A COMPARISON OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY GAINS IN ONE FOCAL SKILLS AND TWO TRADITIONAL ESL PROGRAMS

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Abstract

A Comparison of English Proficiency Gains
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The Focal Skills approach to ESL was established in 1988. It focuses on language acquisition instead of learning which plays a dominant role in traditional ESL programs. This study compares the effectiveness of one Focal Skills program and two traditional ESL programs on the improvement of ESL students' English proficiency. The research instrument is a proficiency test: the Focal Skills placement test. From the data analysis, it is concluded that the Focal Skills approach is more effective than the traditional programs in improving both the general and specific language proficiency of ESL students.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Purpose of the Study:

In this study, the researcher compared the effectiveness of two kinds of teaching approaches in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL)-the Focal Skills approach and the traditional ESL teaching-on the improvement of English proficiency among ESL students in three American ESL programs.

Significance of the Study:

With the increasing popularity of English learning in today's world, more and more people begin to study English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) in order to function well to meet the demands of the society in various fields. This situation urges English administrators, educators, and teachers to find ways to help people develop English language proficiency as effectively and efficiently as possible.

There are several approaches used in the ESL/EFL programs all around the world, each of which has its own advantages and disadvantages. Generally speaking, we can roughly divide them into two categories: one focuses on conscious learning of language rules, and the other concentrates on subconscious acquisition of language skills. This study is to compare the effectiveness of the two different categorical approaches in order to make a contribution to the research work in second language learning and second language acquisition.

Practically speaking, a learner needs to gain a certain level of English skills in listening, reading, writing, and speaking so as to function well in the society. In this study, not only the general language proficiency but each specific language skill is compared between the two approaches which will make the research more meaningful to the researchers and educators as a reference in their study and practice of finding a more effective way of language teaching, learning, and acquisition.

Hypothesis:

HA: The Focal Skills approach is more effective than the traditional ESL teaching in the improvement of ESL students' English proficiency.

Definition of Terms:

The Traditional ESL Programs: "In a typical intensive pre-university ESL program, students progress through a series of levels. Ordinarily, all the levels are structured in much the same way, with balanced amounts of time devoted to listening, reading, writing, speaking, and grammar" (Hastings, 1994, p.3-4). "Language components such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are often taught in discrete units, each accompanied by various types of drills, exercises, and other prefabricated activities. This general pedagogical orientation calls for elaborate, specialized instructional materials" (Hastings, 1994, p.5).

The Focal Skills approach: "A program designed for use in intensive, post-secondary, pre-university ESL programs in which all instruction is given in English. It is divided into an ordered sequence of full-time modules (Listening,

Reading, Writing, and Immersion) with specific proficiency objectives and methodologies. It emphasizes comprehensible input and topic-centered communicative interaction, employing methods that stress the progressive integration of developing skills with other relevant skills already possessed by the students" (Hastings, 1992, p.1). In the Focal Skills approach, "Each student is placed in only one module at a time" (Hastings, 1994, p.2). "In order to place out of a module (leave or skip the module), a student must demonstrate the target level of proficiency in the appropriate skill. This can be done only by earning a certain score on an assessment instrument specifically designed for this purpose" (Hastings, 1990, p.61).

The Focal Skills placement test: "A battery of skill-specific proficiency tests to place students in the modules" (Hastings, 1992, p.1). There are three assessments in the placement test: Listening Assessment, Reading Assessment, and Writing Assessment. "The assessments are usually done every four weeks" (Hastings, 1990, p.61).

The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows. Chapter 2 is a Literature Review which defines some terms and introduces some related theories and approaches, especially the Focal Skills approach. Chapter 3 is Methodology which talks about the research population, sample, instruments, and procedure. Chapter 4 is the Analysis of Data where the researcher presents the data for the five comparisons, the four week gains, and the significance. Chapter 5 is the Conclusion which has a more detailed analysis of the data and makes a conclusion for the whole thesis.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Traditional ESL Programs

Hastings (1994) described the traditional ESL programs thus: "In a typical intensive pre-university ESL program, students progress through a series of levels. Ordinarily, all the levels are structured in much the same way, with balanced amounts of time devoted to listening, reading, writing, speaking, and grammar" (p.3-4).

Teaching materials play an important role in the traditional ESL programs which may include carefully chosen text books, authentic reading materials, etc. The students may receive different kinds of drills, exercises, and other activities designed to improve or test their understanding of the teaching materials.

Hastings (1994) described the placement in the traditional ESL programs: "A variety of placements instrument may be used to place incoming students. In some programs, each student is placed in the same level for all skills; in other programs, split placements may be permitted, allowing a student to be placed in different levels for different skills" (p.4).

Krashen's Theories and Research in Second Language Learning and Acquisition

Krashen (1985) has written, "We have tried everything else -- learning grammar rules, memorizing vocabulary, using expensive machinery, forms of group therapy, etc. What has escaped us all these years, however, is the one essential ingredient: comprehensible input" (p.Vii).

There are two independent approaches when developing second language skills. In Krashen's definition, "acquisition" is a subconscious process in which a person acquires a language by receiving comprehensible input from listening and reading. The way of acquiring a second language is similar to that of utilizing one's first language. Different from "acquisition," "learning" is a conscious process in which a person studies the rules of a language systematically. "Learning" must be organized in concrete units accompanied by a lot of drills and exercises.

The conscious knowledge from learning, in his opinion, "serves only as an editor, or Monitor" (Krashen, 1985, p.2). Only when the learner are aware of the rule and are careful about correctness, can they use the "Monitor."

He defined a learner's present level as "i" and his/her next level as "i+1" (Krashen, 1985, p.2). He stated that learners were developing their language skills from the present stage to a higher stage by constantly receiving comprehensible input. With the growing acquisition of their language proficiency, they would become more and more skillful and advanced.

In Krashen's theory, the receptive skills like listening and reading precede the productive skills like speaking and writing. The language skills are developing through an order that occurs naturally in one's first language and should also be encouraged in acquiring a second language.

Krashen (1985) defined the affective filter as "a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition" (p.3). This implies that if learners want to acquire as much comprehensible input as possible, they need to lower the affective filter to let the input come into the brain. In other words, both aptitude and attitude are important for accepting comprehensible input (Smith, 1997).

After analyzing many reports of bilingual programs such as Immersion and Sheltered language teaching, Krashen (1985) concluded, "People acquire second languages only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input 'in'" (p.4).

When comparing the two ESL teaching approaches which have different focuses: one on learning, one on acquisition, Krashen states that those approaches which focus on providing the students with plenty of comprehensible input and creating an atmosphere where the students keep a low affective filter will outperform the methods which emphasize conscious grammar learning (Krashen, 1985).

The development of individual skills like listening, reading, writing, and speaking, in Krashen's theories, depends on the quantities of comprehensible input and the affective filter.

In a listening class, teachers should show their understanding of the students' "silent period" which means that the learners are acquiring comprehensible input and accumulating their knowledge during a period of time when no speech is produced. The teachers' task is to provide students with as much comprehensible input as possible instead of pushing them to speak right away when they are not ready or feel reluctant to do so (Krashen, 1985).

Krashen (1993) also recommended "Free Voluntary Reading (FVR)" (p.x). He emphasized reading for meaning instead of reading for the purpose of analyzing language itself. From his data analysis, he reported that by FVR, the students improved their reading comprehension and they were ready to read more complex texts. They also improved their writing skills, vocabulary, spelling, and control of grammar. With the development of reading, they became better readers and language users generally. It appeared that the effect of FVR on students' language proficiency development was better than that of a traditional approach.

As to writing, he denied that grammar study was the best way to improvement writing. He stated that the English language grammar system was too complicated to be taught completely. Even the best linguists could describe "only fragments of the grammar of the best described natural language, English, and language teachers know only a portion of this fragment" (Krashen, 1984, p.24). This implies that people can only learn the most obvious and teachable rules in the grammatical system. When talking about his theories on learning writing, he stated, "It is reading that gives the

writer the 'feel' for the look and texture of reader-based prose" (Krashen, 1984, p.20). This indicates that by reading for pleasure and fun, a learner is able to acquire a lot of comprehensible input and keep a low affective filter which are important for him/her to improve writing skills.

In Krashen's theory, speaking and grammar emerge naturally through the language acquisition process. The vital factor is comprehensible input.

Pedagogically, comprehensible input and affective filter are the two most important elements in Krashen's second language learning and second language acquisition theory since these are under the control of the instructor.

Approaches to Language Teaching Which Are Compatible with Krashen's Theories

There are several approaches to second language teaching which are compatible with Krashen's theories. These approaches focus on language acquisition instead of learning.

Krashen (1982/1995) described the "Natural Approach" thus: "Class time is devoted primarily to providing input for acquisition. The teacher speaks only the target language in the classroom. Homework may include formal grammar work. The goals of the course are 'semantic'" (p.138).

Another approach is called "Total Physical Response" which was developed by James Asher. Total Physical Response delays speech from students until they have received enough comprehensible input and have acquired the understanding of spoken language.

"Suggestopedia" is another approach which is characterized by the involvement of Yoga and music in the

process of learning. It combines the traditional conversations, games, plays, etc. with some new teaching methods. In this approach, the teacher provides comprehensible input by reading aloud and helps the students to acquire the meaning in a relaxing environment. According to Krashen, "Suggestopedia comes very close to completely matching the requirements of optimal input" (Krashen, 1995, p.146).

Based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Brown and Palmer established "The Listening Approach". It "concentrates on meaning, not on the language" and it suggests that students "not speak until the students' sentences emerge spontaneously" (Brown & Palmer,1988, p.3).

Another approach which focuses on cooperative learning is the "Whole Language Approach". Instructed and voluntary reading plays an important role in this approach. When developing their language skills, the students concentrate on meaning and communication instead of grammar rules. They first develop their language fluency, then accuracy (Robb, 1994).

The Focal Skills Approach

The Focal Skills approach is a more recently developed approach to second language acquisition. It applies Krashen's second language learning and acquisition theories into practical teaching. It went into effect in 1988 in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In the spring of 1989, Focal Skills was chosen as the official name of the approach.

The Focal Skills approach has also been used at Pacific Lutheran University, Mississippi State University, Clark

University, Shenandoah University, Northwest Missouri State University, University of Dallas, Golden West College, United Arab Emirates University, and Minnesota State University -- Akita (Japan).

The basic units in the Focal Skills approach are modules, each of which focuses on one specific skill; each student is placed in only one module at a time. There are a total of four ordered modules in the Focal Skills approach: the Listening Module, the Reading Module, the Writing Module, and the Immersion Module. In the Listening Module, movie techniques and teacher's talking - demonstrating in front of class ~~show~~ are the two main activities. The students focus their attention on comprehending what is being shown and described in the target language by the instructor before them in order to acquire comprehensible input. In the Reading Module, group reading and free reading are the main activities. The students are exposed to authentic materials and continue to receive comprehensible input in written forms. "Writing is the first module that asks them to focus on production. It is to help the students develop the ability to express themselves intelligibly on paper" (Hastings, 1990, p.90). In the Writing Module, group writing and free writing are the main activities. In free writing, each individual student produces one piece of writing every day and gets the teacher's feedback after that. The students can choose their favorite topics to write about. The last module in the Focal Skills approach is the Immersion Module. "Now they need to broaden and deepen their English proficiency, and prepare for the next phase of their

education in the university" (Hastings, 1990, p.93). By going through the modules, the students can progress logically and naturally from a lower level to a higher level of language use. The design of the modules is based on Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis which hypothesizes that the receptive skills precede the productive skills in natural development.

The placement system in the Focal Skills approach "provides the basis for coherent, productive, successful modules" (Hastings, 1990, p.61). The placement test is a kind of language proficiency test which includes three assessments: Listening Assessment, Reading Assessment, and Writing Assessment. For each instrument, there are three versions which can be used in rotation to measure the students' progress over time. Each assessment focuses on one particular skill. Usually every four or five weeks, the students take the placement test to skip any module(s) they do not need or they may stay at the same module for another period of time till they can meet the requirements.

The Listening Comprehension Assessment is composed of 60 items, each of which consists of a short dialogue between two people followed by a Yes/No question. The test is recorded on tape. The passing line for listening assessment is set at 60% adjusted for guessing (corresponding roughly to 80% raw) (Hastings, 1996).

The Reading Comprehension Assessment consists of 20 paragraphs, each of which is followed by three Yes/No questions. The scoring of the reading assessment is done in the same way as the listening assessment.

The writing Proficiency Assessment is a form of C-Test. It contains 12 paragraphs, in each of which the second half of every second word has been deleted, up to a total of ten partial deletions. In order to pass the writing test, the students need to get at least 70% correct (84 out of a total 120 points). No correction for guessing is needed.

The Focal Skills approach emphasizes comprehensible input and the development of communicative skills in a cooperative learning environment. The materials and classroom topics are supposed to have both variety and continuity. The students are given their own choices of materials to acquire language with a low affective filter.

The Focal Skills approach takes the interrelationships among different skills into consideration. Hastings (1995) reported that "At a given stage of development, a skill may be dependent or autonomous" (p.31). Dependent skills include focal and emergent skills and autonomous skills are composed of foundational and instrumental skills. A dependent skill needs a lot of study, but an autonomous skill has already been well developed.

A focal skill is the skill which is focused on by the students at one time such as the listening skill in Focal Skills listening module. It is supposed to help the students improve their specific skill in a very efficient way. Emergent skills are those which emerge with the development of their foundational skills. Instrumental skills are those which can support the development of another skill. For example, listening skill is the instrumental skill in the reading module of a Focal Skills program. A foundational

skill is the base for performing in another skill like reading skill for the development of writing skill. It makes it easier to develop another skill. Emergent skills develop naturally along with their foundational skills. For instance, the gains in reading skill produce some emergent writing competence. By developing a foundational skill, the students can also develop a corresponding emergent skill.

The above description can be applied to the Focal Skills modular system which is based on the interrelationships among different skills. In each module, the students develop a focal skill and they use instrumental and foundational skills to support development of that skill. At the same time, they can develop their emergent skills even though not focusing on them. Therefore one module is like a bridge which makes a tight connection between the previous module and the later module. That can explain why the Focal Skills students can improve faster than the traditional program students in a specific skill in a short period of time and develop at least as fast as students in other programs can in other skills in the long run.

Evaluations and Research on the Focal Skills Approach

From some research in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) gains by students in the Focal Skills programs in the University of Dallas, Hastings reported that Focal Skills students who were regarded as chronic underachievers or academically challenged could perform as well as regular students in traditional intensive English programs, while regular Focal Skills students progressed more rapidly than regular students in traditional programs.

"On the basis of rather limited data from standard IEPs, it appears that in general Focal Skills students progress about three times as fast as standard IEP students in the skill they are currently focusing on. The 'extra' progress noted above (Reading and Writing in the Listening Module, Reading in the Writing Module) seems to match the ordinary progress of comparable standard IEP students in these skills" (Hastings, 1994, p.3).

Hastings also compared the proficiency gains in two Focal Skills programs and one control program. He concluded that the weekly gains of the Focal Skills students were significantly greater than those of the control group students who received traditional ESL instructions. He also found that generally speaking, the Focal Skills students could perform better than those in other programs in their focal skills. At the same time, they were just as good as their counterparts in the other skills of English, including vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and composition (1995, p.38-41).

Giammari (1989), commenting on some benefits and success of the Focal Skills program, stated "Most of the teachers agree that the Focal Skills program is an improvement over the previous curriculum" (p.34). The Focal Skills classes provided a collaborative atmosphere for both teachers and students.

Smith (1991) noted that in the Focal Skills approach "Speech is encouraged, not forced, and emerges naturally ... Students are not taught about English ... They are helped to become proficient in using English ... " (p.85). The

emphasis is on helping "students develop the use rather than simply usage of language" (H. A. Smith, personal communication, July 22, 1998). These are helpful for one to know the main characteristics of the Focal Skills approach.

Correlations of the Focal Skills Placement Tests with TOEFL

Both the Focal Skills placement tests and the TOEFL test are characterized as proficiency tests. They are different from achievement tests. "Their link to the curriculum is at the abstract level of proficiency constructs" (Hastings, 1992, p.6). That means that the content of a proficiency test is not based on the teaching materials.

In Hastings (1992), he reported the correlations between the Focal Skills placement tests with TOEFL as:

BAT=FS battery, TT=TOEFL total, L=FS Listening, R=FS Reading, W=FS Writing

Validity Coefficients Corrected for Criterion

BAT/TT	L/TT	R/TT	W/TT	
.93	.68	.83	.89	(p.7).

It appears that the Focal Skills test battery has a relatively high consistent validity when using TOEFL as the criterion.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

This study compares the effectiveness of one Focal Skills program and two traditional ESL programs on the improvement of ESL students' English proficiency. Two versions of the Focal Skills placement test were given to the subjects at an eight-week interval in order to compare the students' improvement on their language proficiency.

In this research, the researcher decided to set the level of significance at .05 which is the generally accepted level in order to guard against both Type 1 and Type 2 errors.

Population

The population of this study was the ESL students from three American ESL programs, among which one was a Focal Skills program, and the other two were traditional ESL programs. The Focal Skills program was at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). The two traditional programs were in George Mason University (GMU) and George Washington University (GWU).

In the Focal Skills program, approximately 162 students enrolled in UWM in the summers of 1992, 1993, and 1994. In the traditional programs, around 150 students enrolled in GMU, and 70 students enrolled in GWU in the Fall of 1997. The researcher selected the population of the Focal Skills

approach at different time for researcher's convenience. It was available for her to get those data in three summer programs which were comparable to the traditional programs because all of them were run over eight-week intervals. Also three summer programs would provide as large samples as the traditional programs offered. The more recent data for the Focal Skills approach were not as accessible, therefore the researcher selected those summer programs.

The students in the Focal Skills programs were placed in one module and "focused" on one skill at one time, while those who enrolled in the traditional programs studied all the language skills together at one time- listening, reading, writing, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, etc.

Samples

Among the population of 282 students, 211 students in the three ESL programs who took both the Focal Skills pretests and posttests over separate eight-week intervals were used as the samples. Among them, 91 were from UWM, 96 from GMU, and 24 from GWU. Since this study is to compare the improvement of the students between their pretests and posttests, those who only took one test were excluded from the data analysis. Therefore the Focal Skills samples were from three summer programs of 1992, 1993, and 1994, and the traditional program samples were from two fall programs of 1997.

The researcher also obtained data from UWM Focal Skills students enrolled in the fall semester of 1996 and the spring and fall semesters of 1997 in order to see their improvement in a four-week interval. Among those samples, 97 were from

the listening module, 36 were from the reading module, and 46 were from the writing module.

This research adopted accidental sampling system, using available data for the study. This had some potential threats to the research reliability. Since the subjects were not assigned to both of the approaches in a randomized way, under this situation, the researcher could not verify that the two research groups were equivalent in all relevant aspects and the only difference between them was that one received the treatment of the independent variable -- the Focal Skills approach-- but the other one did not (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1996).

Instruments

The study instrument was the Focal Skills placement system.

There are altogether three assessments in the Focal Skills placement regular test which are Listening Assessment, Reading Assessment, and Writing Assessment. "The Listening Comprehension Assessment is recorded on audio cassette. There are sixty items; each consists of a short conversation followed by a Yes/No question" (Hastings, 1996, p.1-2). The passing line for listening assessment is set at "60 adjusted (corresponding roughly to 80% raw)" (Hastings, 1996, p.1-2). "Adjusted" means that the percentage scores have been corrected for guessing, using the standard formula for two-choice tests (incorrect answers are subtracted from correct answers before percentages are computed) (Henning, 1987, p.31-32).

"The reading Comprehension Assessment takes the form of a booklet containing twenty paragraphs; each paragraph is followed by three Yes/No questions" (Hastings, 1996, p.2). The scoring system of the reading assessment is done in the same way as the listening assessment.

"The writing Proficiency Assessment consists of a booklet containing twelve C-Test paragraphs; there are ten partial deletions per paragraph" (Hastings, 1996, p.3). In order to pass the writing test, the students need to get at least 70% correct (84 out of a total 120 points). (Writing scores are not corrected for guessing, because the responses are not chosen from a small set of options.)

As to the placement system's reliability coefficients, Hastings (1996) reported the number "Listening: .91; Reading: .86; Writing: .93" (p.3).

The Focal Skills placement test has three versions: version I, version II, and version III. It is very reasonable to have three forms of each test-type because "if only one form were used, gain scores might partially reflect test familiarity rather than actual proficiency gains" (Hastings, 1992, p.1). Three versions were used in rotation, usually every four weeks.

Three regular versions of the Focal Skills placement test and two shortened versions of the test were used as the instrument of measurement for this study.

Taking the regular test time into consideration, it was not practical to conduct the test in the two traditional ESL programs in that it would take much of their class time and cause undue inconvenience in their programs. Therefore, two

shortened versions of two regular Focal Skills placement tests were created to meet their needs. The researcher selected the first one-fourth of each assessment from one regular placement test and made a shortened version of that corresponding test. For example, in the sixty-item listening assessment, the first fifteen items were taken out as the listening assessment of the shortened version. In the twenty-paragraph reading assessment, the first five paragraphs were taken out as the reading assessment of the shortened version and in the twelve-paragraph writing assessment, the first three paragraphs were chosen as the writing assessment of the shortened version. Generally speaking, the newly-developed shortened form of the test was one-fourth of the regular one either in length or in time control. Since all the items in each assessment were randomized and had the similar level of difficulty, the samples in the shortened versions are quite representative. Furthermore, the precise relationship between the difficulty of the shortened forms and the difficulty of the full forms was computed and taken into account, as described below.

The shortened versions of the Focal Skills placement test kept the test validity and reliability because they were used to test group improvement instead of individual scores. Although it is well known that individual score reliability is reduced by shortening a test, individual deviations from true scores tend to be averaged out when group score averages are computed.

Procedure

The subjects from the two traditional ESL programs took the shortened version of the Focal Skills placement test III at the beginning of the Fall semester of 1997 as the pretest and took the shortened version of the Focal Skills placement test II at the end of the eighth week of the Fall semester as the posttest. They were told beforehand that the two tests were only for research purposes and the results would not influence their scores in their own programs. The subjects from the Focal Skills program took the regular Focal Skills placement test as pretest and posttest. They understood that the tests would influence their present status in their current modules.

In this research, the traditional program students took the shortened versions of the regular Focal Skills placement tests, but the Focal Skills students took the full length of the tests, therefore we need to know the relationship between each regular test and its shortened version before we make the comparisons between them. The researcher collected data from UWM which were obtained in the years of 1994, 1995, and 1996. Among the data, four hundred and seven were listening version II, four hundred and twenty-two were listening version III, four hundred and fifty were reading version II, three hundred and forty-four were reading version III, two hundred and seventy-one were writing version II, and four hundred and ninety-three were writing version III. She grouped the data into listening, reading, and writing categories. As to listening assessment, for each version she computed the samples' average scores of the whole test, and

then their average scores of the first fifteen items. As to the reading and writing assessments, the procedures were the same as the listening assessment. By dividing the first one-fourth average scores by the whole average scores, the researcher found the ratio of the first one-fourth of each assessment to the whole assessment. Then the researcher used the ratio to recompute the data obtained from GMU and GWU to estimate the students' performance if they had taken the regular test instead of the shortened versions.

The researcher also used the same scoring system for all the samples. The scores of the Focal Skills placement test can be reported in three different ways: "raw points (number of items) correct, raw percentage correct (%), or percentage adjusted for guessing...." (Hastings, 1996, p.1). In the listening and reading assessments, we can find out that for each Yes/No question, a student has 50% chance of correct guessing, therefore guessing should be taken into account when computing the scores. Hastings (1996) explained that "To adjust for guessing, simply subtract the number of incorrect responses from the number of correct responses (do not count blanks in either figure). If the remainder is less than zero, set it to zero. Divide the remainder by 60 and multiply by 100 to obtain the adjusted percentage score" (p.1). The adjusted score is more accurate indicating a student's real comprehension ability than either of the other two ways.

Five Comparisons in This Study

1. Comparison of Group Improvement:

The researcher computed the average scores made by all the

samples who took both pretest and posttest in the Focal Skills program in order to get their whole-skill proficiency. She did the same thing in the two traditional ESL programs. She got the samples' improvement in each group by looking at the differences between their pretest and posttest. Then the researcher compared the improvement of the samples between the two different approaches. By this comparison, the researcher could get an idea of the effectiveness of the two different approaches on the improvement of ESL students' general language proficiency.

2. Comparison of Listening Students' Improvement: Based on the samples' pretest scores, the researcher selected those who did not pass listening assessment and considered them as listening students for purposes of comparison. She did the same thing in both programs. There were 60 listening students in the Focal Skills program and 54 listening students in the traditional programs. Then the researcher computed the average scores made by the listening students of each program in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments, six for each module and two for each assessment. After that, the researcher compared the improvement of the listening students between the two different approaches. By this comparison, the researcher could know the effectiveness of the two different approaches on the listening students' improvement in different skills.

In the interest of clarity, it must be emphasized that the traditional program students were placed into ordinary levels, not into skill-focused modules as in the Focal Skills program. For purposes of comparison, the researcher grouped

the traditional students who did not pass the listening assessment into the listening module as the counterpart of the Focal Skills listening students. The same procedure was used in grouping reading, writing, and immersion students. In this way, students with similar skill profiles are compared across programs. However, it must be understood that the traditional program students were not actually placed or taught according to their Focal Skills test scores.

3. Comparison of Reading Students' Improvement: According to the samples' pretest scores, the researcher grouped the students who passed the listening assessment but not the reading one as reading students. She did the same thing in both programs. There were 14 reading students in the Focal Skills program and 43 reading students in the traditional programs. Then the researcher worked out the average scores made by the reading students of each program in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments, six for each module and two for each assessment. She also computed the improvement of each program's reading students in different skills - listening, reading, and writing. By this comparison, the researcher was able to compare the effectiveness of the two approaches on the reading students' improvement in each language skill.

4. Comparison of Writing Students' Improvement: The samples who passed listening and reading assessments but not writing assessment in their pretests were regarded as writing students. The procedure of grouping them was the same in both programs. There were 10 writing students in the Focal Skills program and 16 in the traditional programs.

Then the researcher computed the average scores made by the writing students of each program in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments, six for each module and two for each assessment. After that, the researcher compared the improvement of the writing students between the two approaches in different skills - listening, reading, and writing in order to see the effectiveness of each program.

5. Comparison of Immersion Students' Improvement: Based on the samples' pretest scores, the researcher pulled out those who passed all the three assessments and placed them into the immersion group as immersion students. She used the same procedure in both programs. There were 7 immersion students in the Focal Skills approach and 7 in the traditional programs. Then the researcher computed the average scores made by the immersion students of each program in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments, six for each module and two for each assessment. She also calculated the improvement of each program's immersion students in different skills - listening, reading, and writing. From the comparison, the researcher could know the effectiveness of the two approaches on the immersion students' improvement in language skills.

As mentioned earlier, additional data was considered from three semesters of the Focal Skills program. When dealing with those additional samples, the researcher computed the improvement of the listening students between their listening pretest and posttest, of the reading students between their reading pretest and posttest, and of the

writing students between their writing pretest and posttest in a four-week interval. These computations were done to obtain independent evidence of the short-term effectiveness of the Focal Skills program.

Chapter 4 Analysis of Data

Purpose of Data Collection

The purpose of this data collection is to make some comparisons between the two ESL teaching approaches: traditional approach and the Focal Skills approach. The collected data measures their effectiveness on students' improvement of three language skills: listening, reading, and writing. By analyzing the data, the researcher compares the two approaches from five aspects: (1) comparison of group improvement; (2) comparison of listening students' improvement; (3) comparison of reading students' improvement; (4) comparison of writing students' improvement; and (5) comparison of immersion students' improvement. After making the above comparisons, the researcher is able to test the research hypothesis.

Grouping of Students

In the Focal Skills approach, the students were placed into modules based on their placement test results at the beginning of each term. Every four or five weeks, they would take the test again and were placed again into appropriate modules. Generally speaking, those who did not pass the listening assessment were placed into listening module. Those who passed listening but not reading assessment were put into the reading module and those who passed both listening and reading but not writing assessment were placed

into the writing module. The students who passed all the three assessments would be in the immersion module. In order to make a compatible comparison, the researcher checked the traditional program students' pretest scores and placed them into different modules following the same principle as the placement of the Focal Skills students.

The two traditional programs were regarded as a whole comparison group which consisted of listening comparison group, reading comparison group, writing comparison group, and immersion comparison group.

Comparison of Group Improvement

Group improvement indicates the improvement made by all the students in both of Focal Skills approach and the comparison group between their pretests and posttests in separate eight-week intervals.

Table 4-1

The mean scores made by all the Focal Skills students in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The standard deviation in each assessment.

	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Mean Scores:	40	55	38	47	44	52
St.Dev.:	31.4	28.6	28.5	30.4	19.6	20.8

N = 91

Table 4-2

The mean scores made by all the comparison students in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The standard deviation in each assessment.

	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Means:	54	59	34	47	48	49
St.Dev.:	31.3	31.1	28.0	29.2	18.2	19.4

N = 120

Table 4-3

The changes in scores and in deviation made by both of the Focal Skills students and the comparison students in each assessment.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
FS	15	9	8
St.Dev.:	19.1	15.9	9.3
Trad.	5	13	1
St.Dev.:	29.2	22.8	12.7

Table 4-4

The T-test of significance between the Focal Skills students and the comparison students.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
t	3.330	1.463	4.885
df	209	209	209
p <=	0.0005	0.10	0.0005

The data shows that the students in the Focal Skills approach made more progress in listening and writing than those in the comparison group. But the comparison students outperformed the Focal Skills students in reading. The differences between the two approaches in listening and writing are highly significant, and the difference in reading approaches significance and is consistent with the general trend in the data.

Comparison of Listening Students' Improvement

Based on the pretest, those who did not meet the criterion to pass the listening assessment were placed in the listening module and were regarded as listening students. This comparison is made between the listening students in the two approaches to see their improvement in different skills.

Table 4-5

The mean scores made by the Focal Skills listening students in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The standard deviation in each assessment.

	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Mean:	21	43	27	37	37	45
St.Dev.:	18.7	26.3	25.3	30.4	17.3	19.8

N = 60

Table 4-6

The mean scores made by the listening comparison students in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The standard deviation in each assessment.

	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Means:	25	39	24	33	41	40
St.Dev.:	19.2	26.9	23.4	25.9	15.6	17.9

N = 54

Table 4-7

The changes in scores and in deviation made by both of the Focal Skills listening students and the listening comparison students in each assessment.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
FS	22	10	8
St.Dev.:	18.2	17.7	10.3
Trad.	14	9	-1
St.Dev.:	30.7	21.3	13.9

Table 4-8

The T-test of significance between the Focal Skills listening students and the listening comparison students.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
t	1.648	0.108	3.849
df	112	112	112
p <=	0.05	None	0.0005

The data tells that the Focal Skills students made better improvement in all the three skills than the listening comparison students. The listening comparison students had a

retrogress in writing assessment. The differences between the two approaches in listening and writing are significant, but the difference in reading is not significant.

Comparison of Reading Students' Improvement

After taking the pretest, the students who passed listening assessment but not reading assessment were regarded as reading students. A comparison is made between the reading students in the two approaches to measure their improvement in different skills.

Table 4-9

The mean scores made by the Focal Skills reading students in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The standard deviation in each assessment.

	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Mean:	75	76	43	56	48	56
St.Dev.	10.7	12.3	14.5	15.7	12.5	12.8

N = 14

Table 4-10

The mean scores made by the reading comparison students in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The standard deviation in each assessment.

	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Means:	78	71	25	50	46	49
St.Dev.:	13.5	27.6	16.3	27.6	18.3	15.7

N = 43

Table 4-11

The changes in scores and in deviation made by both of the Focal Skills reading students and reading comparison students in each assessment.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
FS	1	13	8
St.Dev.	11.5	12.2	8.6
Trad.	-7	25	3
St.Dev.:	28.9	22.0	12.1

Table 4-12

The T-test of significance between the Focal Skills reading students and the reading comparison students.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
t	1.452	2.565	1.730
df	55	55	55
p <=	0.10	0.005	0.05

The data indicates that the Focal Skills students gained more improvement in listening and writing than the reading comparison students, but they made less progress in reading. The reading comparison students made a retrogress in listening. The differences between the two approaches in reading and writing are significant, and the difference in listening approaches significance and is consistent with the general trend in the data.

Comparison of Writing Students' Improvement

Similar to the listening and reading students, the writing students were placed according to their pretest scores. Those who passed listening and reading but not writing assessment were regarded as writing students. This comparison is to see their improvement in both approaches.

Table 4-13

The mean scores made by the Focal Skills writing students in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The standard deviation in each assessment.

	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Mean:	76	78	69	72	56	67
St.Dev.:	12.9	16.3	8.6	11.6	12.0	10.7

N = 10

Table 4-14

The mean scores made by the writing comparison students in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The standard deviation in each assessment.

	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Means:	80	81	77	76	63	64
St.Dev.:	11.8	15.1	14.6	16.0	5.6	15.5

N = 16

Table 4-15

The changes in scores and in deviation made by both of the Focal Skills writing students and the writing comparison students in each assessment.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
FS	2	3	11
St.Dev.:	17.3	9.0	6.6
Trad.	1	-1	1
St.Dev.:	18.1	20.9	12.1

Table 4-16

The T-test of significance between the Focal Skills writing students and the writing comparison students.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
t	0.185	0.740	2.612
df	24	24	24
p <=	None	None	0.01

The data shows that the Focal Skills students made more progress than writing comparison students in all three skills. The writing comparison students had a retrogress in reading. The difference between the two approaches in writing is significant, but the differences in listening and reading are not significant.

Comparison of Immersion Students' Improvement

The students who passed listening, reading, and writing assessments in their pretest were placed in the immersion

module and regarded as immersion students. This comparison is to measure improvement made by the Focal Skills immersion students and the immersion comparison students in the two programs.

Table 4-17

The mean scores made by the Focal Skills immersion students in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The standard deviation in each assessment.

	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Mean:	81	88	83	86	78	84
St.Dev.:	10.6	7.9	9.5	8.0	4.4	7.5

N = 7

Table 4-18

The mean scores made by the immersion comparison students in their pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The standard deviation in each assessment.

	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Means:	80	86	73	76	76	77
St.Dev.:	15.0	8.9	9.4	9.3	3.3	10.2

N = 7

Table 4-19

The changes in scores and in deviation made by both of the Focal Skills immersion students and the immersion comparison students in each assessment.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
FS	7	3	6
St.Dev.:	12.8	11.3	3.9
Trad.	6	3	1
St.Dev.:	7.2	10.2	7.7

Table 4-20

The T-test of significance between the Focal Skills immersion students and the immersion comparison students.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
t	0.342	0.052	1.226
df	12	12	12
p <=	None	None	None

The data shows that the Focal Skills students made more progress than the immersion comparison students in listening and writing. The two groups had the same progress in reading assessment. Neither of the differences between the two groups in listening, reading, and writing is significant.

Additional Samples' Four Week Gains

Table 4-21

The mean scores made by the additional Focal Skills listening, reading, and writing students in their corresponding pretests and posttests of listening, reading, and writing assessments. The improvement they made in each assessment in a four-week interval.

	L students		R students		W students	
	PreL	PostL	PreR	PostR	PreW	PostW
Means:	26	47	27	39	57	65
Improvement:		21		12		8
N:		97		36		46

By looking at Table 4-21 and by comparing this with the traditional students' performance, we can conclude that since the Focal Skills students were placed into modules to study one skill at one time, they focused on one specific skill instead of learning all the techniques simultaneously. They made more progress in the specific skills than the comparison students in a four week interval. This can suggest that the placement system in the Focal Skills approach can use time more efficiently to help students improve their current levels and get ready to move on to the more advanced levels in a short term. The traditional programs instead combined all the skill study at one time for the students to progress at a comprehensive scale. That is good for their long-term improvement, but when taking time efficiency into account, it is not as effective as the Focal Skills approach.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Conclusion

Among the three assessments in the Focal Skills placement system, the writing assessment has the highest correlation with TOEFL test; therefore, it can best test one's general language proficiency. By looking at the five comparisons in the last chapter, we find that the Focal Skills approach was more effective when helping students improve their general language proficiency than the traditional programs.

By looking at Table 4-5 through Table 4-16, we can see the effectiveness of the two different approaches on students' improvement of their specific language skills - listening, reading, and writing. The data of both listening and writing students show that when they focused on one skill at one time as in the Focal Skills approach, they developed that specific skill more than did students who studied all the skills at the same time. The data of the reading students in Table 4-11 seem to show the opposite. From the numbers, we see that the comparison students improved much more than the Focal Skills students. If we look at both their pretest and posttest reading scores in detail, it is not difficult to find that the reading comparison students in the traditional programs had a very low starting point in reading, but their listening and writing scores were similar

to those of their counterparts. It indicates that the students' general proficiency was fairly high, but they needed special training in reading. They had the potential to improve their reading skills over time. Since their pretest score was much lower than that of the Focal Skills students, they had more space for improvement.

Comparing Table 4-6 with Table 4-10, we can see that the listening comparison students had almost the same prereading score as the reading comparison students, but their prelistening score was much lower. After eight weeks, they made much less gains than the reading comparison students in reading skill. It suggests that the reading comparison students just needed sufficient practice in reading to parallel their general proficiency. Since writing assessment can best suggest one's general proficiency level among the three assessments, when checking the writing gains made by the reading comparison students, we know that they made much slower improvement in writing than in reading. That can further support the previous analysis that the reading comparison students mainly improved the specific reading skill rather than their general proficiency. This finding reveals another issue about the Focal Skills placement test. It indirectly suggests that the Focal Skills placement system can appropriately distinguish the students based on their general language proficiency. If not, by only looking at the prereading scores made by both of the listening and reading comparison students, we could not know their differences in general proficiency. It is the placement system which gives us a broader and preciser view of the students' real levels.

After checking the Focal Skills reading students' data, the researcher found that after four weeks, most of the reading students moved to the next module. They made most of their reading improvement in the first four weeks, which was essentially equal to that made by the reading comparison students in the traditional programs in their eight week period. After only four weeks, the former Focal Skills reading students were able to move on to the intensive study of writing, allowing the comparison students to catch up in reading, while the Focal Skills students were progressing more rapidly in writing. This finding suggests that the Focal Skills approach can help students who are weak in reading make more progress in a short period of time than can the traditional programs.

Table 4-7 shows that the Focal Skills listening students made more progress than the listening comparison students in all three skills, even though they focused only on listening. That means that the Focal Skills listening program successfully made a connection among different language skills in the process of students' development. Table 4-8 shows that the difference in gains between the two groups in the reading assessment is not significant. They made similar gains in reading proficiency.

Table 4-11 shows the largest difference in gain scores between the students' development in their reading skills. The listening and writing data show that the Focal Skills students outperformed the comparison students in the skills which they did not focus on.

Table 4-15 indicate that there is no significant difference between the two programs except in writing. It means that when focusing on writing, the Focal Skills students showed more improvement than the writing comparison students. In the meanwhile, they developed other skills at least as fast as their counterparts. Table 4-16 indicates that the differences between the two approaches in their gains in the listening and reading assessments are not significant, which seems to mean that the two approaches are similarly effective in helping students improve their listening and reading skills. But since the Focal Skills students were in the writing module where they did not focus on the study of listening and reading skills, but the writing skill, they appeared to progress as much as their peers in those two skills and more in writing. It actually supports the hypothesis that the Focal Skills approach is more efficient than the traditional programs.

Table 4-19 suggests that the Focal Skills approach is more effective in helping students gain a general proficiency than the traditional programs. Table 4-20, however, shows that there are no significant differences between the effectiveness of the two approaches on helping the more advanced students (in the immersion level) improve their integrated language skills. This result is compatible with an earlier research report in "Figure 2: Gain Scores in Relation to Pretest Scores" (Hastings, 1992, p.9).

From the above analysis, we can conclude that generally speaking, the Focal Skills approach is more effective on ESL students' improvement on both of their general and specific

language proficiency than the traditional programs. Most of the data in the research support the hypothesis. The only exception is the reading data for the reading comparison students which appear to reject the hypothesis. This issue suggests that further research investigate students' other skill levels and their learning backgrounds more deeply and it also brings about some suggestions for future studies which will be discussed later in this chapter.

When looking back at Chapter 3, we note that the comparison students just took the Focal Skills tests for research purpose and their scores did not count in their own programs. This might have an influence on their performance on the tests. One possibility is that they might have performed better than they should do normally because they were very relaxed. Another possibility is that they might have performed worse than they should usually because they did not consider it a serious task and did not work hard on it. These are some external factors which might not reflect their real abilities. As to the Focal skills students, they had more pressure on the tests because they were eager to pass the present levels, and they worked hard to perform well. This also could have had two opposite effects on the results of their scores: one was positive and the other was negative. Since we do not know the students' real motivation during the tests in both approaches, we can only speculate about the possible effects of the different circumstances.

Suggestions for Future Research

The results shown in Chapter 4 in Table 4-5 and Table 4-6 may suggest some further studies for the researchers. The

reading data indicate something unusual compared to the other data. The traditional program students gained much more than the Focal Skills students in the same amount of time. When looking at their performance in listening assessment, it appears that they had gained a pretty high level of listening skill, which indicates that they had a potentially high language proficiency in general, but they might not be good readers because their prereading score was abnormally low. Future researchers may do a more concrete investigation about the students' backgrounds,the teaching methods, materials, and goals in the traditional programs in order to find a clearer explanation about the reading data. In this study, the researcher made some reasonable estimations which need further support from future practical observations.

Another suggestion is that the future research might do some demographics study. People from different nationalities and language backgrounds may have different learning habits and styles. They may also have different patterns of strength and weakness in the various skills, and they may find different aspects of English relatively easy or difficult to acquire. By looking at their differences, the researchers may analyze the data in a more reliable and insightful way.

Limitations

This research only involved one Focal Skills program which might not be representative of all the Focal Skills programs in the United States and overseas. Therefore its effectiveness may have had more to do with the teachers' experience or the students' motivation than with the approach

itself. Also the research was conducted in an eight-week interval which was not very long. Another limitation is that the Focal Skills placement system was used as the instrument instead of international TOEFL test which is more authoritative and more widely used when testing language proficiency. However, the TOEFL test would require more time and money which made it not as practical as the Focal Skills placement test in this research.

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APPENDIX

FOCAL SKILLS STUDENTS (N=91)									
Improvement:		15			9			8	
Mean:	40	55		38	47		44	52	
St.Dev.:	31.4	28.6		28.5	30.4		19.6	20.8	
Changes:		MEAN	15.4		MEAN	9.1		MEAN	8.3
		ST.DEV	19.1		ST.DEV	15.9		ST.DEV	9.3
Module	PreL	PostL		PreR	PostR		PreW	PostW	
L	0	0	0	3	32	29	17	5	-12
L	0	27	27	7	20	13	27	33	6
L	0	20	20	0	23	23	34	38	4
L	0	15	15	0	0	0	12	13	1
L	0	20	20	7	7	0	7	22	15
L	23	77	54	18	7	-11	19	29	10
L	25	67	42	48	70	22	53	52	-1
L	27	57	30	53	70	17	53	61	8
L	3	63	60	47	73	26	43	82	39
L	3	0	-3	0	10	10	25	26	1
L	37	70	33	47	57	10	46	62	16
L	47	72	25	0	22	22	43	52	9
L	50	67	17	83	93	10	73	81	8
L	53	57	4	70	70	0	46	74	28
L	55	77	22	20	63	43	40	43	3
L	57	37	-20	10	30	20	28	36	8
L	7	0	-7	0	0	0	12	16	4
L	0	33	33	13	0	-13	25	28	3
L	0	10	10	0	0	0	31	29	-2
L	0	50	50	20	47	27	39	52	13
L	10	47	37	47	80	33	51	66	15
L	13	27	14	0	0	0	29	23	-6
L	20	33	13	27	0	-27	18	41	23
L	23	43	20	70	85	15	70	68	-2
L	27	53	26	28	60	32	26	54	28
L	7	0	-7	0	10	10	35	36	1
L	0	17	17	30	7	-23	33	38	5
L	10	10	0	3	3	0	20	29	9
L	13	17	4	13	0	-13	35	38	3
L	13	50	37	63	67	4	58	73	15
L	17	70	53	38	60	22	38	64	26
L	27	43	16	43	67	24	52	63	11
L	28	83	55	73	90	17	43	72	29
L	30	63	33	83	87	4	78	83	5
L	37	73	36	53	67	14	42	52	10

L	43	50	7	80	80	0	80	79	-1
L	50	60	10	20	40	20	40	43	3
L	7	3	-4	5	10	5	34	48	14
L	57	87	30	40	40	0	54	56	2
L	53	97	44	67	60	-7	37	72	35
L	30	40	10	60	47	-13	64	67	3
L	43	73	30	67	77	10	52	60	8
L	33	57	24	13	40	27	48	46	-2
L	27	47	20	18	87	69	0	31	31
L	15	43	28	30	53	23	40	35	-5
L	3	3	0	23	27	4	13	18	5
L	27	70	43	32	10	-22	31	38	7
L	47	53	6	7	0	-7	4	4	0
L	17	37	20	20	47	27	43	50	7
L	0	33	33	5	0	-5	19	23	4
L	13	30	17	10	17	7	28	37	9
L	13	80	67	7	30	23	19	28	9
L	23	43	20	12	43	31	43	60	17
L	0	13	13	0	13	13	28	35	7
L	20	20	0	17	0	-17	39	40	1
L	0	23	23	3	13	10	28	29	1
L	0	10	10	17	3	-14	38	38	0
L	0	10	10	20	23	3	33	38	5
L	0	43	43	0	20	20	23	23	0
L	53	83	30	32	67	35	53	60	7
R	63	80	17	48	70	22	52	73	21
R	73	73	0	50	57	7	62	59	-3
R	73	47	-26	18	47	29	49	52	3
R	77	87	10	47	60	13	39	56	17
R	60	73	13	37	67	30	58	60	2
R	63	57	-6	57	73	16	45	60	15
R	63	70	7	43	43	0	33	55	22
R	73	77	4	17	23	6	28	27	-1
R	77	73	-4	53	40	-13	39	41	2
R	97	80	-17	50	50	0	45	47	2
R	83	77	-6	55	60	5	58	63	5
R	90	90	0	57	80	23	46	63	17
R	80	83	3	20	40	20	43	49	6
R	80	93	13	53	67	14	76	78	2
W	60	93	33	60	50	-10	30	40	10
W	83	83	0	67	83	16	68	73	5
W	93	93	0	70	83	13	52	68	16
W	63	43	-20	70	77	7	51	65	14
W	90	80	-10	67	70	3	65	66	1
W	90	87	-3	70	67	-3	65	73	8
W	67	60	-7	63	58	-5	49	63	14

W	77	77	0	90	87	-3	67	80	13
W	73	70	-3	60	73	13	52	73	21
W	60	93	33	73	70	-3	65	66	1
I	90	87	-3	80	73	-7	73	73	0
I	73	87	14	73	90	17	72	78	6
I	83	97	14	97	93	-4	82	92	10
I	93	97	4	87	93	6	78	79	1
I	87	80	-7	70	90	20	80	89	9
I	63	93	30	90	87	-3	84	92	8
I	77	77	0	83	77	-6	79	83	4

FOCAL SKILLS LISTENING STUDENTS (N=60)									
Improvement:		22			10			8	
Mean Score	21	43		27	37		37	45	
St.Dev.:	18.7	26.3		25.3	30.4		17.3	19.8	
Changes:		MEAN	22.0		MEAN	10.0		MEAN	8.3
		ST.DEV	18.2		ST.DEV	17.7		ST.DEV	10.3
Module	PreL	PostL		PreR	PostR		PreW	PostW	
L	0	0	0	3	32	29	17	5	-12
L	0	27	27	7	20	13	27	33	6
L	0	20	20	0	23	23	34	38	4
L	0	15	15	0	0	0	12	13	1
L	0	20	20	7	7	0	7	22	15
L	23	77	54	18	7	-11	19	29	10
L	25	67	42	48	70	22	53	52	-1
L	27	57	30	53	70	17	53	61	8
L	3	63	60	47	73	26	43	82	39
L	3	0	-3	0	10	10	25	26	1
L	37	70	33	47	57	10	46	62	16
L	47	72	25	0	22	22	43	52	9
L	50	67	17	83	93	10	73	81	8
L	53	57	4	70	70	0	46	74	28
L	55	77	22	20	63	43	40	43	3
L	57	37	-20	10	30	20	28	36	8
L	7	0	-7	0	0	0	12	16	4
L	0	33	33	13	0	-13	25	28	3
L	0	10	10	0	0	0	31	29	-2
L	0	50	50	20	47	27	39	52	13
L	10	47	37	47	80	33	51	66	15
L	13	27	14	0	0	0	29	23	-6
L	20	33	13	27	0	-27	18	41	23
L	23	43	20	70	85	15	70	68	-2
L	27	53	26	28	60	32	26	54	28
L	7	0	-7	0	10	10	35	36	1
L	0	17	17	30	7	-23	33	38	5
L	10	10	0	3	3	0	20	29	9
L	13	17	4	13	0	-13	35	38	3
L	13	50	37	63	67	4	58	73	15
L	17	70	53	38	60	22	38	64	26
L	27	43	16	43	67	24	52	63	11
L	28	83	55	73	90	17	43	72	29
L	30	63	33	83	87	4	78	83	5
L	37	73	36	53	67	14	42	52	10

L	43	50	7	80	80	0	80	79	-1
L	50	60	10	20	40	20	40	43	3
L	7	3	-4	5	10	5	34	48	14
L	57	87	30	40	40	0	54	56	2
L	53	97	44	67	60	-7	37	72	35
L	30	40	10	60	47	-13	64	67	3
L	43	73	30	67	77	10	52	60	8
L	33	57	24	13	40	27	48	46	-2
L	27	47	20	18	87	69	0	31	31
L	15	43	28	30	53	23	40	35	-5
L	3	3	0	23	27	4	13	18	5
L	27	70	43	32	10	-22	31	38	7
L	47	53	6	7	0	-7	4	4	0
L	17	37	20	20	47	27	43	50	7
L	0	33	33	5	0	-5	19	23	4
L	13	30	17	10	17	7	28	37	9
L	13	80	67	7	30	23	19	28	9
L	23	43	20	12	43	31	43	60	17
L	0	13	13	0	13	13	28	35	7
L	20	20	0	17	0	-17	39	40	1
L	0	23	23	3	13	10	28	29	1
L	0	10	10	17	3	-14	38	38	0
L	0	10	10	20	23	3	33	38	5
L	0	43	43	0	20	20	23	23	0
L	53	83	30	32	67	35	53	60	7

FOCAL SKILLS READING STUDENTS (N=14)									
Improvement:		1			13			8	
Mean:	75	76		43	56		48	56	
St.dev.:	10.7	12.3		14.5	15.7		12.5	12.8	
Changes:		MEAN	0.6		MEAN	12.3		MEAN	7.9
		ST.DEV	11.5		ST.DEV	12.2		ST.DEV	8.6
Module	PreL	PostL		PreR	PostR		PreW	PostW	
R	63	80	17	48	70	22	52	73	21
R	73	73	0	50	57	7	62	59	-3
R	73	47	-26	18	47	29	49	52	3
R	77	87	10	47	60	13	39	56	17
R	60	73	13	37	67	30	58	60	2
R	63	57	-6	57	73	16	45	60	15
R	63	70	7	43	43	0	33	55	22
R	73	77	4	17	23	6	28	27	-1
R	77	73	-4	53	40	-13	39	41	2
R	97	80	-17	50	50	0	45	47	2
R	83	77	-6	55	60	5	58	63	5
R	90	90	0	57	80	23	46	63	17
R	80	83	3	20	40	20	43	49	6
R	80	93	13	53	67	14	76	78	2

FOCAL SKILLS WRITING STUDENTS (N=10)									
Improvement:		**2**			**3**			**11**	
Mean:	**76**	**78**		**69**	**72**		**56**	**67**	
St.Dev.:	**12.9**	**16.3**		**8.6**	**11.6**		**12.0**	**10.7**	
Changes:		**MEAN**	**2.3**		**MEAN**	**2.8**		**MEAN**	**10.3**
		ST.DEV	**17.3**		**ST.DEV**	**9.0**		**ST.DEV**	**6.6**
Module	**PreL**	**PostL**		**PreR**	**PostR**		**PreW**	**PostW**	
W	60	93	33	60	50	-10	30	40	10
W	83	83	0	67	83	16	68	73	5
W	93	93	0	70	83	13	52	68	16
W	63	43	-20	70	77	7	51	65	14
W	90	80	-10	67	70	3	65	66	1
W	90	87	-3	70	67	-3	65	73	8
W	67	60	-7	63	58	-5	49	63	14
W	77	77	0	90	87	-3	67	80	13
W	73	70	-3	60	73	13	52	73	21
W	60	93	33	73	70	-3	65	66	1

FOCAL SKILLS IMMERSION STUDENTS (N=7)									
Improvement:		7			3			6	
Mean:	81	88		83	86		78	84	
St.Dev.:	10.6	7.9		9.5	8.0		4.4	7.5	
Changes:		MEAN	7.4		MEAN	3.3		MEAN	5.4
		ST.DEV	12.8		ST.DEV	11.3		ST.DEV	3.9
Module	PreL	PostL		PreR	PostR		PreW	PostW	
I	90	87	-3	80	73	-7	73	73	0
I	73	87	14	73	90	17	72	78	6
I	83	97	14	97	93	-4	82	92	10
I	93	97	4	87	93	6	78	79	1
I	87	80	-7	70	90	20	80	89	9
I	63	93	30	90	87	-3	84	92	8
I	77	77	0	83	77	-6	79	83	4

TRADITIONAL STUDENTS (N=120)									
Improvement:		5			13			1	
Means:	54	59		34	47		48	49	
St.Dev.	31.3	31.1		28.0	29.2		18.2	19.4	
Changes:		MEAN	4.3		MEAN	13.0		MEAN	0.9
		ST.DEV	29.2		ST.DEV	22.8		ST.DEV	12.7
Placement	PreL	PostL		PreR	PostR		PreW	PostW	
L	20	20	-0	0	0	0	36	10	-26
L	20	34	13	7	20	13	30	43	13
L	0	0	0	0	34	34	21	29	8
L	0	34	34	27	0	-27	12	0	-12
L	0	0	0	0	7	7	24	13	-11
L	7	7	-0	0	20	20	39	26	-13
L	0	34	34	34	0	-34	48	26	-22
L	48	20	-27	0	0	0	39	13	-26
L	48	20	-27	0	0	0	6	10	4
L	7	0	-7	20	0	-20	9	16	7
L	0	34	34	0	0	0	39	29	-9
L	7	20	14	48	47	-1	30	36	6
L	7	34	27	0	34	34	51	39	-12
L	0	34	34	34	61	27	48	52	4
L	0	75	75	0	40	40	39	36	-3
L	7	47	41	48	20	-27	42	62	20
L	7	34	27	0	7	7	36	49	13
L	48	75	27	34	47	13	45	69	24
L	0	34	34	7	34	27	27	46	19
L	20	34	13	7	34	27	51	52	1
L	34	20	-14	7	7	-0	42	33	-9
L	48	47	-0	34	34	-0	33	26	-7
L	48	20	-27	0	20	20	21	26	5
L	7	0	-7	20	61	40	36	49	13
L	0	0	0	48	20	-27	45	46	1
L	34	34	-0	0	34	34	51	33	-18
L	48	47	-0	61	61	-1	66	62	-4
L	0	34	34	7	0	-7	33	49	16
L	20	75	54	34	34	-0	48	59	11
L	34	7	-27	20	20	-0	36	49	13
L	48	20	-27	48	74	26	45	59	14
L	7	47	41	7	74	67	51	49	-2
L	20	20	-0	20	47	27	39	39	0
L	48	61	13	48	61	13	57	56	-1
L	34	61	27	7	47	40	30	49	19

L	34	61	27	34	34	-0	30	33	3
L	34	20	-14	34	34	-0	39	33	-6
L	7	75	68	48	74	26	51	46	-5
L	48	47	-0	88	87	-1	66	52	-14
L	20	88	68	48	87	40	54	56	2
L	48	34	-14	0	34	34	60	43	-17
L	48	61	13	61	74	13	57	49	-8
L	34	88	54	7	20	13	45	33	-12
L	34	75	41	61	61	-1	78	75	-3
L	48	100	52	88	74	-14	72	43	-29
L	48	47	-0	48	47	-1	75	66	-9
L	48	7	-41	34	34	-0	45	62	17
L	7	34	27	34	61	27	45	62	17
L	48	47	-0	14	0	-14	36	29	-6
L	20	75	54	20	20	-0	27	39	12
L	48	34	-14	27	0	-27	30	0	-30
L	34	20	-14	0	0	0	21	20	-1
L	48	0	-48	7	20	13	21	13	-8
L	7	100	93	7	47	40	33	59	26
R	61	75	13	20	34	13	18	23	5
R	75	20	-55	20	34	13	48	56	8
R	61	34	-27	7	0	-7	30	39	9
R	75	34	-41	7	34	27	33	46	13
R	89	75	-14	14	74	60	57	46	-11
R	89	34	-55	0	7	7	30	26	-4
R	61	61	-0	34	74	40	57	49	-8
R	61	75	13	20	47	27	57	36	-21
R	75	75	-0	20	61	40	51	69	18
R	75	75	-0	34	74	40	48	43	-5
R	61	100	39	0	47	47	45	59	14
R	75	88	13	34	47	13	48	49	1
R	75	75	-0	0	47	47	30	39	9
R	61	34	-27	34	20	-14	57	59	2
R	100	100	0	34	47	13	24	46	22
R	75	100	25	34	74	40	63	56	-7
R	61	100	39	0	61	61	66	52	-14
R	75	75	-0	34	61	27	57	66	9
R	89	20	-68	34	34	-0	57	52	-5
R	61	75	13	48	87	40	57	62	5
R	61	100	39	20	34	13	57	62	5
R	61	75	13	20	47	27	48	62	14
R	61	88	27	20	61	40	45	49	4
R	100	100	0	48	74	26	63	46	-17
R	89	88	-0	7	74	67	57	46	-11
R	100	100	0	20	74	54	78	69	-9
R	89	88	-0	48	74	26	75	72	-3

R	75	100	25	34	74	40	66	75	9
R	75	20	-55	48	87	40	81	69	-12
R	89	88	-0	48	61	13	69	62	-7
R	89	75	-14	48	61	13	42	66	24
R	75	100	25	0	0	0	30	43	13
R	100	88	-12	48	61	13	9	39	30
R	89	61	-28	27	47	20	21	29	8
R	61	75	13	27	34	6	27	33	6
R	89	61	-28	27	0	-27	9	20	11
R	75	47	-27	7	0	-7	39	20	-19
R	61	20	-41	7	0	-7	33	36	3
R	89	7	-82	0	7	7	15	10	-5
R	89	100	11	34	47	13	33	49	16
R	100	100	0	34	87	53	63	56	-7
R	89	75	-14	48	100	52	45	62	17
R	89	61	-28	48	74	26	57	66	9
W	61	75	13	61	61	-1	54	43	-11
W	89	100	11	61	74	13	69	82	13
W	100	100	0	61	61	-1	57	39	-18
W	89	61	-28	100	87	-13	63	46	-17
W	89	100	11	61	87	26	66	52	-14
W	75	88	13	88	87	-1	60	52	-8
W	89	61	-28	75	74	-1	69	82	13
W	89	75	-14	75	100	25	69	75	6
W	61	88	27	88	74	-14	60	56	-4
W	89	88	-0	61	74	13	66	82	16
W	75	61	-14	75	100	25	60	56	-4
W	75	61	-14	88	47	-41	69	79	10
W	89	88	-0	100	87	-13	57	66	9
W	61	100	39	61	74	13	66	85	19
W	75	75	-0	88	47	-41	54	59	5
W	75	75	-0	88	74	-14	69	66	-3
I	100	100	0	75	87	13	75	82	7
I	89	88	-0	75	87	13	78	72	-6
I	89	88	-0	88	74	-14	75	72	-3
I	89	88	-0	61	61	-1	72	66	-6
I	75	88	13	61	74	13	81	92	11
I	61	75	13	75	74	-1	78	88	10
I	61	75	13	75	74	-1	72	69	-3

TRADITIONAL LISTENING STUDENTS (N=54)									
Improvement:		14			9			-1	
Means:	25	39		24	33		41	40	
St.Dev.:	19.2	26.9		23.4	25.9		15.6	17.9	
Changes:		MEAN	14.1		MEAN	9.6		MEAN	-0.6
		ST.DEV	30.7		ST.DEV	21.3		ST.DEV	13.9
Placement:	PreL	PostL		PreR	PostR		PreW	PostW	
L	20	20	-0	0	0	0	36	10	-26
L	20	34	13	7	20	13	30	43	13
L	0	0	0	0	34	34	21	29	8
L	0	34	34	27	0	-27	12	0	-12
L	0	0	0	0	7	7	24	13	-11
L	7	7	-0	0	20	20	39	26	-13
L	0	34	34	34	0	-34	48	26	-22
L	48	20	-27	0	0	0	39	13	-26
L	48	20	-27	0	0	0	6	10	4
L	7	0	-7	20	0	-20	9	16	7
L	0	34	34	0	0	0	39	29	-9
L	7	20	14	48	47	-1	30	36	6
L	7	34	27	0	34	34	51	39	-12
L	0	34	34	34	61	27	48	52	4
L	0	75	75	0	40	40	39	36	-3
L	7	47	41	48	20	-27	42	62	20
L	7	34	27	0	7	7	36	49	13
L	48	75	27	34	47	13	45	69	24
L	0	34	34	7	34	27	27	46	19
L	20	34	13	7	34	27	51	52	1
L	34	20	-14	7	7	-0	42	33	-9
L	48	47	-0	34	34	-0	33	26	-7
L	48	20	-27	0	20	20	21	26	5
L	7	0	-7	20	61	40	36	49	13
L	0	0	0	48	20	-27	45	46	1
L	34	34	-0	0	34	34	51	33	-18
L	48	47	-0	61	61	-1	66	62	-4
L	0	34	34	7	0	-7	33	49	16
L	20	75	54	34	34	-0	48	59	11
L	34	7	-27	20	20	-0	36	49	13
L	48	20	-27	48	74	26	45	59	14
L	7	47	41	7	74	67	51	49	-2
L	20	20	-0	20	47	27	39	39	0
L	48	61	13	48	61	13	57	56	-1
L	34	61	27	7	47	40	30	49	19

L	34	61	27	34	34	-0	30	33	3
L	34	20	-14	34	34	-0	39	33	-6
L	7	75	68	48	74	26	51	46	-5
L	48	47	-0	88	87	-1	66	52	-14
L	20	88	68	48	87	40	54	56	2
L	48	34	-14	0	34	34	60	43	-17
L	48	61	13	61	74	13	57	49	-8
L	34	88	54	7	20	13	45	33	-12
L	34	75	41	61	61	-1	78	75	-3
L	48	100	52	88	74	-14	72	43	-29
L	48	47	-0	48	47	-1	75	66	-9
L	48	7	-41	34	34	-0	45	62	17
L	7	34	27	34	61	27	45	62	17
L	48	47	-0	14	0	-14	36	29	-6
L	20	75	54	20	20	-0	27	39	12
L	48	34	-14	27	0	-27	30	0	-30
L	34	20	-14	0	0	0	21	20	-1
L	48	0	-48	7	20	13	21	13	-8
L	7	100	93	7	47	40	33	59	26

TRADITIONAL READING STUDENTS (N=43)									
Improvement:		-7			25			3	
Means:	78	71		25	50		46	49	
St.Dev.:	13.5	27.6		16.3	27.6		18.3	15.7	
Changes:		MEAN	-7.2		MEAN	24.3		MEAN	2.8
		ST.DEV	28.9		ST.DEV	22.0		ST.DEV	12.1
Placement	PreL	PostL		PreR	PostR		PreW	PostW	
R	61	75	13	20	34	13	18	23	5
R	75	20	-55	20	34	13	48	56	8
R	61	34	-27	7	0	-7	30	39	9
R	75	34	-41	7	34	27	33	46	13
R	89	75	-14	14	74	60	57	46	-11
R	89	34	-55	0	7	7	30	26	-4
R	61	61	-0	34	74	40	57	49	-8
R	61	75	13	20	47	27	57	36	-21
R	75	75	-0	20	61	40	51	69	18
R	75	75	-0	34	74	40	48	43	-5
R	61	100	39	0	47	47	45	59	14
R	75	88	13	34	47	13	48	49	1
R	75	75	-0	0	47	47	30	39	9
R	61	34	-27	34	20	-14	57	59	2
R	100	100	0	34	47	13	24	46	22
R	75	100	25	34	74	40	63	56	-7
R	61	100	39	0	61	61	66	52	-14
R	75	75	-0	34	61	27	57	66	9
R	89	20	-68	34	34	-0	57	52	-5
R	61	75	13	48	87	40	57	62	5
R	61	100	39	20	34	13	57	62	5
R	61	75	13	20	47	27	48	62	14
R	61	88	27	20	61	40	45	49	4
R	100	100	0	48	74	26	63	46	-17
R	89	88	-0	7	74	67	57	46	-11
R	100	100	0	20	74	54	78	69	-9
R	89	88	-0	48	74	26	75	72	-3
R	75	100	25	34	74	40	66	75	9
R	75	20	-55	48	87	40	81	69	-12
R	89	88	-0	48	61	13	69	62	-7
R	89	75	-14	48	61	13	42	66	24
R	75	100	25	0	0	0	30	43	13
R	100	88	-12	48	61	13	9	39	30
R	89	61	-28	27	47	20	21	29	8
R	61	75	13	27	34	6	27	33	6

R	89	61	-28	27	0	-27	9	20	11
R	75	47	-27	7	0	-7	39	20	-19
R	61	20	-41	7	0	-7	33	36	3
R	89	7	-82	0	7	7	15	10	-5
R	89	100	11	34	47	13	33	49	16
R	100	100	0	34	87	53	63	56	-7
R	89	75	-14	48	100	52	45	62	17
R	89	61	-28	48	74	26	57	66	9

TRADITIONAL WRITING STUDENTS (N=16)									
Improvement:		1			-1			1	
Means:	80	81		77	76		63	64	
St.Dev.:	11.8	15.1		14.6	16.0		5.6	15.5	
Changes:		MEAN	1.0		MEAN	-1.6		MEAN	0.7
		ST.DEV	18.1		ST.DEV	20.9		ST.DEV	12.1
Placement	PreL	PostL		PreR	PostR		PreW	PostW	
W	61	75	13	61	61	-1	54	43	-11
W	89	100	11	61	74	13	69	82	13
W	100	100	0	61	61	-1	57	39	-18
W	89	61	-28	100	87	-13	63	46	-17
W	89	100	11	61	87	26	66	52	-14
W	75	88	13	88	87	-1	60	52	-8
W	89	61	-28	75	74	-1	69	82	13
W	89	75	-14	75	100	25	69	75	6
W	61	88	27	88	74	-14	60	56	-4
W	89	88	-0	61	74	13	66	82	16
W	75	61	-14	75	100	25	60	56	-4
W	75	61	-14	88	47	-41	69	79	10
W	89	88	-0	100	87	-13	57	66	9
W	61	100	39	61	74	13	66	85	19
W	75	75	-0	88	47	-41	54	59	5
W	75	75	-0	88	74	-14	69	66	-3

TRADITIONAL IMMERSION STUDENTS (N=7)									
Improvement:		6			3			1	
Means:	80	86		73	76		76	77	
St.Dev.:	15.0	8.9		9.4	9.3		3.3	10.2	
Changes:		MEAN	5.5		MEAN	3.0		MEAN	1.4
		ST.DEV	7.2		ST.DEV	10.2		ST.DEV	7.7
Placement	PreL	PostL		PreR	PostR		PreW	PostW	
I	100	100	0	75	87	13	75	82	7
I	89	88	-0	75	87	13	78	72	-6
I	89	88	-0	88	74	-14	75	72	-3
I	89	88	-0	61	61	-1	72	66	-6
I	75	88	13	61	74	13	81	92	11
I	61	75	13	75	74	-1	78	88	10
I	61	75	13	75	74	-1	72	69	-3