a specific level of competency; the learner may continue to acquire his or her proficiency and expertise through additional learning and work experiences. Regarding the last aspect listed above, Chyung et al. explained that competencies in real practice are context specific. In other words, different definitions of competencies are needed in different contexts.

According to Harville (1990), although knowledge and skills are prescribed and assessed through competencies, there is no dominant instructional process or one specific instructional strategy that is appropriate for all students. An effective competency-based ESL program must offer students learning strategies from a wide array of differing approaches, such as (a) instructional modules, (b) group presentations and discussions,

(c) self-directed learning, (d) student-initiated activities, (e) teacher-with-student or student-with-student teaching, and (f) other learning strategies that best assist the students to gain competence.

Instructors in competency-based ESL programs must take into account the learners' prior academic skills (Harville, 1990). Students should be tested before entering an ESL program and placed in the program according to their present level of proficiency. Students with higher levels of proficiency in the language require less instructional time than students with limited proficiency; instruction for students with limited proficiency must concentrate on a broad range of competencies. Regardless of their level of language proficiency, all students must be aware of finite objectives and their current standing in relation to ESL program completion, and they all need to experience success in the accomplishment of competencies as they progress in their English-language learning (Harville).

TOEFL

The TOEFL, which is designed to measure the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English, is used as part of the admissions process for nonnative speakers of English at more than 2,400 colleges and universities across the United States and Canada (Rosenfeld, Oltman, & Sheppard, 2004). The TOEFL is administered in more than 180 countries, making it the most accessible test in the world. In addition, more than 5,000 colleges, universities, and licensing agencies in 90 countries accept TOEFL scores (ETS, 2006a). The TOEFL was developed in the early 1960s to measure the English-language proficiency of international students (ETS, 2005b). The TOEFL board was formed in 1962 by representatives of more than 30 private organizations and government agencies concerned with the English proficiency of

nonnative speakers of English who wished to study at colleges and universities in the United States. The ETS is responsible for administering the TOEFL with guidance from the TOEFL board, which has 15 members from (a) undergraduate and graduate schools, (b) community colleges, (c) nonprofit educational exchange organizations, and (d) other public and private agencies that have an interest in international education (ETS, 2005b).

Originally, the five sections of the TOEFL were (a) Listening Comprehension, (b) English Structure, (c) Vocabulary, (d) Reading Comprehension, and (e) Writing Ability. As a result of extensive research, a three-section test was developed and introduced in 1976. The sections of the new test, which are separately timed, are (a) Listening Comprehension, (b) Structure and Written Expression, and (c) Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary. Each section contains multiple-choice questions, and there are four possible answers or options per question. The total test time is approximately 2.5 hours. All responses are gridded on answer sheets that are computer scored (ETS, 2005b).

Section 1 of the test, Listening Comprehension, measures the ability to understand English as it is spoken in North America. Oral features of the language are stressed, and the problems posed include vocabulary and idiomatic expressions as well as special grammatical constructions that are frequently used in spoken English. The material and oral questions are recorded in standard North American English (ETS, 2005b).

Section 2 of the test, Structure and Written Expression, measures the test taker's recognition of selected structural and grammatical points in standard written English. The language tested is formal, rather than conversational. Topics of the sentences are of a general academic nature so that individuals in specific fields of study or from specific national or linguistic groups have no particular advantage (ETS, 2005b).

Section 3 of the test, Reading Comprehension, measures the ability to read and

understand short passages that are similar in topic and style to those that students are likely to encounter in North American colleges and universities. Examinees are required to read a variety of short passages on academic subjects and answer several questions about each passage. The questions test information that is stated in or implied by the passage as well as knowledge of some of the specific words used in the passage (ETS, 2005b).

In July 1995, the format of the TOEFL was modified somewhat within the same three-section structure. In recent years, various constituencies have called for a new TOEFL that will (a) be more reflective of communicative competence models, (b) include more constructed-response tasks and direct measures of writing and speaking, (c) include tasks that integrate the language modalities tested, and (d) provide more information than the paper-based TOEFL about the ability of international students to use English in an academic environment (ETS, 2005b). This led to the creation of the computer-based TOEFL.

The computer-based TOEFL utilizes two types of testing: linear and computer adaptive. Two of the sections, Listening and Structure, are computer adaptive, and one section, Reading, is linear (ETS, 2001). In a linear test, examinees are presented with questions that cover the full range of difficulty. A computer-adaptive test is tailored to an individual examinee, and only one question is presented at a time. The computer-based TOEFL includes seven tutorials to give examinees computer training. The Listening Comprehension section contains 50 questions that must be answered within 60 minutes. The Structure section has 25 questions that must be answered within 20 minutes. The Reading section has 55 questions that must be answered within 90 minutes. The Writing section has one writing prompt and a writing assignment that must be completed within

30 minutes.

In September 2005, a new Internet-based version of the test, the TOEFL iBT, was introduced. The TOEFL iBT, which takes about 4 hours to complete, is delivered in secure testing centers around the world and has replaced both the computer-based and the paper-and-pencil versions of the TOEFL (ETS, 2006a). In addition to assessing all four language skills that are important for effective communication (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing), the TOEFL iBT emphasizes integrated skills and provides better information to institutions about students' ability to communicate in an academic setting and their readiness for academic coursework (ETS, 2005b). Some tasks on the TOEFL iBT require test takers to combine more than one skill. Note taking is allowed. Test scores, which are reported online (ETS, 2006a), identify test takers' English-language abilities.

According to the ETS (2006b), the TOEFL iBT is designed to (a) measure a prospective student's ability to communicate successfully in English in an academic setting, (b) reflect how people really use language, and (c) keep up with the best practices in language learning and teaching. The TOEFL iBT helps teachers and learners understand the importance of learning to use English to communicate by providing activities that focus on communication and require skills that are very popular in many English-language programs.

The Reading section of the TOEFL iBT, which measures the ability to understand academic reading matter, includes three to five passages, with 12 to 14 questions each, that must be completed in 60-100 minutes. The Listening section, which measures the ability to understand English as it is used in colleges and universities, has four to six lectures; each lecture contains 6 questions that must be completed in 60-90 minutes. The Speaking section,

which measures the ability to speak English, includes six tasks, two independent and four integrated, that must be completed in 20 minutes. The Writing section, which measures the ability to write in a way that is appropriate for college and university course work, includes one integrated task and one independent task that must be completed in 50 minutes (ETS, 2006b).

Content of test items on the TOEFL iBT is based on a database of spoken and written language that contains more than 2.7 million words, collected from educational institutions throughout the United States (ETS, 2006a). The spoken language in the database was collected from lectures and interactive classes, labs, office hours, study groups, and everyday service interactions, and the written language was collected from sources such as textbooks and course materials (ETS, 2006a).

Due to significant changes in the content of the test, new scoring scales were created: four section scores (i.e., reading, listening, writing, and speaking) and a total score. Each section is scored on a 0-30 scale; the total score is the sum of the scores of the four sections (ETS, 2006b). *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT* from the ETS (2006a) includes statistical information to support the TOEFL as an accurate tool for measuring English proficiency. The following statistical characteristics of the TOEFL iBT are documented in the guide: (a) percentile ranks, (b) mean scores, (c) standard deviations of scores, (d) test reliability (i.e., the consistency with which the same results occur), (e) reliability of gain scores, (f) correlations among scores, and (g) test validity (i.e., that the test measures what it is intended to measure).

Summary

The literature review covered the following topics: (a) history and background of teaching and learning English as a second language, (b) second-language acquisition and

the immersion method, (c) the subject areas of ESL instruction, (d) competency-based curricula, and (e) use of the TOEFL to measure English-language proficiency. Over time, attitudes and approaches toward second-language instruction have changed considerably in the United States as people have come to understand more about how a second language is learned and have realized that learning English as a second language demands a specifically designed program (Harville, 1990). The number of U.S. students who come from non-English backgrounds offers a compelling reason for educators to analyze the assessments with which ELLs are identified and subsequently classified. Leaders of many institutions of higher education have realized that in order to serve the growing population of international students, an ESL program is needed.

Nakanishi (2005) suggested that a second language is most successfully acquired when the conditions are similar to those present in first-language acquisition. For that reason, there is a profound advantage to studying a second language by total immersion in the culture of the target language. Immersion represents the most intensive form of content-based foreign-language instruction. In an immersion program, English is not only the subject of instruction but also the medium through which a majority of the academic content is taught. The immersion method takes an interactive, experiential approach to teaching the major areas of ESL instruction: (a) speaking, (b) listening, (c) reading, (d) writing, and (e) grammar.

Chyung et al. (2006) reported that interest in competency-based instruction has been growing for several decades. A competency-based curriculum is ideal in an ESL immersion program because it (a) provides learners with clearly defined objectives, (b) views language learning as a means for learners to achieve their own individual goals, and (c) allows for flexibility in instructional strategies. Competency-based instruction is

designed to help an individual reach a specific level of competency, and the individual may continue to acquire proficiency and expertise through additional learning and work experiences.

For admission purposes, most universities and colleges throughout the United States use the TOEFL to measure the English proficiency of people whose native language is other than English. The TOEFL may also be used to determine whether students should be placed in an ESL program or mainstreamed into regular college programs. The TOEFL is designed to (a) measure a student's ability to communicate successfully in an academic setting, (b) reflect how language is really used, and (c) keep up with the best practices in language learning and teaching. In this study, the immersion method and a competency-based curriculum were applied to the various subject areas of ESL instruction. The TOEFL was used as a pre- and posttest to measure the skills of students before and after their participation in the intensive ESL course.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this research study was to implement an ESL program to help LEP students improve their English skills and TOEFL scores so that they became eligible to enroll in programs at the researcher's university. The effects of an intensive 6-week ESL program on adult Hispanic immigrants who had intermediate to intermediate-advanced levels of English were examined. In this chapter, the methodology for conducting the study; the participants, including their demographics and the participant selection method; the data-gathering instruments; and the procedures used are described.

Participants

Sample size and demographics. Initially, 10 Hispanic students with an intermediate to intermediate-advanced level of English were enrolled in the intensive ESL program. During the 1st week of the program, 3 students withdrew from the class for personal reasons, leaving 7 students, 3 males and 4 females, as the subjects for this study. Of these students, 3 were from Colombia, 2 were from Cuba, 1 was from Ecuador, and 1 was from Venezuela; all had resided in the United States for less than 5 years. The primary language of the subjects was Spanish. The age range of these students was 26 to 55 years. Of the participants, 2 held associate degrees and were seeking bachelor's degrees; the other 5 participants held bachelor's degrees and were trying to obtain master's degrees.

The students enrolled in the intensive ESL course were not only preparing to take the TOEFL iBT but also striving to increase their English proficiency to help them gain admission to higher education classes. Of the 7 students, 1 had taken the official TOEFL iBT in November 2006; she had obtained a score of 36. The rest of the students had never taken the test. They planned to take the official TOEFL iBT after they completed the

intensive ESL course because they were hoping to attend the university in the near future.

Participant selection method. Subjects were recruited via handouts, mail, and posted flyers that provided a brief description of the project and qualifications for participation in the study. To qualify, the participants had to be at least 18 years of age; be legal U.S. residents; be of Hispanic origin; have lived in the U.S. for 5 years or less; and have an intermediate to intermediate-advanced level of English-language proficiency.

The participants were selected and screened through a TOEFL pretest. Eligibility was based on the above qualifications and a borderline passing score on the pretest. Of the 12 subjects who applied to the program, only 10 met the above requirements and passed the TOEFL pretest. Subjects who did not meet the qualifications or obtain a borderline passing score on the pretest were excluded from participation. The passing score for the pretest TOEFL was 54 points. This score was based on the percentile ranks of the Internet-based TOEFL.

Instruments

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to assess the effectiveness of the intensive ESL program. The quantitative instruments used in this research included pre- and posttests of the TOEFL iBT, which was fully described in the previous chapter. A pretest was administered before the intensive ESL program began. A posttest of the same standardized instrument was given at the end of the program. The pre- and posttests were computer scored at the researcher's workplace.

The qualitative part of the research consisted of a survey that was created by the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the ESL course (see Appendix A). The subjects were able to complete this survey in 15 minutes on the last day of classes. The survey consisted of nine questions. In Questions 1-8, the subjects were asked to indicate their

level of agreement (i.e., *strongly agree*, *agree*, or *disagree*) with statements about different aspects of the ESL course, such as (a) physical comfort of the classroom, (b) time allotted for the course, (c) coverage of course objectives, and (d) opportunities to take sample tests. The last question on the survey asked the subjects to provide comments and suggest ways to improve the course.

The versions of the standardized TOEFL iBT used as pre- and posttests in this study were taken from Sharpe's (2007) book entitled *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*, which includes a pretest and several posttests that can be used to monitor the progress of students. This publication, which is used by several universities and colleges in their TOEFL preparation courses, includes audio prompts on CDs for listening, speaking, and writing and provides explanations and examples for all questions, including sample essays and speaking responses (Sharpe). In addition to this book, other books, such as *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT* (ETS, 2006a) were utilized.

The TOEFL iBT is a good standardized test because it has validity and reliability. Validity is the most important consideration in test evaluation because it indicates how well a test measures what it is intended to measure. The validity of the TOEFL relates to how well it measures a person's proficiency in English as a second or foreign language. To support inferences, validation should include three types of evidence: (a) content related, (b) criterion related, and (c) construct related (ETS, 1997). Content-related evidence is established by examining the content of the test, and criterion-related and construct-related evidence usually involve judgments based on statistical relationships.

According to the ETS (1997), content-related evidence for the TOEFL is a major concern of the TOEFL Committee of Examiners, which has developed a comprehensive list of specifications for items that appear in different sections of the test. The

specifications identify the aspects of English communication, ability, and proficiency that are to be tested and describe appropriate techniques for testing them. The specifications are continually reviewed and revised, as appropriate, to ensure that the test reflects both current English usage and current theory as to the nature of second-language proficiency.

The ETS (1997) reported that some of the most basic TOEFL research has attempted to match performance on the test with other indicators of English language proficiency, thus providing criterion-related evidence of the TOEFL's validity. The ETS (1997) described a study conducted by Maxwell at the University of California in 1965 who found a .87 correlation between total scores on the TOEFL and the English proficiency test that was used for placement of foreign students at the university. This correlation was based on a total sample of 238 students (i.e., 202 males and 36 females) 191 of whom were graduates and 47 of whom were undergraduates who were enrolled at the university during the fall of 1964.

Evidence for the construct validity of the TOEFL is useful for test development because it provides guidelines on which to base evaluations of questions at the review stage. For example, in 1970, two studies were conducted that compared the performance of native and nonnative speakers of English on the TOEFL. In these studies, which were described by the ETS (1997), the mean TOEFL scores of native speakers in the United States were much higher than the scores of foreign students who had taken the same test. These comparisons of native and nonnative speakers of English provided evidence of the construct validity of the TOEFL as a measure of English-language proficiency.

Reliability is another important measure for standardized tests. The ETS (2001) wrote, "The reliability coefficient and standard error of measurement (SEM) are the two most commonly used statistical methods" (p. 27). The reliability coefficients and SEMs

of the sections of the TOEFL iBT were as follows: (a) Listening, 0.89 reliability and 2.76 SEM; (b) Structure and Writing, 0.88 reliability and 4.89 SEM; and (c) Reading, 0.88 reliability and 2.73 SEM.

The sections of the TOEFL are designed to measure different skills within the general domain of English proficiency. According to the ETS (1997), it is recognized that these skills are interrelated (i.e., persons who are highly proficient in one area tend to be proficient in the other areas as well). A correlation of 1.0 would indicate a perfect correlation between the two scores, and 0.0 would indicate a total lack of relationship. The average correlations of the test, which range from 0.68 to 0.79, indicate that there is a fairly strong relationship among the skills tested by the three sections of the test.

Procedures

The researcher believed that the most appropriate type of research design for this study was the descriptive method. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), descriptive research is “a type of quantitative research that involves making careful descriptions of educational phenomena” (p. 290). The decision to design an intensive ESL program for implementation at the researcher’s university was based on three observations. First, the student educational centers of the university did not offer an intensive ESL program to meet the needs of non-English speakers. Second, as previously mentioned, over 1.5 million persons in Miami-Dade County have a native language that is other than English. Third, students who were selected for this study had taken the TOEFL previously or were planning to take the TOEFL in the near future.

Following the screening and selection process, which included administration of the TOEFL pretest, the subjects began an intensive ESL program that was conducted Monday through Friday from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. for 6 weeks, from May 28, 2007,

through July 6, 2007, for a total of 120 hours of instructional time. Because the students who participated in this program had intermediate to intermediate-advanced English proficiency, 20 hours of instruction per week was considered to be an appropriate amount of time to help them master the upper level skills addressed in the course. At the end of the course, the instructor administered the TOEFL posttest and the survey.

In order to accelerate second-language acquisition, students were enrolled in a total immersion program, as advocated by Fortin (1983), Harville (1990), and Krashen (as cited in Harville) with a competency-based curriculum. Krashen (as cited in Harville) remarked that second-language acquisition occurs at an accelerated rate when students study the target language in the country where it is spoken in a formal instructional setting for 4 to 5 hours per day. Describing the effectiveness of competency-based instruction in an adult ESL program, Harville wrote,

By using a competency-based curriculum, the learning tasks are clearly stated for the students, English is integrated into the practical daily experiences of the students, and the instructional strategies may vary from course to course to facilitate learning for the students. (p. 40)

D. Levin (personal communication, November 22, 2006), the President of Talk International School of Languages in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, informed the researcher that intensive second-language-acquisition classes should offer 20-25 hours of instruction to have successful results. Levin also pointed out that a total immersion program provides students with the opportunity to interact better with native speakers.

The intensive, competency-based ESL program was designed and taught by the researcher, who has an ESL teaching certificate from Mexico City and experience teaching ESL classes. Based on this experience and previous college work, the researcher was qualified to teach the intensive ESL course. The design and implementation of this

program answered the research questions that were mentioned in chapter 1. The main objective of the course was to help ELLs increase their English-language proficiency and skills over a relatively short period of time so they could enter the higher education system.

The ESL program that the researcher designed and implemented consisted of intensive English lessons that increased the students' knowledge of the English language and prepared them to pass the TOEFL. The ESL program included instruction in four main subject areas: (a) reading, (b) writing, (c) listening, and (d) speaking. The syllabus for each subject area is presented in Appendix B. The general course competencies and objectives for each of the subject areas are presented in Appendix C. Classroom instruction was supplemented with PowerPoint presentations, and computer laboratory experience was provided so the students could practice the computer skills needed to pass the TOEFL iBT.

Chapter 4: Results

The results and analysis of the TOEFL pre- and posttest scores earned by the 7 Hispanic students enrolled in an intensive 6-week ESL program designed for this study are presented in this chapter. Additionally, the results of a survey that was created by the researcher are presented. The pre- and posttests that were given came from different versions of the TOEFL iBT, but both exams were functionally identical. Four research questions were utilized to guide the study.

Improvement of Students' TOEFL Scores and English Skills

Research Question 1 was, Will a 6-week intensive ESL program help intermediately proficient English students improve their TOEFL scores and their English skills? The instruments used to answer this question were the TOEFL pre- and posttests. Individual scores for each section of the tests, total TOEFL scores, and gains made by students in the intensive ESL program are illustrated in Tables 1 and 2. The following procedures, along with charts provided by Sharpe (2007), were used to determine scores for the pre- and posttests:

1. The researcher counted the total number of correct answers for the Reading section and used the reference chart to find the scaled score.
2. The researcher counted the total number of correct answers for the Listening section and used the reference chart to find the scaled score.
3. The researcher rated each question in the Speaking section on a holistic scale from 0-4, added the scores, divided by 6 to calculate the average, and used the reference chart to find the scaled score.
4. The researcher rated each essay in the Writing section on a holistic scale from 0-5, added the scores, divided by 2 to calculate the average, and used the reference chart to

find the scaled score.

5. The researcher added the scaled scores for all four sections.

Table 1

Students' Pre- and Posttest Scores for Individual TOEFL Sections

Student	Reading comprehension		Listening comprehension		Writing		Speaking	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
1	16	19	18	21	11	17	17	20
2	18	22	19	24	17	5	15	27
3	19	23	21	21	17	25	15	27
4	14	17	17	19	13	17	15	20
5	17	20	21	23	17	22	15	20
6	17	19	20	25	11	20	15	20
7	21	21	18	20	14	20	15	19

Note. TOEFL = Test of English as a Foreign Language.

The minimum scaled score for each section is 0, and the maximum scaled score for each section does not exceed 30. Thus, the total TOEFL score is between 0 and 120.

According to Table 1, for the Reading Comprehension section of the TOEFL, pretest scores ranged from 10 to 21, and posttest scores ranged from 17 to 23. For the Listening Comprehension section of the TOEFL, pretest scores ranged from 10 to 21, and posttest scores ranged from 19 to 25. For the Writing section of the TOEFL, pretest scores ranged

from 11 to 17, and posttest scores ranged from 17 to 25. For the Speaking section of the TOEFL, pretest scores ranged from 15 to 17, and posttest scores ranged from 19 to 27.

Table 2

Students' Pre- and Posttest Total TOEFL Scores and Gains

Student	Total score		Gain
	Pretest	Posttest	
1	62	77	15
2	69	98	29
3	72	96	24
4	60	73	13
5	70	85	15
7	68	82	14

Note. TOEFL = Test of English as a Foreign Language.

According to Table 2, pretest total scores ranged from 48 to 72, and posttest total scores ranged from 73 to 98. Gains ranged from 15 to 29. The gains were computed by subtracting the pretest score from the posttest score. In general, the highest gains were achieved by students who earned the highest pretest total scores. For example, Student 3 earned a pretest score of 72, the highest pretest score in this group, and exhibited a gain of 24, the third highest gain. Student 2 earned a pretest score of 69, the third highest pretest score, and exhibited a gain of 29, the highest gain score. There was one exception. Student 4, who earned the lowest pretest TOEFL score, a score of 48, showed the second

highest gain of 25.

As indicated by Tables 1 and 2, there was an increase in the TOEFL scores achieved by students in the 6-week intensive ESL program. Although there was improvement in all sections of the TOEFL, students' scores indicated the greatest improvement in the Writing and Speaking sections of the test. Students increased an average of 4 to 9 points in the Writing section and 3 to 12 points in the Speaking section.

Difference in Pre- and Posttest Scores on the TOEFL

Research Question 2 was, Is there a significant difference in the total pre- and posttest scores on the TOEFL of students who are enrolled in the intensive ESL program? Hypothesis testing was used as the principal tool for statistical analysis to answer this question. In this study, the null hypothesis was as follows: There is no significant difference in the total TOEFL pre- and posttest scores of students enrolled in the intensive ESL program. The alternative hypothesis was as follows: There is a significant difference in the total TOEFL pre- and posttest scores of students enrolled in the intensive ESL program.

A test of statistical significance was done to determine whether the null hypothesis could be rejected (Gall et al., 2003). The *t* test for the mean was used to determine the level of statistical significance because the sample was small. The level of significance (i.e., the probability of rejecting the hypothesis when it is true) was set at the recommended value of $\alpha = 0.05$ for educational research (Gall et al.). Based on results of the *t* test for the mean, the null hypothesis was rejected; there was a significant difference in total TOEFL pre- and posttest scores of students who were enrolled in the intensive ESL program.

Results of other calculations, such as the mean, standard deviation, coefficient of

correlation, and correlation test results of TOEFL scores for the intensive ESL group, are shown in Table 3. The coefficient of correlation measures the strength of a relationship, or the association, between two variables in a sample (Levine, Stephan, Krehbiel, & Berenson, 2002). In this study, the positive coefficients of correlation for the Reading Comprehension and Writing sections of the test and for total scores were significant. The coefficient of correlation for the Listening Comprehension section showed no significant positive correlation. The coefficient of correlation for the Speaking section showed no significant negative correlation.

Table 3

Total and Section Scores on the TOEFL

Variable	Reading comprehension	Listening comprehension	Writing	Speaking	Total score
Pretest <i>M</i>	17.43	19.14	14.29	15.29	64.57
Pretest <i>SD</i>	2.23	1.57	2.75	0.76	8.16
Posttest <i>M</i>	20.43	21.86	20.86	21.86	85.29
Posttest <i>SD</i>	2.30	2.19	3.39	3.53	8.93
Correlation coefficient	0.94	0.59	0.84	-0.23	-0.79

Note. TOEFL = Test of English as a Foreign Language.

Meeting English Proficiency Requirements for College Admission

Research Question 3 was, Upon completion of the intensive ESL program, will students meet the minimum English-proficiency requirements for college admission? The

level of English proficiency that most colleges and universities require for admission to regular college courses is a score of 550 or higher on the paper-based TOEFL, a score of 213 or higher on the computer-based TOEFL, or a score of 79-80 on the TOEFL iBT. As observed in Table 2, none of the students met the English-proficiency requirement when they took the pretest. After attending the intensive ESL program, 6 students (i.e., 86%) received a passing score on the TOEFL posttest, and 1 student (i.e., 14%) did not reach the passing score. The posttest score for this student was only 73. Although all of the students improved their English skills and were successful in the intensive ESL program, only 86% of the students who participated in the intensive ESL program met the English proficiency requirement for college admission.

Students' Perceptions of the Intensive ESL Program

Research Question 4 was, What are the students' perceptions of the intensive ESL program? At the end of the last class, the researcher administered a survey to the students to answer this question. Students responded to eight statements with one of three possible answers: *totally agree*, *somewhat agree*, or *disagree*. In addition, students were asked to provide their comments and suggestions for improving the course.

To Questions 1-3 on the survey about whether the course was a good experience, helped them to learn more English, and helped them to improve their English-language skills, all of the students (i.e., 100%) answered *totally agree*. To Question 4, which asked the students if the length of time for the classes was sufficient, 71% of the students responded *totally agree*, and 29% answered *somewhat agree*. These percentages suggest that the course should have lasted longer. The researcher believes that the course would be more effective if it were offered three times per week for at least 3 months. To Questions 5-7 about whether the classroom was physically comfortable, if the availability

of the sample tests helped them improve their TOEFL scores, if the time allowed to complete the test sections was sufficient, and if the objectives of the course were covered adequately, all of the students (i.e., 100%) responded *totally agree*. In response to Question 9, students provided the comments and suggestions for improving the course that are shown in Appendix D.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of the Applied Dissertation

Learning a foreign language is of vital importance for people to succeed in their personal and professional lives. The number of non-English speakers in Miami-Dade County has increased significantly. Many of them want to pursue or complete degrees in higher education. ESL programs represent an increasingly important aspect of institutional missions and are the subject of considerable interest and debate. In education, ESL programs are designed to help ELLs develop the English-language skills they need to further their education. The problem addressed in this study was that ELLs were unable to pursue degrees at the researcher's university due to their lack of proficiency in English, which was reflected in borderline scores on the TOEFL. The purpose of this study was to design and implement an intensive ESL program to help LEP students improve their English skills and TOEFL scores to facilitate their enrollment in undergraduate, graduate, specialist and doctoral programs at the researcher's university. Intensive ESL classes were offered to Hispanic students with intermediate to intermediate-advanced levels of English proficiency. For the purposes of this study, four research questions were tested.

Overall, the 6-week intensive ESL program helped ELLs who took the course to improve their TOEFL scores and their English skills. A significant difference was found in the students' total TOEFL scores from the pretest to the posttest. Upon completion of the intensive ESL program, 86% of the students obtained the minimum level of English proficiency required for college admission, and the students who participated in the intensive ESL program said that the course helped them to improve their English language skills considerably.

Implications of Findings

The immersion method takes an interactive, experiential approach to teaching speaking, listening, reading, writing, and grammar. In this method, the emphasis is on activities that promote involvement and interaction on the part of the learner. Students practice the skills that are to be learned rather than just talking or hearing about them (Baker, 1998; Harville, 1990).

ESL programs aim to help ELLs learn the new language and provide them with the skills to persist in academic coursework and function in society (Kuo, 2000). Traditionally, the subject areas that are incorporated into ESL study are (a) reading, (b) writing, (c) listening, (d) speaking, and (e) grammar. Sometimes, grammar is integrated into the writing component (Harville, 1990). This instruction is supplemented with language laboratories, reading and writing workshops, and other activities that are clearly designed to orient the students to U.S. academic, professional, technical, social, or cultural life (Judd-Price, 2006).

A competency-based curriculum is appropriate for an immersion program. Competency-based ESL is a means for learners to achieve their own individual goals (Auerbach, 1986). A competency-based ESL program may offer students learning strategies from a wide array of differing approaches, such as (a) instructional modules, (b) group presentations and discussions, (c) self-directed learning, (d) student-initiated performance activities, (e) teacher-with-student or student-with-student teaching, and (f) other strategies that help students to gain competence. A competency-based ESL program takes into account the learner's prior academic skills (Harville, 1990); students are tested before entering the program and placed in the program according to their present level of proficiency.

Based on the literature review, this present study was competency based and taught with a total immersion instructional approach. The curriculum was divided into four major content areas of instruction: (a) reading comprehension, (b) listening comprehension, (c) writing, and (d) speaking. The standardized test used in this study was the TOEFL iBT. This test was used as a pretest and a posttest to measure the students' improvement during the course.

Initially, 10 Hispanic students with an intermediate to intermediate-advanced level of English proficiency were enrolled in the intensive ESL program, but during the 1st week of the program, 3 students withdrew from the class for personal reasons, leaving 7 students to participate in the intensive ESL course. These students attended classes 4 hours per day, 5 days per week, over a 6-week period, for 120 hours of instructional time. Although the size of the sample was reduced, the impact of this change was not very meaningful because the number of students who remained in the study was still significant for the purposes of the study. The researcher believes that the students who participated in the intensive ESL course were able to learn more because of the smaller class size.

Results of the study indicate that the intensive 6-week ESL program helped students to improve their English skills as well as their TOEFL scores. The greatest gain in scores was achieved by students who earned the highest total score on the TOEFL pretest. Although the students' scores improved in all sections of the TOEFL, the greatest increases were made in the Writing and Speaking sections of the test.

A *t* test for the mean that was conducted to determine the level of statistical significance indicated there was a significant difference between students' total scores on the pre- and posttests, which substantiated the effectiveness of the intensive ESL

program. Additionally, the statistical results indicated a significant positive correlation between students' scores on the Reading and Writing sections of the TOEFL; students showed positive improvement in both of these areas. According to Salam (2002), reading English as a foreign language is very important because it (a) is critical to success in some academic majors, such as medicine and engineering; (b) is a useful source for information that might be missed in class lectures; (c) can improve native language reading; (d) can accelerate foreign-language learning and improve other language skills; and (e) is a major means of learning both spelling and vocabulary.

At the beginning of the course, the students could barely write an essay. At the end of the program, students were able to write a 200-300 word essay with few grammatical and spelling errors. Writing has many uses and functions in the area of ESL instruction. Writing skills are often needed for formal and informal testing, and the ability to write acceptable scientific English is essential for postgraduate students who must write their dissertations in English. The ability to write in English allows communication with large numbers of people from all over the world. Writing can enhance students' vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and thinking skills and provide them with physical evidence of their achievement.

Students' scores did not improve significantly in the Listening Comprehension section of the TOEFL. Listening is an essential prerequisite for oral communication and often influences the development of reading and writing and builds vocabulary. Listening plays a basic role in academic success because lecture remains the most widely used method of instruction at all educational levels. During the course, the researcher recommended that in addition to completing the listening exercises that were assigned in class, students should listen to radio and television shows and other conversations to

improve their listening skills.

Speaking plays an imperative role in ESL learning. Salam (2002) defined speaking as “an oral process of meaning construction and expression” (p. 67). ELLs frequently find themselves in situations where they have to speak in English. Salam noted that speaking is regarded by some linguists as the foundation for other language skills. In this study, students’ scores in the Speaking section of the TOEFL showed a significant negative correlation from pre- to posttest. Speaking is one of the most difficult subjects for ESL learners, and apparently, a 6-week program did not provide enough time for ELLs to learn to speak English fluently.

After completing the intensive ESL program, 86% of the students met the university’s English requirement for college admission, which was a final score of 79 or above on the TOEFL iBT. On the last day of class, the researcher administered a survey (see Appendix A) to determine the students’ perceptions of the intensive ESL program. In general, the students believed the course was a good experience that helped them to improve their English-language skills and increase their TOEFL scores. Students indicated that the objectives of the course were properly covered.

The instructional approach in the intensive ESL program was structural, functional, and interactive. The course material included realistic situations and placed emphasis on interactions between class members that were designed to help develop critical-thinking and synthesizing skills. The computer laboratory gave students opportunities to practice the various skills they needed to improve their scores on the TOEFL. Also, students were encouraged to practice their listening skills by watching TV and listening to National Public Radio.

Limitations

In this study, various parameters limited the investigation. These parameters included threats to the validity of the study. Noe (2005) said that threats to validity are “factors that will lead an evaluator to question either (1) the believability of the study results (internal validity) or (2) the extent to which the evaluation results are generalizable to other groups of trainees and situations of external validity” (p. 182).

The internal validity of this study was affected by what Noe (2005) called the mortality threat, which refers to subjects dropping out of the study. Of the 10 students chosen for this study, 3 dropped out before the class began, reducing the size of the sample population to 7. The possibility existed that some of the remaining students might also drop from the program during the study. In addition, there was the threat of students’ irregular attendance. If students dropped out or did not attend the program frequently, the results would become questionable.

One limitation to the generalizability or external validity of the study was the population sample. All of the participants in the study were Hispanic adults; they did not represent the universe of non-English language speakers in Miami-Dade County. Another limitation was the fact that the students had been exposed to the TOEFL before they took the TOEFL pretest for the ESL course. Their earlier experiences with the test may have affected their scores on the pre- and posttests given during the study. Another possible limitation was the fact that the researcher had never conducted such study previously.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The intensive ESL program should serve as a model for other educational centers at the researcher’s institution to increase enrollment by admitting immigrants and

international students who earn borderline scores on the TOEFL.

2. Students with an intermediate to intermediate-advanced level of English should have the opportunity to register in an intensive ESL program to enable them to enroll in regular college classes in a relatively short period of time.

3. In a future replication of this study, added emphasis should be placed on communicative skills, which include listening and speaking. Such an emphasis could result in better student scores on the Listening Comprehension and Speaking sections of the TOEFL. Therefore, the design and implementation of an ESL program that merges a competency-based curriculum with a communicative-based curriculum is recommended.

4. The participants in this study were Hispanic. In a future replication of this study, other races, cultures, and nationalities should be represented.

5. The average class size in an intensive ESL course should be between 7 and 10 students to give the students sufficient opportunities to learn and interact in a small-class setting.

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Appendix A
Student Survey

Dear Student:

I want to thank you for your time in participating in this study. Please help us serve you better by taking a couple of minutes to tell us about the progress you have made in this class so far. Please circle the correct answer.

1. This course was a good experience.

Disagree Somewhat agree Totally agree

2. This course helped me learn more English.

Disagree Somewhat agree Totally agree

3. This course helped me improve performance on my English language skills.

Disagree Somewhat agree Totally agree

4. The length of time for the classes was sufficient.

Disagree Somewhat agree Totally agree

5. The physical comfort of the classroom was good to complete the course.

Disagree Somewhat agree Totally agree

6. The availability of the sample tests helped me improve my TOEFL scores.

Disagree Somewhat agree Totally agree

7. The time allowed to complete the test sections was sufficient.

Disagree Somewhat agree Totally agree

8. The objectives of the course were properly covered.

Disagree Somewhat agree Totally agree

9. Please provide in the space below your comments and suggestions for improving the course.

Appendix B
Course Syllabus

Reading Syllabus

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the various types of TOEFL iBT Reading questions
2. How to recognize each Reading question type
3. Tips for answering each Reading question type
4. Understand reading passages like those in college textbooks
5. Develop critical-thinking skills
6. Be able to discern meaning from context
7. Understand the general organization of the passage. Common types of organization you should be able to recognize are:
 - Classification
 - Comparison and contrast
 - Cause and effect
 - Problem and solution
8. Practice of vocabulary

II. REQUIRED MATERIALS

Required Textbook:

Sharpe, P. J. (2007). *TOEFL Internet-Based Test* (12th ed.). Hauppauge, NY: Barron's.

Additional Textbooks:

Educational Testing Service. (2006). *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

ESL Pro Systems. (2004). *How to Study for and Master the TOEFL iBT Test*. Author.

ESL Pro Systems. (2005). *Reading Workbook for the TOEFL iBT Test*. Author.

III. CALENDAR OF WEEKLY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WEEK 1: 5/29/07-6/1/07

A. Topics

I. Types of reading passages: (1) exposition, (2) argumentation, and (3) historical

II. Understand the general organization of the passage:

- Classification
- Comparison and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Problem solution

III. TOEFL Reading questions:

a. Main Idea Questions. Read passage and identify the main question. *Reading Workbook for the TOEFL iBT Test*, pages 3-5

b. Detail Questions. Identify clue words such as: Who, what, when, where, why, and how. Read passage and identify the detail question. *Reading Workbook for the TOEFL iBT test*, pages 3, 4, and 6

c. Factual Information Questions. Identify factual information that is explicitly stated in the passage. Tips to recognize this type of questions. Read passage excerpt and identify the factual information question. *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 20-21

d. Negative Factual Information Questions. Verify what information is true and what information is NOT true or not included in the passage based on information that is explicitly stated in the passage. How to recognize negative factual information questions. Tips for negative factual information questions. Read passage excerpt and identify the negative factual information question. *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 21-22.

B. Homework

1. Read pages 201-209 from the required textbook: Sharpe, P. J. (2007). *TOEFL Internet-Based Test* (12th ed.). Hauppauge, NY: Barron's.
2. Review the first 40 words of the glossary of campus vocabulary found in required textbook, pages 783-788

WEEK 2: 6/4/07-6/8/07

A. Topics

I. Continue with TOEFL Reading questions:

f. Inference Questions. Measure your ability to comprehend an argument or an idea that is strongly implied but not explicitly stated in the text. Learn how to recognize inference questions. Tips for inference questions. Read passage excerpt and identify the inference questions. *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 23-24

g. Rhetorical Purpose Questions. Learn how to recognize this type of questions. Provide tips for rhetorical questions. Read passage excerpt and identify the rhetorical purpose questions. *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 24-25

h. Vocabulary Questions. Identify the meanings of individual words and phrases as they are used in the reading passage. Tips for vocabulary questions. *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 25-26

i. Reference Questions. Identify referential relationships between the words in the passage. How to recognize and tips for reference questions. *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 26-28

j. Sentence Simplification Questions. In this type of question, you are asked to

choose a sentence that has the same essential meaning as a sentence that occurs in the passage. Learn how to recognize these questions. *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 28-29

k. Insert Text Questions. In this type of question, you are given a new sentence and are asked where in the passage it would best fit. *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 29-31

l. Reading to Learn Questions. Distinguish between the two types of questions: “Prose summary” and “Fill in a table.” *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 31-38

B. Activities

1. Reading Comprehension Exercises
2. Vocabulary - Guess the word
3. Matching phrasal verbs
4. Scrambled words
5. Scrambled conversations

ESL Pro Systems. (2005). *Reading Workbook for the TOEFL iBT Test*, pages 38-43

C. Homework

1. Read pages 210-218 from the required textbook: Sharpe, P. J. (2007). *TOEFL Internet-Based Test* (12th ed.). Hauppauge, NY: Barron's.
2. Review the second set of 40 words from the glossary of campus vocabulary found in required textbook, pages 789-794

WEEK 3: 6/11/07-6/15/07

A. Topics

I. Review homework from previous week

II. Improving your performance on TOEFL iBT questions

- a. Reading to find information
- b. Reading for basic comprehension
 - Skimming
 - Scanning
- c. Reading to learn
- d. Additional textual clues

B. Activities

Reading Practice Set 1 from *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 40-47

C. Homework

1. Do the following exercises from ESL Pro Systems' (2005). *Reading Workbook for the TOEFL iBT Test*.

- a. Pick the best greeting card
- b. Read an advertisement for an English tutor
- c. Look for apartments

2. Review the third set of 40 words from the glossary of campus vocabulary found in required textbook, pages 794-799

WEEK 4: 6/18/07-6/22/07

A. Activities

1. Review homework from previous week
2. Review tips and strategies for reading comprehension
3. Practice TOEFL readings from *Reading Workbook for the TOEFL iBT Test*.
 - a. Reading 1
 - b. Reading 2
4. Reading Practice Set 3 from *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 58-68

B. Homework

1. Which word does not belong? Exercises 1-5 from *Reading Workbook for the TOEFL iBT Test*.
2. Review the fourth set of 40 words from the glossary of campus vocabulary found in required textbook, pages 799-805

WEEK 5: 6/25/07-6/29/07

A. Activities

1. Review homework from previous week
2. Practice TOEFL readings from *Reading Workbook for the TOEFL iBT Test*
 - a. Reading 3
 - b. Reading 4

B. Homework

1. Reading Practice Set 4 from *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, pages 69-79
2. Review the fifth set of 40 words from the glossary of campus vocabulary found in required textbook, pages 805-810

WEEK 6: 7/2/07-7/6/07

A. Activities

1. Practice TOEFL tests
2. Posttest

Listening Comprehension Syllabus

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the various types of TOEFL iBT Listening questions.
2. Tips for answering each Listening question type
3. Review and improve the following academic skills:
 - a. Note taking
 - b. Paraphrasing
 - c. Summarizing
 - d. Synthesizing
4. Increase your vocabulary knowledge
5. Listen to radio and TV programs
6. Improve and sharpen listening skills

II. REQUIRED MATERIALS

Required Textbook:

Sharpe, P. J. (2007). *TOEFL Internet-Based Test* (12th ed.). Hauppauge, NY: Barron's.

Additional Textbooks:

Educational Testing Service. (2006). *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

ESL Pro Systems. (2004). *How to Study for and Master the TOEFL iBT Test*.

ESL Pro Systems. (2005). *Listening Workbook for the TOEFL iBT Test*.

III. CALENDAR OF WEEKLY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WEEK 1: 5/29/07-6/1/07

A. Topics

1. Note-taking skills
 - a. Organize your notes
 - b. Identify important information
 - c. Take notes quickly
2. Paraphrasing
 - a. Substitute multiple synonyms
 - b. Use phrases
 - c. Make an explanation
 - d. Review of phrasal verbs and one-word verbs
 - e. Use alternative grammatical structures

B. Activities

1. Dictation exercises
2. Note-taking exercises on pages 68-86 of the *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*

3. Paraphrasing exercises on pages 87-104 of the *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*
4. Watch a TV series

C. Homework

1. Note-taking and paraphrasing exercises on pages 68-104 of the *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*
2. Review the phrasal verbs and one-word verbs

WEEK 2: 6/4/07-6/8/07

A. Topics

1. Summarizing skills
 - a. Condense the ideas
 - b. Identify the main points
 - c. Report the information
 - d. Clauses of addition
 - e. Clauses of reversal
 - f. Clauses of result
 - g. Clauses of contrast
 - h. Descriptive clauses
 - i. Chronology clauses
 - j. Conclusion clauses
 - k. Parallel structures
2. Introductory verbal modifiers (-ing and -ed)
3. Identify the main point
4. Report the content accurately
5. Retain the original emphasis
6. Maintain an objective point of view

B. Activities

1. Dictation exercises to practice summarizing and spelling
2. Exercises on pages 115-127 of the *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*
3. Listen to National Public Radio (NPR)
4. Fill in the blanks to songs

C. Homework

1. Exercises on pages 128-135 of the *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*

WEEK 3: 6/11/07-6/15/07

A. Topics

1. Review homework from previous week

2. Synthesizing skills
 - a. Identify themes and connections
 - b. Select information from both sources
 - c. Follow a plan
3. Review of TOEFL iBT Listening materials
 - a. Conversations: Office hours and service encounters
 - b. Lectures

B. Activities

1. Exercises on pages 148-151 of the *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*
2. Watch a documentary

C. Homework

Read pages 219-233 of the *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*

WEEK 4: 6/18/07-6/22/07

A. Topics

1. Review of the various types of TOEFL iBT Listening questions
 - a. Multiple-choice questions with more than one answer
 - b. Questions that require you to put in order events or steps in a process
 - c. Questions that require you to match objects or text to categories in a table
 - d. Basic comprehension questions
 - e. Pragmatic understanding questions
 - f. Connecting information questions

B. Activities

1. Review homework from previous week
2. Listen to NPR
3. Fill in the blanks to songs
4. Do a TOEFL iBT Listening comprehension exercise

C. Homework

1. Listen to NPR
2. Watch a TV documentary and write an essay about it

WEEK 5: 6/25/07-6/29/07

A. Activities

1. Review homework from previous week
2. Review note-taking skills

3. Review the TOEFL iBT Listening questions
4. Do a TOEFL iBT Listening comprehension exercise

B. Homework

1. Listen to NPR
2. Watch a TV documentary and write an essay about it

WEEK 6: 7/2/07-7/6/07

A. Activities

1. Practice TOEFL tests
2. Posttest

Writing Syllabus

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the integrated and independent writing tasks.
2. Strategies for raising your TOEFL Writing score
3. Learn note-taking methods
4. Develop critical-thinking skills
5. Review key grammar rules
6. Use of appropriate mechanics and style in writing
7. Practice of writing essays

II. REQUIRED MATERIALS

Required Textbook:

Sharpe, P. J. (2007). *TOEFL Internet-Based Test* (12th ed.). Hauppauge, NY: Barron's.

Additional Textbooks:

Educational Testing Service. (2006). *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

ESL Pro Systems. (2004). *How to Study for and Master the TOEFL iBT Test*.

ESL Pro Systems. (2005). *Reading Workbook for the TOEFL iBT Test*.

III. CALENDAR OF WEEKLY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WEEK 1: 5/29/07-6/1/07

A. Topics

1. Overview of the TOEFL Writing section
2. How to excel in the integrated writing task
3. Strategies for raising your score on the integrated writing task
 - a. As you read
 - b. As you listen
 - c. As you write your response

Books:

Educational Testing Service. (2006). *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

ESL Pro Systems. (2005). *Writing Workbook for the TOEFL iBT Test*.

B. Homework

Read pages 254-261 from the required textbook: *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*

WEEK 2: 6/4/07-6/8/07

A. Topics

1. Review the various note-taking methods.
2. How to excel in the independent writing task
 - a. Essay-writing tips
 - b. The four main types of essay questions
 - c. Steps on how to write your TOEFL iBT essay (independent writing task)
 - d. The format of an essay

B. Homework

1. Read pages 261-270 from the required textbook: *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*
2. Complete exercise on page 270 in the required textbook

WEEK 3: 6/11/07-6/15/07

A. Topics

1. Grammar Review. Each student will be given a grammar topic, and he or she will give a presentation to the class. The instructor will complement the lecture. The purpose of this is to practice the current grammar and speaking skills of the students.

B. Activities

1. Presentation of the grammar topics
2. Grammar exercises

C. Homework

Write an independent essay.

WEEK 4: 6/18/07-6/22/07

A. Topics

1. Review mechanics for writing
2. Review style for writing
3. Organization and development of a strong essay

WEEK 5: 6/25/07-6/29/07

A. Activities

1. Organization and development of essays
2. Review of the various topics discussed in the previous weeks
3. Practice TOEFL essays from *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*.

B. Homework

Write one independent essay

WEEK 6: 7/2/07-7/6/07

Activities

1. Practice TOEFL tests
2. Posttest

Speaking Syllabus

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Speak on a variety of topic that draw on personal experience, campus-based situations, and academic-type content material
2. Strategies for improving the pronunciation, natural pacing, and natural-sounding intonation patterns
3. Develop clearly and coherently the topics
4. Develop critical-thinking skills
5. Practice the two types of speaking questions
6. State opinions and preferences and present supporting reasons clearly, with detail
7. Study and practice words and expressions commonly used to express opinions, such as: In my opinion, I believe, etc.

II. REQUIRED MATERIALS

Required Textbook:

Sharpe, P. J. (2007). *TOEFL Internet-Based Test* (12th ed.). Hauppauge, NY: Barron's.

Additional Textbooks:

Educational Testing Service. (2006). *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

ESL Pro Systems. (2004). *How to Study for and Master the TOEFL iBT test*.

ESL Pro Systems. (2003). *ESL Pro Student's Guide to Workbook*.

III. CALENDAR OF WEEKLY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WEEK 1: 5/29/07-6/1/07

A. Topics

1. Overview of the TOEFL Speaking section
2. Converse informally to state and ask about personal data and personal interests and opinions

B. Homework

Read pages 234-244 from the required textbook: *TOEFL Internet-Based Test*

WEEK 2: 6/4/07-6/8/07

A. Topics

1. Speaking Strategies
 - a. Anticipate the first question

- b. Support your answers
- c. Understand the task
- d. Pronounce to communicate
- e. Sound confident
- f. Adapt notes
- g. Pace yourself
- h. Prepare key phrases
- i. Use verbal pauses
- j. Correct yourself
- k. Stay positive

2. Pronunciation practice

WEEK 3: 6/11/07-6/15/07

A. Activities

1. Grammar presentations
2. Listen actively in order to restate previously heard discussion (TOEFL practice exercises)

WEEK 4: 6/18/07-6/22/07

A. Activities

1. Conduct a personal interview by preparing questions and getting additional information
2. Listen actively in order to restate previously heard discussion (TOEFL practice exercises)
3. Lesson on how to create a powerful presentation
4. Choose an appropriate topic for a prepared discourse

B. Homework

Prepare presentation

WEEK 5: 6/25/07-6/29/07

Activities

1. Using audio-visual aids effectively
2. Delivery of presentations

WEEK 6: 7/2/07-7/6/07

Activities

1. Practice TOEFL tests
2. Posttest

Appendix C

General Course Competencies and Objectives

Competencies and Objectives for Reading

1. Read and understand the content of prompts and different types of reading materials. To achieve this, you will:
 - a. Have to read a lot in the target language
 - b. Do large amounts of extensive reading both from a text and from a computer screen in order to develop and learn the skill.
 - c. Read about a variety of topics that are relevant to the TOEFL iBT, such as social science, science and technology, North American history, geography, government, and history art biography.

2. Identify the different types of basic information and inferencing questions. To achieve this, you will:
 - a. Recognize factual and negative factual information questions
 - b. Recognize inference questions
 - c. Recognize rhetorical purpose questions
 - d. Recognize vocabulary questions
 - e. Recognize reference questions
 - f. Recognize sentence simplification questions
 - g. Recognize insert text questions
 - h. Recognize reading to learn questions
 - i. Recognize prose summary questions
 - j. Recognize main idea questions
 - k. Recognize detail questions
 - l. Fill in a table questions

3. Use critical-thinking skills. To achieve this, you will:
 - a. Analyze the author's ideas by considering their origin and how they are used to support the author's opinion
 - b. Recognize how the level of diction, the overall tone, and point of view relate the author's approach to the topic.
 - c. Recognize and understand how the author achieves coherence.
 - d. Judge the persuasiveness of the conclusion of the passage.
 - e. Improve reading skills. To achieve this, you will:
 - Practice speed-reading techniques such as skimming and scanning
 - Learn to preview the reading by:
 - Looking at the title and headings
 - Reading the first sentence of every paragraph
 - f. Read the last sentence of the passage
 - Learn to read for meaning
 - Learn to make inferences
 - Learn to make connections
 - Learn to summarize
 - g. Improve vocabulary. To achieve this, you will:

- Recognize abstract nouns, verbs, adjective, pronouns, and adverbs and how they relate to other elements in a sentence
- Recognize transitions and quotation marks
- Recognize the connotation of words
- Use affixes and root words to identify the meaning of new words in different contexts
- Keep a journal and use flashcards with new vocabulary and refer to it regularly

Competencies and Objectives for Listening

1. Read and understand the content of prompts and different types of listening materials. To achieve this, you will:
 - a. Listen to four to six lectures
 - b. Listen to two to three conversations

2. Identify the different types of TOEFL iBT Listening questions. To achieve this, you will learn to differentiate:
 - a. Multiple-choice questions with more than one answer
 - b. Questions that require you to put in order events or steps in a process
 - c. Questions that require you to match objects or text to categories in a table
 - d. Basic comprehension questions
 - e. Pragmatic understanding questions
 - f. Connecting information questions

3. Improve and sharpen listening skills. To achieve this, you will:
 - a. Watch TV documentaries
 - b. Listen to music in English
 - c. Listen to National Public Radio
 - d. Increase your vocabulary knowledge
 - e. Focus on the content and flow of material
 - f. Anticipate what the speaker is going to say as a way to stay focused
 - g. Stay active by asking yourself questions (e.g., What main idea is the professor communicating?)
 - h. Listen to connect ideas
 - i. Listen for pragmatic understanding

- 3 Review of basic academic skills. To achieve this, you will learn to improve:
 - a. Note-taking skills
 - b. Paraphrasing skills
 - c. Summarizing skills
 - d. Synthesizing skills

Competencies and Objectives for Writing

1. Write simple, compound, and complex sentences that are grammatically and syntactically correct. To achieve this, you will:
 - a. Use the eight parts of speech correctly
 - b. Exhibit variety in sentence types
 - c. Demonstrate comprehension of the relationships between clauses
 - d. Effectively link clauses with transitions and connectors
2. Write integrated writing essays. To achieve this, you will:
 - a. Build effective listening and note-taking skills
 - b. Be an active listener, not a passive listener
3. Learn note-taking methods. To achieve this, you will follow these methods:
 - a. Cornell note-taking systems
 - b. Outlining methods
 - c. Concept mapping
 - d. Summarize the passage effectively
 - e. Summarizing practice
 - f. Writing your response, contrasting
 - g. The importance of using transitions
4. Write independent writing essays. To achieve this, you will:
 - a. Distinguish the four main types of essay questions
 - b. Use the various steps to write an essay
5. Review key grammar rules. To achieve this, you will demonstrate proficiency in using:
 - a. Fragments
 - b. Run-on sentences
 - c. Noun forms
 - d. Verb forms
 - e. Subject-verb agreement
 - f. Pronouns
 - g. Prepositions
 - h. Articles
 - i. Homonyms
 - j. Confused words
6. Use of appropriate mechanics in writing. To achieve this, you will demonstrate proficiency in:
 - a. Capitalization

- b. Spelling
- c. Punctuation
- d. Compound words
- e. Fused words
- f. Duplicate words

7. Apply the correct style in writing. To achieve this, you will address the following kinds of problems in writing:

- a. Word repetition
- b. Inappropriate words or phrases
- c. Too many passive sentences
- d. Too many long sentences
- e. Too many short sentences
- f. Sentences beginning with coordinating conjunctions

8. Distinguish the different kinds of essays you may be asked to write. To achieve this, you will address the following types of essays:

- a. Persuasion
- b. Informative writing
- c. Comparison-contrast
- d. Description
- e. Narration
- f. Cause and effect
- g. Description of a process
- h. Writing for assessment
- i. Response to literature
- j. Problem and solution
- k. Writing in the workplace

Competencies and Objectives for Speaking

1. Communicate effectively in a broad variety of everyday, school and work situations. To demonstrate this level of proficiency, you will be able to:
 - a. Respond in English to native speakers talking at a normal rate in both informal and formal conversational situations
 - b. Have the ability to communicate in English in an academic setting.
2. Speak on a variety of topics that draw on personal experience, campus-based situations, and academic-type content material. To demonstrate this level of proficiency, you will be able to:
 - a. Distinguish the six types of questions presented by the TOEFL iBT
 - b. Understand the independent speaking tasks
 - c. Understand the integrated speaking tasks
3. Time your speech accordingly. To demonstrate this level of proficiency, you will be able to:
 - a. Deliver fluid and clear presentations
 - b. Use effectively grammar and vocabulary to convey your ideas
 - c. Develop coherently your ideas
 - d. Relate and transition from one idea to the next clearly and easily
4. Practice and improve the pronunciation. To demonstrate this level of proficiency, you will be able to:
 - a. Repeat pairs of sounds and words in context exercises
 - b. Perform pronunciation exercises that include sound sorting, articulation recognition, and oral practice
 - c. Read orally in class

Appendix D

Students' Comments About the Intensive ESL Program

1. "I liked a lot the course; it helped me to understand the educational system of the U.S. I hope we can continue to be in touch. Thank you very much for everything and I wish you the best, Georgina!"

2. I think everything was wonderful, specially the dedication and professionalism of our teacher. I wish we had more than 6 weeks of class since the practice of all the subjects is a little bit complicated. If the university would have this intensive ESL course it would be great if it were longer than 6 weeks and less time for each class. I felt this was a great new experience for me, and I got the best to improve my English. Congratulations Georgina, and thank you very much. You really reached your goal with this course!

3. In my opinion, the course was excellent. The materials provided to us were very organized, and they covered other points not covered in the book. The instructor was excellent, very organized, and she was always in a good mood and on time. I will suggest to the University to establish a course like this to help people improve their English, especially for those that English is not their first language.

4. "I can only say that computer lab work is very important. I wish that this course would have lasted for some more time, perhaps 6 months. Other than that, the instruction was very appropriate and effective."

5. "Technically, the course is almost perfect. What made the difference is having a wonderful teacher as Mrs. Argüello."

6. "This kind of activities [sic] should be available to the foreign students because it helps so much to improve the English language."

7. "This course helped me improve my essays and listening skills. Great course! I wish the University had more English preparation courses as this one. Thank you for your time and dedication."