

Closing the Language Gap One Work of Art at a Time

Primary Researcher: Francesco Little



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
A PREEMINENT RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

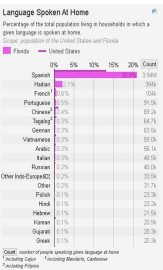
Research Goal

The goal of this research is to explore the incorporation of art and VTS in the building of confidence and fluency for English as a second language (ESL) learners while simultaneously providing a framework by which to develop a future program in collaboration with the Tampa Museum of Art's *Connections Program* to aid the Tampa Bay community.

Introduction

The following call to research explores the connections between the visualization, analysis, and finally reflection of art upon the viewer and how this can aid ESL/ELLs in building confidence and vocabulary using VTS (Visual Thinking Strategies). It is the hope that through the incorporation of art into language learning, which has been shown to tremendously increase learner's fluency (Right Brain,2014), and using VTS strategies which disassociates the idea of right and wrong answers in participants (Reilly,2005) secondary English language learners will bolster their confidence and fluency simultaneously (Cheng, 1999).

Literature Review



Languages in Florida (State)-(Pictured to the left)

A brief breakdown of language demographics in Florida provided by the 2010 US Census and 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Provides data on spoken household languages besides English in Florida.

The Affective Filter in Second Language Teaching by: Xiaoyan Du:

Discusses the components of the affective filter which must be lowered for the learner to acquire "Comprehensible input" (Du,2009). This source demonstrates that a lack of confidence is a substantial obstacle to language learning.

Right Brain Initiative- 2014 Progress Report: This source demonstrates the effectiveness of art's incorporation on English language learning. Schools that chose to incorporate art saw "At least 10 times" (Right Brain,2014) greater average in their English language learners' scores after implementation.

Visual Thinking Strategies: A New Role for Art in Medical Education By: Jo Marie Reilly, MD; Jeffrey Ring, PhD; Linda Duke: This source explores the effectiveness of VTS to make participants "Look carefully, put their observations and ideas: into words, and actively "scaffold" on the thoughts of others" (Reilly,2005).

How Visual Thinking Strategies Using Picture Book Images Can Improve Korean Secondary EFL Students' L2 Writing By: Eun Young Yeom from the University of Georgia: Art as a tool to language learning is explored and after continued observation was found to benefit students as "They learned to take risks and to make mistakes in using a foreign language" (Eun,2018).

Literature Review cont....

Supporting Oral Language Acquisition using Visual Thinking Strategies: Describes why VTS is a great tool for developing fluency as it allows for ELL [ESL learners] to "bring perspectives from home culture into the analysis" (Anderson, Supporting).

Responding to ESL Student Writing: The Value of a Nonjudgmental Approach: This source details the ability for second language learners to self-evaluate their work after continued encouragement and experiencing non-judgmental feedback. It proposes that if initial feedback is met with "Task oriented questions" students' confidence gradually increases (Kasper,1996).

METHODS

The procedure: (1.) Participants will take a pre-survey before their 1st ever VTS tour (2.) Participants will experience a facilitator led VTS tour (3.) At least 3 VTS tour sessions will be administered. (4.) After each session, a qualitative post-survey will be completed to acquire data for analysis (Girdharan,2011).

Facilitators: Should be familiar with several forms of accent affected English and if possible, the native languages of the majority of participants to guide and translate expressions if and only when participants have hit a linguistic roadblock that they themselves cannot overcome.

Rationale behind images: These sessions are targeted for intermediate to advanced ESL/ ELLs. The selected artworks serve to move from very representational to more abstract pieces to challenge

Pre-survey questions:

1. How would you evaluate your confidence with English? (Rank: 1 being very low ability to 5 being very high ability)
2. Do you feel confident communicating complex thoughts in English? (Rank: 1 being not confident at all to 5 being extremely confident)

Post-survey questions:

1. How would you evaluate your confidence with English? (Rank: 1 being very low ability to 5 being very high ability)
2. Do you feel confident communicating complex thoughts in English? (Rank: 1 being not confident at all to 5 being extremely confident)
3. What skills if any, did you gain from participating in this visual learning experience?

Conclusion

It takes about 3-5 years to acquire fluency in ESL/ELLs via traditional instruction (Hakuta,2000). A clear need for a program that quickens and improves fluency thus exists. Confidence was shown to be a significant obstacle to language acquisition. The outlined procedure's incorporation of art into language learning through VTS improves both confidence and fluency. VTS serves as the most appropriate alternative for ESL/ELLs by allowing them to incorporate their background, scaffold off of other's responses, and acknowledge that there are no wrong answers (Anderson, Supporting). This allows participants to experience the program and decide if they are interested in further participation.

VTS Images



SC.74.5.3 EDDY, DON Red Mercedes, from Documenta Folio, Super Realism 1970 lithograph 24 in. x 30 1/2 in. MUSEUM PURCHASE, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA COLLECTION



FC.2000.10.48 BROWN, DOUGLAS A. Ed's Garden (Sweet Sixteen), from the series Nature Boy 1993 Cibachrome print 11 1/4 in. x 15 3/4 in. GIFT OF THE ESTATE OF DOUGLAS A. BROWN, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA COLLECTION



SC.73.6.8 CBEAUCHAMP, ROBERT Untitled No. 31972 lithograph 18 in. x 26 in. MUSEUM PURCHASE, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA COLLECTION

Citations

Anderson, Angela. "Supporting Oral Language Acquisition using Visual Thinking Strategies."

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"Right Brain Releases Powerful Data to Great Applause." *The Right Brain Initiative, The Right Brain Initiative*, 2014, <http://rightbraininitiative.org/right-brain-resources/>.

Contributing Author: Christian Alvarez