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This study was designed to answer the following question: What factors affect Latino students' attendance at free adult English classes? As an ABE ESL instructor, I am concerned about why potential students, specifically Latino students, do not attend classes. A gap exists between the number of students who are in class and those who need to learn English but are not in classes. The methods used in my study included focus groups, a discussion group and writing task, and short informal interviews. The participants were Latinos who currently attend classes, past attendees, and potential attendees. The results indicated that work and family (children), along with personal empowerment, life experiences, cultural values, and peer relations were critical factors that supported and hindered the students' attendance. From these results suggestions for improving student attendance in ABE programs were formulated.

FACTORS AFFECTING LATINO STUDENTS' ATTENDANCE AT
FREE ADULT ENGLISH CLASSES

by

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To my students, friends, and family who encourage and inspire me.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“I need to go to school.” “I will come on Monday.” “It’s too hard. “Yo soy burro.” (I am stupid). “I am really busy, but as soon as I can, I will come back to school.” “I am tired.” “I am lazy.” The preceding reasons/excuses are just a few of the ones that I have heard adult ESL students use to justify not attending adult English classes.

What drives us to make the decisions that we do? Almost any decision we make is influenced one way or another by family, society, circumstances, time, personality, motivation or a combination of these factors or others that we aren’t even aware of. While we may not know what guides our decisions, we do know that language is power. Ludwig Wittgenstein, an Austrian-British philosopher in his book *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* believed that “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (p.68, 1922). In his 1922 book, he was not referring to the language as a barrier to success, but his words are prophetic in that they illustrate what is happening in society today. If people cannot speak the language, then the door of opportunity remains closed.

Many of the adults we teach are trying to make a living on a minimum wage job while supporting their family and trying to be the best parents they can be. This struggle is compounded by the fact that a large majority of them are classified as limited speakers of English.

According to Census 2000, when people over the age of five, were asked if they spoke a language other than English in their house, 18 percent (47 million) said yes (US Census 2000). In 2002 a study on Immigration, which was updated in 2007, the League of Women Voters found that in Minnesota an estimated 200,000 people especially Asians, Hispanics, and Africans needed ESL services (League of

Women Voters, 2007). In the 2007-2008, program year for Adult Basic Education, of the total ABE adult enrollment 45% or 32,271 participants were ESL students (ABE Minnesota, 2007-2008). If 200,000 people in Minnesota are in need of services and only 32, 271 being served, we have a huge population of adult ESL learners, who are not being served.

As teachers, the challenge we face is trying to increase our students' awareness of the classes and persuading them that these classes have value and need to be utilized. Equally important is that teachers must understand and learn how to better reach our potential student population. In order to effectively keep and reach students, it is necessary to be cognizant of the barriers to participation in adult ESL classes and the role they play in attendance.

The U.S. Department of Education (2003) states that an average time an adult spends in an English learning program is 134 hours, which is roughly about one tenth of the time K-12 students go to school in one year. The same article reports that students who dropped out before 12 hours are not included in this figure, and that it is also important to remember this is an average, which may vary by state (U.S. Dept. of Education (2003) as cited in Comings, 2007).

There is some debate as to what is a critical period in adult education in terms of attendance. The National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs (NEAEP) states that 50% of people in Adult Basic Education (ABE) complete less than 35 hours of instruction before they drop out (Comings, Parrella, & Soricone, 1999). Another statistic says that 18 % drop out prior to completion of 12 hours and up to 74% of adults drop out of classes before the first three weeks are finished (Quigley, 2000). While the statistics vary, the implications are clear. Our overall retention rate is low.

The National Reporting System for ABE defines a participant as a student who has attended a minimum of 12 hours of class in a year. It becomes a goal of adult education programs to sustain this interest for more than 12 hours. A student, who is in a program for 12 hours, has the ability to make a level change. Level changes lead to greater program success. In addition, funding is directly tied to the number of hours a program generates. It only makes sense to encourage participation beyond 12 hours, so funding is increased.

What makes some students stay in class while others quit? I have had students, who are flourishing in class, and then suddenly without warning they stop coming. Who knows why? It is this unknown information that compels me to find answers. It is well-known that societal norms, personal experiences, fear, and a desire to fit in impact a student's decision, but is that all or is it just a smaller part of a much larger puzzle. Some students say, "English is too hard." When asked if they have ever gone to classes before, their answer is usually affirmative. At some point in the conversation, it is usually revealed that the student has not had consistent attendance, which only compounds frustration and negative opinions about English. What barriers have made their attendance inconsistent?

When I ask the students, I usually hear one of the following three reasons for inconsistent attendance. One, I do not like school and am choosing not to go back. Two, I do not need to learn English, because someone can interpret for me. Third, reality and life intruded and something had to give. Beder (1990) gives three similar reasons for this lack of attendance. "They lack sufficient motivation, they are motivated but are deterred in some way, or they are unaware that adult basic education programs exist" (Beder, 1990, as cited in Sparks, 2002, p. 7)

I have been teaching both children and adult ESL students for the last ten years. While I have worked with a variety of cultures, primarily I work with Latinos. The majority of my students are from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. In an effort to make classes more accessible to the students, I teach in an apartment complex. I currently have a larger portion of men than women in class. Most of my students have a K-6th grade education. They come from limited English backgrounds. Many times only

their children speak English. The students talk about the “American Dream” as their principal reason for coming to the United States. They want better jobs and a better way of life. Some also come because they are seeking refuge. Many immigrants come to America because their dreams and the means to accomplish them are not a feasible option in their country (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996, as cited in Alfred, 2001). In their native countries, they struggle to survive and raise a family, yet in their new country they cannot speak the language. How can you obtain the “American Dream” if you do not speak the language?

As teachers, we need to motivate potential adult students to find the time to come to class and then stay in class. We also need to learn ways of sustaining their interest. This means learning about the personal barriers and social fears that keep students from attending classes and helping them find a balance in their new and existing culture. Finally, we have to consider their previous experience and the role of our own experiences on our teaching methods. These are just some of the factors that have led me to the topic of my project.

The specific goal of this paper is to find out what factors affect Latino students' attendance at free adult English classes? I will also be looking for answers to the following questions. What factors keep them attending? What factors can I control? What are barriers that prohibit them from attending? How can I get more consistent attendance and give the students a sense that English classes have value for them?

Increased attendance creates a domino effect. The more students a program has, the more money the program generates. Additional money in turn creates more opportunities for the students and gives them a sense of being successful. They will be

better able to open closed doors. A better understanding of the students will not only help teachers and people who work with limited English, but also employers and even the students themselves to know how to access their greatest potential. It also helps other service providers, such as workforce or human services, who work with the students.

This paper will specifically address factors that affect Latino students' attendance at free adult English classes. The information needed for this study will be gathered from the students who are or have been enrolled in my classes. These students will participate in focus groups and a discussion group and writing task using Spanish. A very small group of past attendees and potential new attendees will also supply some information. I will have two focus groups. I work at two different sites, so I will facilitate groups at both sites. I want to get the best information available to me from the students that I have access to. Spanish is the students' first language, and most of them will be more comfortable using it in the focus groups, which will give me more accurate data.

In the next chapter I will review the literature that pertains to my question. I will specifically focus on adult education, barriers to attendance, motivation, welfare and identity. In Chapter 3 I will discuss the methodology (focus groups, discussion group and writing task, and short informal interviews), the participants, and how the data will be analyzed, which includes triangulation. In Chapter 4 I will present the results of my study and discuss them. In the last chapter I will summarize the research and discuss conclusions that can be made and potential areas of further study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The issue of attendance or participation in adult education, specifically ESL classes has long been an issue of contention. An overview of Adult Basic Education (ABE) in Minnesota – FY2008, states that 32, 271 (45%) of the total students served in 2008 were in ESL classes (Minnesota ABE, 2008). This is a decrease from the FY2007 year, in which 36, 544 (49%) of the total students served were in ESL classes (Minnesota ABE, 2007). The 2006-2007 Minnesota ABE program data estimates that 200,000 people need ESL services, while the 2007-2008 Minnesota ABE program data estimates that 250,000 need ESL services. In 2007 roughly 19% and in 2008 roughly 13% of the total estimated students were served. A huge gap exists between the number of students served and those in need of service. The goal of Adult Basic Education programs becomes that of closing or reducing the gap; however this is no easy task.

My goal is to find out how to close the gap by looking at what factors affect Latino attendance at free adult ESL classes. A better understanding of the students and their lives should lead to greater success in reaching out to potential students and engaging them in classes.

In an investigation of the literature, I found a wide body of research that exists on ABE (Adult Basic Education). A majority of this research focused on GED and

family literacy programs (programs that have parents and young children going to school together) rather than on Latino adult ESL students and their patterns of attendance. This literature review will look at changes in the adult education population, barriers to participation, motivation and second language motivation, welfare, and the impact of identity. A few of the research studies cited where conducted on Hispanics, I have chosen to use the word Latino throughout this paper.

Changes in the Adult Basic Education Program

Adult Basic Education underwent a change in 1991. Teachers began to realize that their classes were no longer made up of mostly African Americans and Caucasians, but rather Latino and Asian immigrants (League of Women Voters, 2002). This change in the ABE population reflects the changing demographics in the United States. It also initiated a new direction in adult education. English instruction became a major part of this new direction.

A study conducted by the League of Women Voters entitled “Immigration in Minnesota and Opportunities” refers to Adult Basic Education as “second-chance education, continuing education, lifelong learning, work force training, and family literacy education” (2002, p. 18). Adult education becomes an umbrella term for a large number of services.

The goal of Adult Basic Education (ABE) in Minnesota is to help students to become more self-sufficient while increasing their literacy skills. This will allow them to be better family members, citizens and workers (Minnesota ABE, 2008). According to the same article Adult Basic Education participants must be below grade level in English, writing, reading or math and be at least 16 years of age, but not currently enrolled in high school. If they meet these requirements, they can participate in a variety of ABE programs including, but not limited to, GED (General Educational Development

diploma), ESL (English as a Second Language), Family Literacy, Workforce Preparation, and Citizenship/Civics Education.

In Minnesota, the total ABE Adult Enrollment is 74, 656 people. Of these people 32, 271 are ESL, 24, 514 are basic skills (general), 14,674 are GED and diploma, 3, 227 are Workforce Preparation, 633 are Family Literacy, and 1,789 are citizenship. Most of Minnesota's ESL population comes from Africa, Latin America, and Asia (Minnesota ABE, 2008).

The Census 2000 found that 47 million or 18% of all the people they questioned over five lived in homes where English was not the only language spoken. In 1990, 31.8 million or 14% reported speaking a language other than English in the home (U.S. Census, 2000). 28 million people over the age of five speak Spanish, which is the mostly widely spoken second language in the United States (Finegan and Rickford 2004). Many of these Spanish speakers are immigrants.

Immigration has long been an issue in the United States. The United States has seen a dramatic increase in the number of immigrants over the past 30 years. In 1970 there were 9.6 million foreign born Americans, while in 2000 there were 28.4 million (Bailey and Mingle, 2003).

The implications of these statistics support a need to create an environment that can provide opportunities that allow each learner a chance to learn regardless of their cultural background (Alfred, 2001). This environment can only be created when educators understand what hinders and promotes attendance.

Barriers/Factors

Educator Malcolm Knowles as cited in a CAELA (2007) ESL resource FAQ report describes adult learners as self-directed, experienced, practical and problem-solvers. They want to be able to apply what they are learning to their lives. Relevance dictates participation and sacrifice, however barriers dictate elimination. Sacrifice becomes excess baggage that impacts students as they enter adult education settings (Illeris, 2003).

Unpacking the baggage leads to some of the most common barriers to learning English and participating in classes. These barriers can be broken down into three categories. These categories are situational, dispositional, and institutional. Situational barriers include those imposed by one's family, job, or even a civic commitment. Dispositional barriers are intrapersonal in nature, such as a conflict between role demands. Finally, institutional barriers are those imposed by the system, such as class schedule (Mercer, 1990, as cited in Fairchild, 2003). Quigley (1997) refers to these three categories as factors which influence participants' decisions to drop out (as cited in Comings, Parrella, & Soricone, 1999). Regardless of the terminology, participants and non-participants alike are influenced by these factors or barriers.

A study conducted by Hayes (1989) found the most highly ranked barriers as perceived by Latino adults to be lack of time, low priority of education in relation to work, costs, and lack of transportation. Comings, Parrella, and Soricone (1999), in a study on PRE-GED students, found that 48.7 percent of their participants said "life demands" were a major barrier to attendance. "Life demands" include such things as work, health, transportation, daycare, lack of time, family, and even weather. A study by McArthur (1997) on participation of adults in English as a Second Language classes

found that time was the biggest barrier (40%), followed by money (26%), and transportation and childcare issues (23%). In all of these studies participants were asked to pick the main barrier for them.

Researchers seem to agree on the barriers, and Latinos (89% in a 2002 survey conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center) agree that English is necessary for survival. The problem is learning to overcome the barriers and learn English.

Situational Barriers/Factors.

The following situational barriers will be explored in this section. They are time, work, daycare, and transportation. In an article by Tucker (2007) time is the balance between holding two jobs, supporting families, and sacrifice, which is basically a few free hours at night to learn English. Bariso (2008) conducted research on factors affecting adult participation in lifelong learning opportunities in London, England. The participants in the study indicated that their available free time was used in many ways. These ways included: friends, family, work, sports, television, travel, shopping, sleeping, and other activities.

Work consumes a large part of the day, thus it is also a barrier to class attendance. Bariso (2008) found that manual workers start work early and finish late. The work is physically demanding, thus the workers are exhausted. John, one of the participants in the study, indicated that when he gets home all he thinks of is showering, eating, and seeing his friends. A case study by Lanteigne and Schwarzer (1997) depicts the story of Rafael. Rafael works from 2:00 a.m. till noon weekdays and on weekends. He gets four hours a sleep a night. His family of nine exists on between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a year. He also comes to class with some of his children two nights a week.

Tse (2001) notes that many immigrant families are very poor and work long hours. Some immigrants with high levels of education come to the United States and get low-paying jobs because their educational backgrounds are not recognized here. These two factors combined create a situation where the families are living from paycheck to paycheck, and thus there is no extra money for daycare or time for learning English (Tse, 2001; Sparks, 2002).

Daycare and transportation are also barriers to attendance (Hayes, 1989). Many of the people who come to class also have children. A low-income family does not always have extra money for daycare or summer camps (Terrell 1990, as cited by Fairchild. 2003). Parents need someone to watch their children and a way to get them to this place and a way to get to class.

Transportation in the United States is essential. Cars are not as readily accessible in their countries, thus they need to learn to drive in the United States. In interviews conducted by Menard (2005), one of the interviewees was forced to drive without a license in order to get to classes. The student did not like driving without a license, but it was necessary to attain her goal of English. It was also dangerous as she was undocumented and driving illegally.

Dispositional Barriers/Factors

Multiple /gender roles, past educational experiences, and attitude will be explored in this section. A major dispositional barrier is role conflict. Most adults are not just students. They have other roles that they must fulfill. Some of these other roles include parent, daycare or financial provider, sibling, and interpreter. Many women are torn between being a mother and a worker. All mothers want to be there for their children,

but sometimes they cannot be, thus they feel guilty (Terrell, 1990, as cited in Fairchild, 2003). This sense of guilt creates a need to choose. Basic needs take precedence over education (Fairchild, 2003).

Gender roles also seem to be a barrier to participation. Davila (2008) found that Mexican women felt typical Mexican culture greatly impacted their ability to learn English. The respondents referred to their husbands as the protector and decision maker. The husband worked, while the wife stayed home, thus she had no need to learn English. Traditional gender roles thus limited their access to classes and the language.

Traditional gender roles are taught to children at a very young age. Sara-Lafosse goes on to further support the idea of gender roles and gender separation. Public and private school curriculum in the immigrants' country is often taught to gender specific groups, which only serves to enforce this gender division (1992, as cited in Davila, 2008). Girls learned appropriate girl curriculum and boys learned appropriate boy curriculum.

In the United States, these gender roles that have been established from childhood are challenged. Oboler (1995) cites a study done by Pessar (1991) on Dominican households in the United States. In the Dominican Republic men belong in the public sphere. The man's job is to work and support the family. The women belong in the private sphere. The woman's job is to clean and care for the family. These traditional roles are established and adhered to. A new life in a new country creates role conflict between these traditional roles and new roles. In the United States Dominican men are forced to do household chores and a variety of other things that are not normally deemed

as “men’s work”. As a result of this change, men felt their masculinity and pride were questioned.

Pessar (1991, as cited in Oboler, 1995) confirms the importance of gender roles in one’s culture and their impact on one’s self-esteem. Past educational experiences also impact self-esteem and new education. Bariso (2008) found that negative early school experiences impacted future educational decisions. In this study one of the participants blames her experiences on her decision to quit school at the age of 14. The participant felt like a failure. In another study by Comings, Parrella, & Soricone (1999), 44.7 % of the subjects in the study indicated that their negatives experiences made school a negative place for them.

The teacher’s attitude to the students and their culture can also heighten these negative experiences (Sparks, 2002). Sparks found that the atmosphere in the classroom can hinder or encourage the students’ overall learning. If the students feel excluded, pushed away, ignored, or unimportant, student participation in the classroom is decreased. Refusal to accept or integrate a student’s culture leads to rejection and withdrawal from the classroom atmosphere. Positive feelings create positive interactions and active participation in the classroom atmosphere.

Research has demonstrated that attitude plays a huge role in one’s desire to learn a new language. Today there are approximately 45.5 million Latinos in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau News, 2008) and of that roughly 12 million are undocumented (Skerry, 2008; Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). Many immigrants feel that they will not stay in this country, thus there is no real need to learn English (Hendricks, 1973, as cited in Hayes, 1989). Research conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center (2007) found that 49 % of the

people asked felt that their native country was their real homeland. The immigrants see this as a place to earn money, but their stay is temporary (Skerry, 2008). A sense of alienation develops, because everything that is familiar to them including their culture, language, family, friends, social system, and norms is still in their country (Segal et al., 2005).

Tse (2001) addresses another important component of attitude, that of fear of losing one's language and culture. As the children of Spanish speaking adults begin to learn English, these same children stop using Spanish. This loss of the first language is referred to as subtractive bilingualism. Each new generation uses the heritage language (in this case Spanish) less. Eventually, English becomes predominant in the house (Tse, 2001; Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). In a study by Worthy (2008), parents described feeling "shut out of vital areas of their children's lives, including language, social and emotional development, and education" (p. 151).

Attitude is one type of barrier/factor that can inhibit participation in ESL classes. Research by Beder (1992) has defined non-participants as one of three kinds. The first group, the demand population, has motivation and no real barriers to participation in class. The second group is motivated but constrained. Attendance is limited by a lack of childcare or other barriers that they cannot overcome. The third group is resisters; this group has no motivation to attend.

Research by Houle (1985) found that motivational factors be broken down into six different categories. These motivational factors may explain the variations that exist in recruitment and attendance. The first three categories are justifications as to why people do not attend classes. These categories are oblivious, uninvolved, and resistant. Oblivious people are unaware of Adult Basic Education (ABE). Uninvolved people know about ABE, but they do not attend because of time or lack of interest. Resistant people have an awareness of ABE, but they resist participating in it. The last three categories are justifications as to why people do attend classes. These categories include focused, eclectic, and comprehensive. Focused people have a specific reason for participating in ABE programs. Eclectic people have many reasons for participating in ABE. Finally, comprehensive people participate in ABE to obtain a complete education, including math, writing, reading, and other basic skills (as cited in Kohring, 1999).

Motivation

Situational and dispositional barriers do hinder adult participation in ABE classes. However, there are some adults who are not hindered by these barriers. These adults may attend because of their motivation. Motivation is a topic that has been greatly debated. Motivation guides human behavior. Human behavior is driven by direction and intensity. This means it is driven by choice, action, and persistence (Dörnyei, 2001a). The question that emerges is what guides this choice, action and persistence. Researchers have postulated many different theories. These researchers' theories have proposed individual and social explanations that are driven by both internal and external factors. The one consensus that seems to be unanimous among researchers is that it continues to be a field of on-going study with endless possibilities.

What is motivation? Motivation explains why, how long, and how hard people are willing to do an activity (Dörnyei, 2001a). Motivation is the reason we do something (Tileston, 2004). While the definitions of motivation are simplistic in nature, the topic of motivation is not. Motivation deals with human behavior and what guides peoples' decisions (Dörnyei, 2001a)

Theories on motivation have greatly changed over the years (Dörnyei, 2001b). Early theories, notably Freud, attributed behaviors to unconscious or repressed instincts or drives. Behavioral theories such as that of Pavlov were later proposed. After that theories were based more on fulfilling needs and being able to get to a state of self-actualization, which was based largely on Maslow's work. Today's theories are based more on the cognitive approach; however they still have some social psychology components. These theories focus on how the individual's thought processes lead to action. The individual considers the value of the activity, their capabilities, and social response.

Research today is impacted by theoretical change and societal changes. Previous studies on motivation addressed the motivations of English speaking individuals, while today these studies address the motivations of non-native English speakers. Today there are approximately 45.5 million Latinos (U.S. Census Bureau News, 2008) in the United States, which translates into a huge number of people who speak more than just English in their home.

Motivation to Learn a Second Language

Motivation to learn a second language is comprised of many factors. Dörnyei (2001a) feels that second language motivation is something that needs to be actively nurtured. Learning a second language is not an easy process. This person is not just "learning" words, but rather s/he is learning a new culture (Gardner 1979, as cited in Dörnyei, 2001b). This task can be overwhelming. A Student needs to learn, acquire and incorporate this new language in their already existing schema, while maintaining the old one (Gardner 1979, as cited in Dörnyei, 2001b). A student torn between two cultures supports the reason why second language motivation needs to be actively nurtured. When a person is forced to choose, s/he will often take the path of least resistance.

General motivations to learn English. In a 2004 study by Buttaro, eight Latino students of varying ages and nationalities in New York were asked among other things their opinions on learning English. Motivations to learn English included improving oneself, becoming better members of society, being better able to help their children, and communicating with school staff. A successful experience in adult education, such as additional qualifications or gaining employment, motivates parents to learn more in order to be better role models (Bariso, 2008). The participants of Buttaro's study concluded that learning English also leads to better jobs and extra training to enhance their jobs, and better overall everyday communication on the phone and in the store. Improved reading and writing skills plus the ability to help their native country were seen as other benefits. Worthy (2006) found that the most common reasons parents give for coming to the U.S. are better educational opportunities for their children and better jobs for them. English thus becomes a way of enhancing these opportunities.

Tse (2001) provides additional support on the importance of speaking and learning English. Her research gives strength to the idea that English means power, prestige, entry into society and acceptance. This ideology is not new. In 1979, a nationally representative survey was conducted. This survey of U.S. residents of Mexican background found that 45% felt English led to better employment benefits and 23% felt a bilingual person received additional benefits from education, society, and the community. Davila's 2008 research on Latinos supports the idea of learning English as a positive benefit. This research confirmed that learning English leads to upward mobility.

Family income and educational background also impact language learning success. A higher income allows the learner to be able to access additional resources (Tse, 2001). Research indicates that the higher levels of formal education in the students' own country leads to a higher probability of learning faster, which is also dependent on the amount of time a person has lived in the U.S. (Tse, 2001).

Buttaro and Tse's work provides clear and justifiable reasons for learning English; however, their work does not explain how these reasons and second language acquisition interact. In addressing the topic of motivation is necessary to look at the four most well-known types of motivation.

Four types of motivation: integrative, instrumental, extrinsic, and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is completing a task for a reward (Tileston, 2004). Extrinsic motivation can be broken down into three forms. Noels, Clement, Pelletier & Vallerand (2000, as cited by Guiora, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei, 2003) identify these forms as external regulation, introjected regulation and identified regulation. External regulation is based on an external reward or punishment. Introjected regulation defines a person's actions as a result of some internalized pressure that the person has placed on himself/herself. The last form is identified regulation. An action is completed because it has a personal value to the person.

Extrinsic motivation is based on external rewards, while intrinsic motivation is based on internal drive. Intrinsic motivation is the drive that comes from inside of a

person. This drive is activated because the person has a desire to learn something, do something or accomplish something (Tileston, 2004). This drive can also be activated based on a sense of joy or satisfaction that the person will receive upon completion of the activity (Noels, Pelletier, Clément, and Vallerand, 2000, as cited in Guiora et al., 2003).

This idea of intrinsic motivation can be classified into a three part taxonomy that was identified by Noels, Pelletier, Clément, and Vallerand (2000, as cited in Guiora et al. 2003). The first type of intrinsic motivation is knowledge. A desire to learn and explore and the feelings associated with this desire create knowledge motivation. The second type of intrinsic motivation is accomplishment. Feelings associated with potential task mastery or goal achievement are responsible for this type of motivation. The final type of intrinsic motivation is stimulation. This type of motivation comes from feelings arising out of completing the task, such as joy.

Attribution theories, which were popular in the 1980's, establish relations between past and future experiences also influence feelings (Dörneyi, 2003 as cited in Guiora et al. 2003). Attribution theories account for the duration and persistence an individual will sustain to complete a task. Failure that is attributed to low ability greatly lessens a student's motivation to attempt a task. Failure that is attributed to a lack of effort or strategies will often ensure some type of task repetition. Feelings or perceptions play a huge role in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Blackburn (2005) defines intrinsic motivation as having two foundational elements. The person needs to perceive the activity as having value and a chance of success. Intrinsic motivation exists in this context, because the person has activated an internal drive to try this activity. This chance of success is determined after the person considers the challenge, experiences/ capabilities, encouragement, and views on success/failures. Expectancy –value theories characterize the motivation to perform a task as being influenced by the individual's expectancy of success in the task and the value of the task to the individual (Dörneyi, 2001).

Students need to learn how to be motivated for themselves. Tileston (2004) points out that if students are constantly extrinsically motivated, then intrinsic motivation becomes lost. Motivation research has addressed how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation interact and lead to task completion or failure. The question then arises what happens in a second language situation.

Gardner, a pioneer in the field of motivation, and his colleagues are credited with convincing people that there is indeed a difference in the motivation needed to learn a second language. Gardner has based a lot of his work out of Canada. Canada is unique in that, it has two separate and distinct languages, which coexist. The coexistence of these two languages showed how second language acquisition is socially based. It was from this research, that he and his colleagues were able to clearly see that a desire to communicate is driven by societal forces (Dörnyei, 2001). If you want to communicate, it is crucial that you know the language.

Second language motivation is a complex process, which can best be defined in terms of the learners' communicative needs and attitudes to their new community (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Gardner and Lambert (1972) are well-known for the concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is based on the learners' attitudes. It can be thought of as wanting to integrate into the new culture. Positive experiences have created a desire to assimilate. Instrumental motivation is based on the learners' communicative needs. It is learning a new language or merging into a new culture not for pleasure, but rather what you can get as a result of learning a new language (Dörnyei, 2001a).

These four basic types of motivation have been broadened and developed into the underlying tenets of today's theories. While they are still used to explain motivation other theories have also emerged from them. These new theories have a wider focus and a greater depth.

Current Theories on Motivation

A variety of theories exist today that aid in explaining motivation. Many of the current theories are aligned with the idea of goals. Ford and Nichols created a taxonomy of human goals. This taxonomy classifies goals as falling into six categories (1987, 1991, 1992, as cited in Ford, 1992). Affective goals are the first category. These goals include such things as entertainment, tranquility, happiness, bodily sensations, and physical well-being. Cognitive goals are the next category. Cognitive goals include such things as exploration, understanding, intellectual creativity, and positive self-evaluations. Subjective organization goals, which pertain to unity and transcendence are the third category. These three kinds of goals create internal responses. The next three are based

on environmental responses. Self-assertive social relationship goals look at factors related to individuality, self-determination, superiority, and resource acquisition.

Integrative social relationship goals are based on belongingness, social responsibility, equity, and resource provision. The last type of goal is task goals. These kinds of goals are based on mastery, task creativity, management, material gain, and safety. A lot of research has been conducted on goals.

Research by Crooks and Schmidt (1991) and Gardner and Tremblay (1994) also examines this issue of goals. Their research investigated the reason, desire, attitude, and effort towards a learning goal or situation (as cited in Ngeow, 1998). Dörnyei went one step further and proposed the idea that there is a logical sequence to starting and completing a task (2001b). This led to the idea of motivation as a process-oriented approach.

Dörnyei's (2001) process-oriented approach defines three types of motivation. First, motivation needs to be generated and then a choice can be made. This is referred to as choice motivation. After a choice has been generated it must be actively maintained and protected while the activity is taking place. This is known as executive motivation. This type of motivation is frequently found in the classrooms. Students are frequently distracted or anxious in the classroom, which creates a threat to the executive motivation. The last phase is that of motivational retrospection, which concerns the learners' opinion on how things went. This process-oriented approach explains why students can drop out and re-enroll in classes (Dörnyei, 2001a).

Another perspective on motivation is offered by research initially conducted by Houle (1961) and later expanded on by Morstain & Smart (1974) provides justifications for participation in adult education (Blair & McPake, 1995). Blair and McPake discuss Houle's summation and its impact on research. Houle's 1961 research is based on the results of 22 extensive interviews. This research established models of three learner orientations, which have become the underlying foundation for continued research on this topic (Blair & McPake, 1995). These three orientations are goal-oriented learners, activity-oriented learners, and learning-oriented participants. Goal-oriented learners view education as fulfilling a personal need or aiding in achievement of a goal. Activity-oriented learners are more interested in the social interaction the activity will render. Finally, learning-oriented participants participate as a way to gain additional wisdom.

Blair and McPake cite Morstain & Smart's research as developing a six factor analysis for justifying adult participation in education. These six factors are social relationships (friends), external expectations (satisfying authority), social welfare (unselfish actions), professional advancement, escape/stimulation, and cognitive interest (acquiring knowledge).

Blair and McPake's work introduces the idea of an interaction between a goal and a condition rather than seeing these concepts as isolated factors. Goals are defined as the why of adults' returning to education and the expected results and accomplishments. Conditions are the real life factors that impact life. These include age, family, work, and previous school experiences. When goals and conditions are in alignment, education becomes a viable option thus leading to participation.

Underlying this idea of a goal driven approach to motivation is the replacement of a need with goal. A goal is more specific and can be viewed as "the 'engine' to fire the action and provide the direction in which to act" (Dörneyi, 2001 p. 25). Gardner's work, specifically his 1985 motivation theory also addressed the issue of a goal. Gardner referred to a goal as an orientation (Dörneyi, 2001b). Marzano (1992) adds a growing body of research that has found that individual goals as set by the students lead to higher motivation, efficiency, and achievement (as cited in Tileston, 2004).

Goal-setting theories are also based on expectancy and value. Locke and Latham (1990, as cited in Dörneyi, 2001b) contend that purpose drives human behavior and free choice to pursue a goal leads to action. A key aspect of their theory is that goals do not remain constant, but rather they vary based on specificity, difficulty and commitment. Later research by Locke (1996) sums up much of the research that has been conducted on goal setting theories, which has led to the emergence of five points of relevance (as cited in Dörneyi, 2001b). The first point is that the more demanding the goal is the greater the sense of accomplishment is. The second point is a more explicit goal leads to a more meticulously monitored execution. The third point is a goal determined to be demanding and explicit produces the greatest fulfillment. The fourth point is that a more explicit and demanding goal ensures a higher level of commitment due to its specificity. Vague goals require only as much commitment as the person wishes to provide. The final point is that goal commitment can be maintained and enhanced when value and completion are attainable. Learning a language incorporates each and every one of these factors.

The concept of goal in place of need fits into a larger concept of motivation. Ford (1992, as cited in Skilton-Sylvester, 2002) explains the idea of a Motivation Systems Theory (MST). This point of view addresses motivation for individuals as made up of goals, emotions, and personal agency beliefs. Ford further states that each factor is essential, but that none of these factors are able to engage students in strong motivational actions alone. Bergin and LaFave (1998, as cited in Skilton-Sylvester, 2002) argue that goals, emotions, and personal agency beliefs are internal processes that are not formed in isolation, but through interactions of culture, individuals, and the person's culture.

Research by Oxford and Shearin (1994) provides additional support for Bergin and LaFave's 1998 work. Oxford and Shearin (1994) also found goals to be important in

learning a language (as cited in Ngeow, 1998). Through the analysis of 12 different models or theories on motivation, they found six factors that are instrumental in language learning. These are attitudes, issues of self, goals, commitment, environmental support, and personal attributes. Environmental support pertains to the relation between the teacher and student.

The role of the classroom in student motivation

Prior to the 1990's, a large part of second language motivation research was based on the person's perceptions, the task's difficulty, and the reason for completing the task. In the 1990's a change occurred. Researchers realized that the "classroom" played a huge role in sustaining motivation. The three main aspects that came out of this research were course-specific motivational components, teacher-specific motivational components, and group-specific motivational components (Dorneyi, 2003 as cited in Guiora et al, 2003). Course-specific motivational components are the how and what that is being taught. Does the student feel the material is relevant to their needs? Are they interested in it? Teacher-specific motivational components are based on the teacher's personality, behavior, and the style of teaching used. Is the teacher enthusiastic about the subject? Group-specific motivational components look at the group and how they function. Do I like the people, who are with me in class? Do we share the same attitudes?

Attitude is defined as a relation between ideas, emotions, and knowledge. It influences peoples' decisions in positive and negative ways towards people, activities, and opinions (Johnson, 1980, as cited in Wlodkowski, 1999). Attitude in a classroom is instrumental in creating an atmosphere of success or failure. Wlodkowski's (1999) research introduces two important concepts. The first concept is that effective teaching is based on five pillars. These five pillars are five skills that educators need to develop and practice. They are expertise for your subject, empathy for your students, enthusiasm for what you teach, clarity for what you teach, and cultural responsiveness for your students experiences.

The second concept is the idea of a union between the teacher and students, in order to unite them in the process of education. Wlodkowski (1999) labels this union as a feeling of connectedness. Connectedness means each person feels important and belongs, while at the same time knowing that each person is cared for and cares for

others. The teachers and students create a bond that allows for harmony and discord to exist yet the feeling of connectedness still remains intact. A feeling of connectedness which is enhanced by respect from the other students and teachers creates a positive motivation to learn. Wlodkowski's (1999) own experiences were influenced by a sense of connectedness between the teachers and students. Learning and speaking were much easier due to this feeling of connectedness.

Teachers who implement the five pillars can better teach their students and develop this sense of connectedness. Students who feel their teachers really care about their needs have higher motivations to learn. The students feel the teacher is talking to them not at them. The teachers' responsiveness and the students' desire to learn create a more positive learning environment. This positive learning environment is enhanced by the relationship between the students and teachers.

Research by Buttaro (2004) offers additional support on the importance of the teacher's role. A supportive and nurturing environment that accepts and respects one's culture, while at the same time building on the learner's self-esteem and experiences will be more beneficial to the learner. Buttaro further states that this supportive and nurturing environment leads to a higher threshold of motivation for the student, which allows them to complete a difficult task.

The union between teachers and students is very important. Wlodkowski (1999), also offers an additional viewpoint, a more business oriented approach. He concedes that teachers need to appeal to their students. This appeal is something as simple as selling it. If we think of ourselves as sellers of "our services", and "our classes" as our sales product, then all we have left to do is get the students to buy it.

If the students cannot see a benefit to learning the language, they will not learn it (Wlodkowski, 1999 and Buttarro, 2004). A class that is driven by the students' needs and goals and is interesting to the students will have more active participation (Huitt, 2001). Researchers have proven that students perform higher in classes where active participation is encouraged and rewarded. However, sometimes the opposite type of situation occurs.

Deci and Ryan's research (1985, as cited in Dörnyei, 2003) addresses the idea of amotivation. Amotivation is when people do not see their actions as having consequences, but rather what happened to them is beyond their control. This is similar to the idea of learned helplessness. People who are amotivated are very quick to quit a task.

Many adults who enter adult programs have not made this choice of their own free will, but rather employers or authorities are responsible for this choice (Illeris, 2003; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965 as cited in Blair & McPake, 1995). Employees know that their continued employment is based on bettering their skills. This example illustrates amotivation. Welfare is another example of amotivation.

Welfare

Research on welfare has shown that it can be both a motivator and a barrier to attendance. Many adult education programs are forced to deal with this issue of welfare. Usually welfare reform pertains to other immigrant groups. Many Spanish speakers are undocumented and cannot qualify for welfare.

Welfare reform currently focuses on the idea that welfare recipients need to take more control of their situation (Sandlin, 2004). In support of this, the Welfare Reform

Act in 1996 was renamed as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act. The government also supports the idea that individuals can use additional training and education. JOBS (The Family Support Act and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills program) was passed in 1988 to address this issue (Hacker & Yankwitt, 1997).

All of this legislation led to the creation of a partnership between adult literacy education and job training. The philosophy behind this partnership is that educating people will lead to employment (Sandlin, 2004). This is the point at which the issue of welfare works as a barrier and a motivator.

The view of welfare as a barrier is built around the myth that a person's hard work and effort will provide a successful lifestyle of one's choice (Weiss, 1988; Cawelti, 1965; Huber 1971, as cited in Sandlin, 2004). However, it can be argued that the real issue is that unemployment is not based on individual faults, but rather on economic and structural issues (Abramovit, 1996; Hayes, 1999; Piven & Cloward, 1993 as cited in Sandlin, 2004). The research Sandlin (2004) conducted found that participants attributed success in the workforce to both individual and structural factors. Individualistic factors were effort and hard work, a positive attitude, and adherence to rules. Structural factors were job availability, level of education, and financial resources. Failure was based on a lack of these factors.

Sandlin's (2004) final summation of her results is that an understanding of the relation between education and structural issues is necessary. This lack of understanding perpetuates the original myth. This myth refers to the idea that hard work and effort will lead to a successful lifestyle. Belief in the original myth sets the learners up with false

expectations and attributing failure entirely to the individual without considering political, social, contextual, or economic factors.

The view of welfare as a motivating factor is expressed in an article by Hacker and Yankwitt (1997), which explains the Personal Responsibility Act (PRA) and its implications. The underlying premise of PRA is welfare recipients should have a limited time frame to accomplish educational and job goals. It mandates that recipients may participate in up to two years of education. The belief is that recipients should have garnered enough skills to obtain a job by the end of the two years. Each state may set additional limits or guidelines. This leads to mandatory attendance in ABE programs.

Mandatory attendance guarantees that a student will attend the classes through the duration of their program. However, once the program is completed and attendance is no longer mandated, the student quits attending classes (Comings, 2007). Motivation to attend class is based on fulfilling the requirements of their situation. Hacker and Yankwitt point out that placing students in workforce based programs forces them to choose a job over getting the necessary language or literacy skills needed to function in society (1997). This presents a real challenge for students and educators.

This challenge is influenced and hindered by individual, social, financial, and governmental factors. The previous sections have overwhelmingly attested to the fact that motivation to learn a language is not a separate entity, but rather a meshing of factors. Each factor at times becomes more dominant in a person's decisions, however, what guides this dominance is also based on a person's identity.

A person's identity in his/her own culture and society greatly challenges and controls his/her reality. This identity creates one's sense of balance in the world, but it is also impacted by everything that impacts the individual. This identity takes many forms.

Identity

Identity is an integral part of every individual. It is also responsible for a lot of confusion about who one really is. A study conducted by Lee and Dean (2007) found that multiracial adults have conflicting opinions of who they identify with. Some Latino-whites see themselves as white rather than Latinos. One of the participants classified herself as white with a touch of Mexican, while another woman described herself as not looking Mexican but feeling Mexican. Many non-Latinos were surprised, when these women said they had a Latino parent. Jimenez (2004) attributes this surprise to the fact that most non-Latinos think all Latinos have dark skin and dark hair (as cited in Lee & Dean, 2007).

There are varying definitions of what a Latino looks like just as there are varying definitions of what identity is and how it impacts each person. One definition of identity can be thought of as a complicated continuous mental process impacted by an individual's unique experiences (Walker-Goffman 2004). Another definition of identity is provided by Peirce's research (2000 as cited in Skilton-Sylvester 2002). Identity for Peirce is seen as being able to understand one's connection to the world, how that connection is formed, and future connections. Sparks (2002) offers an additional definition of identity. Identity formation is based on social aspects because it is based on social interactions and social principles. Sparks further states that identity is constantly changing based on interactions with family, friends and even strangers. An example of this identity change is role reversal between the parent and child. The child is learning English faster and thus takes over parental roles, such as paying bills and communicating with business and housing people (Weinstein-Shr, 1995 as cited in Ullman, 1997). Illeris (2002, as cited in Illeris, 2003), concludes that different identities exist in different situations and that one stable non-changing identity does not exist. From these varying definitions, it is clear that identity is a continuously developing process that involves being connected to the world and is influenced by social interactions. An educational setting is a good example of how these three components interact.

Each and every student has multiple identities that impact the person's decisions. In an educational setting a learner must develop a learner identity, which is impacted by past experiences, family responsibilities, and social affiliations (Tett & Maclachlan 2007). A woman who is both a student and wife may need to choose one over the other (Skilton-Sylvester, 2002). This choice is even harder when people are forced into the educational setting (Illeris, 2003). Their previous stable roles have in some way or another been changed. The consequence is that identities previously established are now challenged and must be reinvented. These new identities can be created by both social and cultural influences.

Identity: Cultural and Social

When addressing the issue of identity, two viewpoints need to be considered. Peirce (1995, as cited in Ullman, 1997) offers the first viewpoint. If personality characteristics and motivation can completely explain learning a language then what accounts for the variation in the way people communicate? Sometimes people communicate a lot, while at other times they do not. Her conclusion is that one's desire to communicate is impacted by relations between speakers.

The second viewpoint emerges from Segal and Mayadas' (2005) research. Crossing the border doesn't lead to forgetting who you are and instantly becoming American. It is important to remember that immigrants must find a way to balance the two cultures that often clash, while at the same time dealing with issues of acceptance in a new country and reasons for leaving their country. Immigrants come with an identity.

Peirce's viewpoint shows more of a social identity, while Segal and Mayadas viewpoint shows more of a cultural identity. A cultural identity is being able to identify

oneself in terms of a culture and the values of this culture. A social identity is being able to identify and understand oneself in terms of social relations and how one views the past and future (Peirce, 1995). Second language learners have both of these. Turmoil exists between these two identities, because they cannot easily be separated.

In a study done by the Washington Post, the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, and Harvard University, it was found that nearly nine out of ten Latinos felt that they had to change to be a part of the American society (as cited in Artze, 2000). In the same study nine out of ten Latinos also felt that it was necessary to preserve their own separate culture. Matthews-Aydinli (2008) views most students as wanting to learn English. Learning English may be due to a desire to feel complete like they do in their culture. However, this desire to learn is not as strong as their fear of losing their culture and language.

One of the participants in Sparks' research (2002) defines a loss of one's language as a loss of everything. The relationship between one's cultural identity and language is very tightly woven together. This loss of oneself has been found to lessen one's self-esteem, while at the same time increasing one's sense of conflict. This sense of conflict can also be impacted by the main culture. Attitudes, such as English only, displayed by the main culture also breed this sense of loss. Avoidance of uncomfortable or unwelcoming environments is a direct result of these negative attitudes. Sparks concludes that avoidance is a way to protect one's self and one's beliefs.

Learning a new language is no easy task, however, a sense of belonging to the group that speaks the new languages makes learning the new language easier (Tse, 2001).

Individual identities are based on group affiliations. People define themselves in terms of their groups (Tse, 2001).

Sperber (1996) proposed the idea of cultural representations. A cultural representation is a way of representing a group or a part of that group using a physical or mental representation (as cited in Rubinfeld, Clément, Lussier, Lebrun, and Auger, 2006). These representations can reflect open and positive attitudes to the group (xenophilic) or negative attitudes characterized by refusal and rejection (xenophobic) (Gohard-Radenkovic et al., 2004 as cited in Rubinfeld et al., 2006). Oboler (1995) perfectly illustrates this concept of cultural representations. One perception of Latinos, as viewed by a large part of society, is that of welfare-ridden, drug-ridden, and teenage-pregnancy –ridden. This representation is negative, thus creating negative perceptions. Business people, however see Latinos as good workers. This creates a positive representation. A more positive relation with members of the second language community leads to positive cultural representations and increased language learning and usage (Rubinfeld et al., 2006).

A study by Peirce (1995, as cited in Ullman, 1997) found that the immigrant women sometimes were ambivalent about speaking English. The reason was not that they did not want to speak English, but rather a resistance to the identities that other people were creating for them.

Relations between people are very important in language learning. Sociologist Erving Goffman (1959, as cited in Watkins-Goffman, 2004) felt that language learners had both a private and public identity. The private identity is used in the home where the first language is used. The public identity is used in public when trying to fit in.

Goffman further concludes that for immigrants this division between identities is even greater, because the immigrant is forced to mesh their existing identity and language with the people in the new country. Watkins-Goffman (2004) sees acculturation as the successful uniting of private and public identities. Acculturation is dependent on the relation between the individual or group to the new target group. A positive relationship will lead to more acculturation. A negative relationship will lead to less acculturation. Schumann (1976) coins the term social distance to explain this relation between the existing culture and new target culture (as cited in Peirce, 1995). Social distance is created when the dissimilarities are higher than the similarities. If the social distance is high, then it has been surmised that not much acculturation will occur.

Acculturation is one way in which individuals interact, while assimilation is another. Assimilation is the process of blending into a new society and culture, while giving up your old culture (Dörnyei, 2001a). In 1930 pioneering Sociologist Robert E. Park defined assimilation as “the process by which people of diverse backgrounds achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient to sustain a national existence” (as cited in Artze, 2001 p. 32) While acculturation is the process of becoming part of a new society or culture, but not completely giving up your old culture (Watkins-Goffman, 2004). Some individuals are resistant to assimilate into a new culture, if their cultural identity is sacrificed (Sparks, 2002).

Peirce (1995) feels that learners make investments in the new language, because this leads to increased resources and cultural capital. This research supports the idea that language investment leads to an investment in one’s social identity, which is ever changing. Language learning is driven by investments. These investments arise as a result of family or personal situations (Menard-Warwick, 2005). One of the findings of Menard-Warwick’s research was that a familial sacrifice to learn impacted a daughter’s decision to study. This established her new social identity.

Individuals have more than just social identities. Cultural identities also play a huge role in an individual's decisions. Oboler (1995) found that cultural values can also create cultural conflict. In many traditional Latin American societies, a woman's job is her home and men are the providers, which is not the case in the United States. When two cultures conflict, cultural discontinuity arises. Cultural discontinuity is a cultural gap between a learner's culture and the school culture (Lee & Sheard, 2002). According to Lovelace and Wheeler (2006) cultural discontinuity can also be defined as a "lack of cohesion between two or more cultures" (p. 303). This results in negative feelings that impact performance in the situation and self-esteem (Erickson, 1987; McDermott, 1987, as cited in Lee & Sheard, 2002).

Cultural discontinuity is also apparent when existing values are challenged as new identities are formed. Marín and Marín (1991), drawing upon their work and that of others, have characterized Latino cultures as having very specific cultural values. Two of these values are in direct conflict with cultural values of the United States. These two values relate to time orientation and allocentrism. Latino cultures are more present-day oriented, whereas the United States is more future-oriented. The importance of this distinction is reflected in the way each culture views punctuality. For Latinos lateness for appointments and events is a direct result of this view of time. The other value is that of allocentrism or collectivism. Every culture has a specific way of addressing the needs of its members. Latino cultures are referred to as allocentric or collectivist. Marín and Triandis (1985, as cited in Marín and Marín, 1991) define allocentric or collectivist cultures as putting the needs and goals of the group before that of the individual. The United States is a more individualistic and thus the individual's needs take priority over the group.

ESL students experience cultural discontinuity. These students are forced to choose between who they are now, who they want to be, and who they are and will be in their new country. Language becomes a way for them to participate or not participate in their new country.

Language has the power to create group affiliation, social affiliation, and cultural affiliation, but it also has the power to destroy it. Sue and Sue (2003, as cited in Lovelace and Wheeler, 2006) view language as so much more than just a way to communicate. It functions as a way of relating, trading, sharing, and defining life. It gives meaning, perspective, conveys our culture, and influences our opinions on the world. Language is thus essential to life as is one's identity.

Summary

A complete picture of a person and their choice can only emerge when all aspects are examined. Learning a language is a very complex process that involves barriers,

individual and social motivations, teacher and student relations, the impact of governmental programs, and a person's identity. An understanding of these factors can help teachers and other people who work with ESL students. This understanding can also help answer the question: what factors affect Latino students' attendance at free adult ESL classes?

Barriers can be defined in terms of situational and dispositional. These include time, work, daycare, transportation, multiple/gender roles, past experiences, and attitude. Motivation is also a key component. While theories have greatly changed, second language motivation has led to a new way of thinking. Intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental, and integrative motivations are still important. However, newer theories, such as goal setting theories and the importance of teacher and students' interactions are also responsible for motivating people to accomplish tasks.

Welfare also becomes an issue for some students. Mandated welfare attendance in classes can be a motivator, but it can also be a detractor. Welfare requirements, barriers, motivations, and relations between teachers and students can create an identify conflict.

Identity is based on either social or cultural relations. Positive relations between the social and cultural identity and the new language community greatly increase one's desire to learn a new language. Negative relations are more likely to create conflict and isolation.

Even though it is well understood that barriers, motivations, relations, and identity are all factors that are instrumental in a person's decision, these factors are usually viewed as separate entities. These factors can be viewed as separate entities, however, a

gap in the literature still exists in showing how these factors all work together. The closing of this gap is important to understanding and creating increased attendance in free adult ESL classes.

As an ESL teacher, I am very interested in closing the gap and helping students learn English to better themselves. This project addresses the gap in three ways. First current and prospective students will be asked to give information from their frame of reference and that of their friends. Second, the information will be analyzed for answers that explain why people do not attend classes. Finally, this information will be used to create new methods of recruiting and retaining students.

In chapter three I will explain the data collection and analysis methods or the current study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

In chapter two I presented research that was relevant to Latinos and adult education. This research included previous studies on barriers to class attendance, adults' motivations for learning English, the impact of welfare reform on language acquisition,

and the interaction between social and cultural identities. In chapter three my research methodology will be explained. This explanation includes information about the participants, setting, research paradigm, data collection, data analysis, verification of data, and conclusion.

The question I am trying to answer is what factors affect Latino students' attendance in free adult English classes? An answer to this question might lead to increased attendance in classes and information on how to better structure classes. The results will also ensure that our program is doing everything it can to recruit new students and sustain current students.

Participants/Students

The students chosen to participate in my study were from Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. They were chosen from multi-level classes. (In our program, students are allowed to register at the site of their choice. All classes are multi-level, which encourages discussion and cooperation across a variety of backgrounds and levels). The students had all been attending classes for at least a month. The youngest student was about 19 and the oldest was about 45. Their educational levels ranged from about third grade through technical college. The students' time in the United States ranged from two years to twenty-five years.

Their language ability extended from beginners to high intermediate. Some of the participants, around half, came to class knowing some English. The English they spoke was a result of participation in other programs or from exposure to the language. The other half came to class speaking almost no English, or just a few words. Many of these

participants felt they understood more English than they spoke. This study allowed them to speak in English or Spanish, in order to encourage more honest and accurate responses.

This study consisted of roughly 26 participants, six were women and twenty were men. However, not all the participants participated in all of the same activities. I gathered information from three sources: focus groups, discussion group and writing task, and short informal interviews (see Appendix A). Each participant was given a pseudonym to be used throughout the study to ensure anonymity.

Setting

The participants were pulled from two different sites. My classes are taught into different towns in the Midwest. Town A has a population of approximately 15,000. It also has a university and both small and large businesses. Large Spanish, Somali, and Hmong populations can be found in this town. My classes in this town are taught in an apartment complex. The classes at both sites are free.

The second site is another small town in the Midwest. Town B's population is approximately 1700. This area is more rural. The majority of the people in this town work in other towns. A small Spanish population exists in this town. My classes are held in the public school.

Both sites are sufficient enough for between five and ten people to sit comfortably and face each other. The environment of the class is informal and very open. The classes are student driven. The students are actively encouraged to participate and take control of their learning. They know that their needs are very important to the class and to me. The students in both sites are used to being able to share their experiences and opinions in class.

Research design

I am interested in my students' experiences and perspectives on what factors affect class attendance. I also want my students to provide accurate data, which is why

the class and research environment are so important. My research and teaching experience has taught me that a welcoming environment gives students a sense of comfort. A non-threatening welcoming environment is very important anytime you are trying to teach. It is especially important when teaching language. A sense of trust must be gained before students can let down their guard. If the participants feel uncomfortable, they will feel even worse when they make a mistake.

I chose to do qualitative research, because I felt it would be the least threatening to the students. It was also the best way to gain information that was helpful to my study. My students were used to working together, responding to each other, and giving their opinions. This type of research allows me to share with reader the human side of the students.

According to Brown and Rodgers (2002), qualitative research is thought of as non-number research, while quantitative research is referred to as number research. Qualitative research can include observations, field notes, and diaries. Qualitative research is divided into case studies, introspection research, and classroom research.

My research was more on the qualitative side. I used three different components of qualitative research. I used focus groups, a discussion group and writing task, and short informal interviews. In utilizing these three components of qualitative research, I am ensuring that my data is reliable.

These components also serve two other purposes. First, they allow me to address all the needs of my sample group. Some people are not comfortable orally sharing their opinions, so the use of other methods allows them to participate. Second, I am also allowing for researcher and participant biases to be exposed. The writing samples do not

have any names on them, so I do not know whose writing it is. The short informal interviews also helped reduce bias. These students were not currently attending classes or had never attended classes.

Focus Groups

I used a technique known as focus groups. I conducted two focus groups. One focus group had three participants and the other group had five. These groups were conducted in two different towns. It was important that the groups were not too big or too small and shared some common characteristics.

According to Krueger and Casey (2000), most focus groups have five attributes. These attributes convey key ingredients of focus groups: (1) individuals who (2) have specific attributes and (3) offer qualitative information (4) in a focused investigation (5) for purposes of comprehending a specific area of interest.

According to Morgan (1997), focus groups have many benefits and criteria. Groups can be chosen based on sex, race, age, and social class or other factors. A well-chosen focus group should have individuals with varying opinions. It should also have individuals that are not afraid to speak in the group and feel comfortable doing so. The key element of focus groups is their specific and intentional use of the individuals' interactions in a group setting to provide information that would be harder to ascertain without this interaction. Focus groups also allow the researcher to observe a lot of interaction in a short time frame. Most focus group sessions are about two hours long.

Krueger and Casey (2000) found that interaction is very important in focus group success. Success is possible when participants share their experiences or perspectives (self-disclosed) in a comfortable, nonjudgmental permissive environment. My students

were chosen based on their time in class and ability to interact. This interaction was important, because I wanted the students to respond as a group. They could agree and disagree with each other.

Focus groups serve specific purposes. Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest using focus groups when the researcher wants a range of ideas or feelings on a topic, different perspectives between people, or when the researcher is trying to find out what factors influence opinions, behavior, or motivation. They also found that focus groups should not be used when the researcher wants a group consensus, is asking for sensitive information, or the environment is emotionally charged. The goal of a focus group is not to find a solution, but gather information.

Krueger and Casey (2000, also addressed the issue of question choice. Question choice is based on clarity and format. Focus group questions have a very specific format and need to be conversational. It is important that the questions use appropriate vocabulary and are short, yet open-ended. Closed-ended questions and why questions limit responses, where as think back questions and open-ended questions encourage responses.

After the questions are chosen, they are arranged in a logical order based on a specific questioning route. Each type of question has a specific purpose. Questions can be broken down into five groups (Krueger et al., 2000). The first group of questions is referred to as opening questions, which are used to get people talking not to get a lot of profound information. The second group of questions is introductory questions. These questions introduce the topic and get people thinking about it. Introductory questions are open-ended and give the moderator some insight into the participants' opinions. The

third group is referred to as transition questions, which lead to the participants into the key questions. This type of question asks the student to expand on their experiences. The fourth group of questions is known as the key questions. These questions and their answers are the reasons the researcher is conducting the study. The researcher usually has between two and five key questions. The final group is known as ending questions, which are used to create closure and allow the participants time to reflect. These questions are used for clarification, summation, and additional comments.

Focus groups, as a research design, allow the researcher to gain a lot of information. One problem with gaining a lot of information is putting it into perspective. The discussion group and writing task and the short informal interviews were chosen to help with putting the data into perspective.

Discussion Group and Writing Task

In trying to determine what factors affect Latino students' attendance at free adult English classes, it is necessary to consider many factors. A person's decisions are guided by who they are and identify with. Learning a language requires the meshing or colliding of these factors.

One of the goals of introspective research is finding out what the participants are thinking without shaping what they are thinking by what the researcher is thinking (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). The discussion group and writing task are a way of reducing the researcher's role. The discussion group and writing task were designed to serve two purposes. The first purpose was to explore additional aspects of the individual's identity. The second purpose was to explore other factors that impact the individual's decision to

learn a language. Specific attention was paid to the individual's choice of language during the writing task.

The discussion group and writing task participants were not chosen based on any set characteristics as in focus groups. The students were chosen because they happened to be in class on the day the activity was conducted. All of the students were allowed to participate, because I wanted to capitalize on their vast experiences and knowledge. I also knew that I might be asking for sensitive information, which is why focus groups were not appropriate for this part of my research.

The participants in both the focus groups and discussion group and writing task were students in my classes. Research by Marín and Marín (1991) has proven that the Latino culture likes to please and does not want to create negative feelings or relations. As a result of this research the short, informal interviews with Latino adults who are not currently in my classes became very important to my research. These interviews were needed to verify that the information from my students was accurate. Many of these students have come to class for a while and know me. Former students and potential new students should not feel the need to protect my feelings.

Short informal interviews

Another important qualitative research method is interviews. The advantage of using interviews is that they are more personal. Brown and Rodgers (2002) classify interviews as being conducted orally rather than by paper and pen and usually done face to face. Most interview questions are open-ended, because they are used to discover the relevant issues in a survey project.

I chose to conduct short informal interviews for two reasons. First, I wanted to be sure that my data was accurate. Second, I felt that the personal nature of a one on one setting would lead to additional disclosures. It was extremely important that I had a relatively short or nonexistent teaching relationship with these participants. Telling the truth to a stranger is easier than someone you know. In addition to my relation with the participants the setting of the informal interviews was also important.

The participants in this part of my study were specifically chosen from locations of convenience. These locations of convenience included Wal-mart and shopping malls. It is very common to see former and potential new students in these places. The intent behind choosing people in these environments was to eliminate a sense of forced response and a sense of personal invasion. Conversations were held with all of these people for at least five minutes to establish a sense of comfort. They were informed that I wanted to ask them a couple of questions, which would be used in my research.

The former students and potential new students were chosen based on class knowledge. The two former students were chosen based on their interest in classes. They had not attended classes in a while. However, every time I see them they ask how classes are doing and how many people are coming. They express a continued interest in class, but they do not attend classes anymore. The potential new students were chosen based on their knowledge of classes. These potential new students knew other students who were in classes before. I knew that these students knew about classes, yet they still failed to come.

The information gathered from the focus groups, discussion group and writing task, and short informal interviews were used to help me answer the question of what

factors affect Latino students' attendance at free adult English classes? The data also helped me to answer other questions I had. These questions included: What factors keep them attending? What factors can I control? What are barriers that prohibit them from attending? How can I get more consistent attendance and give the students a sense that English classes have value for them?

Data collection

Together these three methods of qualitative research helped to guarantee that my research was truly reflective of my students. They also helped to create a bigger picture with which to analyze the data. Accurate data collection is an essential part of research.

My research consisted of three components. The first component was the focus groups. The second component was an in class discussion and writing part. The third component was four short informal conversations at locations of convenience. These three components were used to be sure that the data was reliable.

The three components of research were chosen for specific reasons and purposes. My research looks at how humans think and respond, thus I needed to incorporate more than one method to collect my data. I addressed this need by utilizing three different types of data collection methods. The three components of my research were designed to answer different aspects of my research question and sub-questions.

Focus groups were used to allow my participants the opportunity to express their thoughts on factors affecting attendance, recruitment issues, and teacher/class environment. These issues are the central focus of my research. Group work encourages interactions and stimulates thoughts and opinions without the pressure of feeling like the

participant must know everything. It also provides the opportunity to share these thoughts and opinions.

The discussion group and writing task were used to yield data on identity and language affiliation. An understanding of these issues enables me to learn more about factors that affect attendance and the value of English for the participants. A discussion group held prior to asking the participants to complete a writing task helps the participants open their minds to the topic.

Finally, short informal interviews were used to supply information on the participants' knowledge of classes and experiences in classes. This information helped me to learn about factors that I can and cannot control. The use of interviews also allowed for students to disclose more personal information. For some people a non-threatening environment without peer influences makes it easier to disclose information. It is important that the students give accurate responses that are not shaped by the researcher or other students (Brown & Rodgers, 2002).

I created a non-threatening environment by presenting my request in multiple formats. The students were informed by both oral and written format that I wanted them to participate in my study. They were contacted in advance, so they had time to think. The written format was in their first language to ensure that there were not any issues of confusion. Each student was assured that the decision to participate was their choice. A signed permission form was obtained from each participant.

My first and foremost goal was to protect my students and their identity. If I wanted them to accurately give information, they had to trust me. They were given a pseudonym and referred to by that name throughout the whole study.

My primary source of research was the focus groups. I conducted two focus groups at two different sites. These groups were held at times convenient for the students. One group had three participants and the other group had five participants. Each focus group lasted between an hour and two hours. The groups were held at the sites, where classes were held. The reason for this was to maintain a sense of comfort.

The groups' participants also received a bilingual handout giving them an idea of what the focus groups questions might be about. The handout allowed them to have an idea of the topics, while at the same time allowing them to be a bit more prepared (see Appendix B). The specific questions were never given to the participants prior to the focus group.

On the day of the focus group session the purpose of my research was once again explained. Students' questions were answered. The focus group questions were read to the participants and displayed on large pieces of paper, so that the students could read them and not lose sight of the question (see Appendix C). The justification behind displaying the questions was to ensure that the students were not pressured into responses. The other reason was based on a need to keep the participants on task by not losing sight of the question. Construction paper and markers were provided for the tasks that required making a list.

Field notes were taken and the session was taped to ensure that the data was accurately gathered. The participants were reminded of this prior to the day of the focus group session. The tape recorder had an external microphone, which aided in easier recording. The field notes were taken on key points.

The second piece of my research consisted of a class discussion and then a written activity. The class discussion addressed the topics of acculturation, assimilation, identity, community attitudes, and dreams. Latino families are very family-oriented, thus the participants were asked to consider these issues in terms of themselves and their children. The discussion was used to activate students' opinions and prepare them for the writing task. The written activity allowed the students to be able to freely express their opinions without fear. Names were not included on the essay paper. This activity involved 14 people, six women and eight men.

The paper had five questions on it (see Appendix D). The students only had to answer questions one and four. In order to be sure the data was reflective of the participants' thoughts, they were asked to complete these two questions. These two questions were analyzed. The other three questions were used for purposes of providing a non-pressured writing session. These questions were needed so that students who finished early had something to do while they waited for the other students to finish writing. I wanted accurate responses, so I did not want the students to feel pressured to finish.

The instructions for this activity were made very clear to the students. Question one addressed the issue of identity in a large picture sense, while question four asked for information on the language the participants used in their houses. These two questions evolved out of the focus group data. The questions were put in both English and Spanish. The students were allowed to write in either Spanish or English.

The participants were allowed to write their responses, rather than share them. Questions about individual's experiences can be very personal. Writing offers the

students a chance to express their opinions freely without fear of retribution or ridicule. The anonymity behind the writing task also encourages personal disclosure.

The third part of my research consisted of contacting two past students and two potential new students. These students were contacted at locations of convenience, so as to eliminate a feeling of forced participation. After a brief conversation, the students were asked if they would help me. Upon agreement, a very informal question and answer session took place. The inactive students and potential new students were asked a series of three questions (see Appendix E).

Data Analysis

Data analysis of all three parts of my research was specific and organized. The justification for this was to ensure that all my data was evaluated equally. It is extremely important that no data is excluded from the analysis in the initial phase of analysis. Later once the themes begin to emerge then data selection can be more specific.

Focus Group Analysis

Once the focus group sessions were finished, the tapes were put in a locked drawer. These tapes were later transcribed. The analysis may be transcript based, tape based-abridged transcript, note based, and memory based (Krueger et al., 2000). Most of the students chose to speak in Spanish, so I did the transcription of the data. I verified my transcriptions with a member of the focus group.

Once the data was transcribed, I needed to organize it and look for themes. I used the long-table approach. This approach is very common and helps organize the data into something manageable. I used a long table so I could spread out the data. On each piece of large construction paper, I wrote one of the questions, that I intended to analyze.

(When researchers use focus groups, the majority of the analysis comes from the key questions). I used color-coding techniques to record information from both groups, while keeping them separated. Each participant was given a separate color to make it easier to identify who said what. The questions were put on colored pieces of construction paper. One focus group had white paper and the other had red paper. This process was very sequential. Quotes that did not directly relate to my topic were set aside for later. The quotes that were relevant were placed under the appropriate questions.

Once the organization was complete, I wrote a descriptive summary of the answers each focus group gave for each question. I was continuously comparing and contrasting the quotes. Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest looking at frequency, specificity, emotion, and extensiveness when choosing themes. Frequency has to do with how often something is said. Specificity refers to comments that give a lot of detail. Comments that are emotionally laden often receive more attention too. Extensiveness has to do with how many people said it, not how often it was said (frequency). The themes were extracted from this data.

Discussion Group and Writing Task Analysis

The writing tasks were categorized based on the same four factors of frequency, specificity, emotion, and extensiveness. Emotion was not as relevant, because the answers were written rather than spoken. Frequency, specificity, and extensiveness were very relevant.

Once all the writing tasks were completed, they were all put together. Putting all of the writing tasks together and mixing them up allowed for anonymity to be ensured. After I read the tasks, a list of key words was generated on a piece of paper. These words

were taken from the writing tasks. I went back through the writing tasks and highlighted the key words.

I gave the paper to a colleague and read off the highlighted words. My colleague put a tally under the key word. Key phrases were listed on the other side of the paper to be used later on. This step was repeated again to ensure that all of the data was accounted for.

Once the data was categorized under the key words, the tallies were counted up. The key words with the most tallies were given the most importance and used in the results section. I did not know who wrote which writing tasks, so the data was only analyzed on the four factors of specificity, emotion, extensiveness, and frequency.

Short Informal Interviews Analysis

The short informal interviews were used to give support to the accuracy of the results obtained in the focus groups and the writing tasks. These interviews consisted of only three questions. The analysis of these questions was based on looking for common threads to support or oppose data collected in the focus groups and writing task.

The short informal interview notes were placed on the table to be examined. Important phrases and words were highlighted. Again specificity, emotion, frequency, and extensiveness were used. Emotion was more relevant in this case. While the participants were responding, I paid attention to non-verbal and verbal cues. This information was also noted.

Once the interviews were highlighted, the key information was placed on a separate piece of paper. This paper was placed next to the descriptive summaries. I

looked for repetitive words or similar meaning phrases. All of this data was used to help determine my main themes.

Verification of Data

It is important that as researchers, we make sure that we accurately report all the information and not just what supports our study (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). Accurate reporting ensures that internal validity is maintained. In any kind of study we have to be careful of our own personal biases. Focus groups, writing tasks, and interviews are no different than any other kind of research in this way.

Focus groups have some weaknesses. It is important that the moderator is objective and lets the data speak for itself. Data that is not accurately reported compromises the study. Focus groups also require a lot of planning and organization. They are sequential and systematic, but if you miss a step they may not provide the results you want. I addressed this issue by getting help from my advisors and peer readers in designing my focus group questions.

Writing tasks and interviews also have some weakness. Writing tasks may be hard for poor spellers to write and the reader to read. In doing the task during class, students may feel pressured to respond, even though they do not want to. Interviews often have a specific agenda and are more structured in nature.

Internal validity is an important part of any study. I addressed this issue in three different ways. First, I was careful of my bias. I knew the students' voices, so I needed to be sure that I was listening and reporting carefully. Second, my data was verified with a member of each of the focus groups to ensure that my translation and transcription were

correct. Third, I collected data from two other sources. These sources included the discussion group and written assignment and short informal conversations.

Ethics

“Research challenges us to define our individual moral principles and then to make choices that honor or violate them” (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2003, p. 286).

As researchers, we have to be careful of our own biases. We also have to be sure that we do not inadvertently take credit for something that is not our work. Researchers also have to be careful when they work with human subjects. The human subjects need to have their identity protected at all times.

In this study, I did several things to safeguard my students’ identity or privacy. I completed and submit a Human Subjects Research form based on Hamline’s guidelines. Next, I spoke with both sites where I work to inform them of what I was doing. Third, I spoke to the students in a large group format and individual format about my project in advance. Fourth, I gave them a Human consent letter in Spanish and English formally asking them to participate in my study, which clearly explained that this was a choice (no pressure). Fifth, I removed any and all identifying information from the study. Sixth, I assured them that their words would not be taken out of context. Seventh, I offered them the chance to meet and look at my project. Finally, I kept all this information in a secure location at all times.

Conclusion

In this chapter, focus groups as a method of data collection were explained along with their strengths and weaknesses. The discussion group and writing task were also

defined and explained in relation to my study. In addition, the study was explained including the participants, setting, data analysis and verification of the data. In order to ensure the reliability of the data and keep it triangulated, all three parts of my research were analyzed separately and then together. All of this information enables to organize the data and present it.

In chapter four I will present my results and discuss them. I will share similarities and differences in my two focus groups. I will also categorize the data under specific themes. In chapter five I will share with the reader my conclusion. I will pay special attention to limitations of the study, how it connects to the literature review and future areas of study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The relation between class attendance in adult English classes and human behavior is complex, yet it is also unique with regard to every individual. The overall

purpose of this study was to discover what factors affect Latino students' attendance at free adult English classes. Potential answers to this question can only be found after gaining answers to four other underlying questions. These questions are: What factors keep them attending? What factors can I control? What are barriers that prohibit them from attending? How can I get more consistent attendance and give the students a sense that English has value for them? An understanding of the answers from each of these questions will increase awareness and knowledge of factors impacting attendance. This information was elicited through the use of focus groups, discussion group and writing task, and four short informal interviews at locations of convenience.

In chapter three the methodology behind this study was described, in addition to the participants, setting, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter four will be a presentation of the results and the main themes that emerged as a result of this study. In this chapter a discussion of the results with regard to the research question will also be shared. The results will be discussed first and the discussion will follow.

Study Participants

The focus group participants and discussion task and writing assignment participants were chosen from my classes. They were students who were currently attending classes. There were some students who participated in both the focus groups and discussion groups and writing tasks. The short informal interview participants were chosen from previous students and potential new students. The students were approached in informal settings, such as Wal-mart. Each participant was given a pseudonym to use throughout the study to ensure anonymity. The research was gathered from two different sites, but it was analyzed all together as one sample.

This study consisted of 26 participants. All of the participants had been in the United States from two to twenty-one years. The participants were mostly men (20). The participants were Mexican, Guatemalan, and Honduran. Their ages ranged from 19 to 45 years of age. The participants were both single and married with children. They were currently attending classes because their friends, family or children had told them about classes (see Appendix A).

Study summary

The primary purpose of this study was to discover what factors affect Latino students' attendance at free adult English classes. Secondary purposes included finding out ways of sustaining attendance and a general understanding of the students' thoughts in relation to classes. The data collected offers insight into both my primary and secondary purposes.

This study was designed using qualitative research methodology. The three methods of data collection chosen were chosen based on this qualitative research philosophy. They included focus groups, discussion groups with a writing component, and informal conversations. The three types of data collection also aided in triangulating this study to ensure that the data was reliable and comprehensive.

The first type of data collection was based on focus groups. Two focus groups were conducted at two different sites. A total of eight people participated in these focus groups. Two women and six men participated. The people were chosen based on their length of time in class and ability to interact.

The focus groups addressed questions relating to barriers to attendance, motivators for increased attendance, recruitment, and the classroom. The participants in these groups made lists and shared their experiences.

The second type of data collection was based on two class discussion groups and then a writing assignment. The discussion groups were informal in nature. The students were allowed to share what they wanted to. The purpose of holding a discussion group before the writing assignment was to get the students thinking. The goal of this data collection was to look at the importance of identity and language choice. A total of fifteen people were involved in this research. The participants included nine men and six women.

The final type of data collection was gathering information from former and potential new students. Three men and one woman were the respondents in this data. The respondents were approached at locations of convenience. Data from these conversations was used to address program issues and sustaining attendance.

The participants were allowed to use both English and Spanish in responding to questions. The majority of the participations chose to use Spanish, however, some English and Spanglish was also used. The reason for allowing the students to choose their language was to ensure accuracy in gathering data and establish a sense of comfort.

Results

The participants in this study discussed barriers that kept them from attending classes. Mercer (1990, as cited in Fairchild, 2003) identifies three categories of barriers. They include situational, dispositional, and institutional. The participants in this study identified barriers that were either situational or dispositional. The participants in this

study did not identify any institutional barriers. Situational barriers are time, work, daycare and transportation. The participants indicated that they have to work hard and are often too tired to spend a lot of time with their families. For example, Chepe and Franco both felt that for them family was everything and working was a necessary part of their lives. Franco also stated, "School is important, but my family must survive." He further stated, "I know I need to learn English, but the weather and transportation are reasons that I do not come to classes." Marisol indicated that she sometimes misses classes because she does not have daycare and does not want to bring her young child to school with her.

Dispositional barriers included negative past educational experiences, multiple/gender roles, and one's attitude about school. The participants also discussed these kinds of barriers. Marisol was sometimes torn between her desire to learn and her role as a mother. Her job was to care for the children. Both Leonardo and Roberto had negative experiences in school. They referred to themselves as "burros." The term burro is used by some Latinos to mean "stupid". They were hesitant about coming to school, because they did not want to fail.

Major themes

The students gave many reasons for not attending classes. The major reasons included being tired, lazy, or busy, no daycare, no car, or working late. These reasons serve as a justification as to why the students do not attend. This study was designed to not just discover the barriers but also the factors that encourage them to attend. The major themes that emerged as a result of this study give insight into additional factors that encourage and inhibit attendance. The themes guide the students' decisions to attend

classes or not attend classes. Each of the four themes is interconnected, yet strong enough to stand out by itself. The four themes are personal empowerment, life experiences, cultural values, and peer influences.

Personal empowerment

I define personal empowerment, as empowering one's self to be the best they can be. This empowerment may result from overcoming obstacles or taking advantage of opportunities. All of the participants in this study had very specific reasons for learning English. Learning English was a way of empowering themselves.

Brianna explained the motive behind her attendance. "Life in our country is hard. You cannot find work, and people need to work. They are forced to do what they can. In this country life is easier. I can make money and send it to my family. If I speak English, I can make more money."

Brianna also spoke of needing to know English, so that she did not need to use an interpreter. "If I can speak English, then I am more independent." Many former and current students have spoken of being less reliant on an interpreter. Brianna and the other students have indicated that they do not always feel the interpreters say what they want them to say. Gabriella said, "I understand some of what is being said, and I know that the interpreters do not always tell me everything. It is easier when you can do it on your own. Sometimes it is hard to find an interpreter, when one is needed. They also cost money." Learning English reduces one's dependence on interpreters. It also gives one a sense of empowerment, which leads to a higher self-esteem. Bianca stated, "When I go to the hospital and can understand, I feel really good about myself. I want to learn more English."

A higher self-esteem also gives students the confidence to practice their new language. They become empowered by being able to communicate in a variety of situations. The participants in my study indicated that being able to communicate better at work, hospitals, school, and stores was very important to them.

Pancho wants to be able to communicate better. He also wants to understand the words people use when criticizing others. He states, “Not everyone is the same some people speak nicely and others don’t.” Learning more than just survival vocabulary enables him to be a more productive worker.

Enhanced opportunities also lead to more empowerment. Arnold agreed that better English leads to better jobs. Arnold said, “Twice I lost manager positions because I didn’t speak English. It is necessary for work. Good pronunciation is also important in better communication. “

He is now motivated to learn, so he does not miss out on another promotion. Every time he comes to class, he becomes more empowered. Arnold is making an investment with his time. He also knows that a better job will empower his family and their financial situation.

Family can also be empowered by a sense of individual empowerment. Creating a better life for the individual’s family is very important. Pancho said, “I want a better life for my children, so they are not like me.” Almost all of the participants wanted to be able to read, write, and speak better. Parents, who can read, write, and speak better, are also more able to buy homes, establish stable lifestyles, and function independently. All three of these factors create enhanced opportunities for the individual and the family.

Personal empowerment arises from being more independent. Increased self-esteem, job advancement, family survival in both the United States and the participants native country motivates students to attend class. At the same time, a feeling of personal empowerment is created in the student. Personal empowerment is just one factor that keeps students attending classes.

Life experiences

I define life experiences, as how one perceives one's life in terms of one's experiences. The participants in this study have many life experiences. These experiences are derived from their native country and the United States. It is these same experiences that guide their decisions.

Gabriella indicated that in her country many young children are forced to quit school and find a job. "Many times children are forced to quit school in order to work. They have to help their family. As the years pass, they see no reason to go back to school, because it will not do anything for them." Life experience has taught them that they can survive without education. These same people come to the United States and get jobs without having a high school diploma. Their original perceptions on the unimportance of education are reinforced.

Negative life experiences in the school also limit one's potential. Chepe reported that he does not have the patience to learn. Franco agreed, he stated, "I get frustrated. Sometimes I remember and sometimes I do not." Chepe felt that a sense of frustration also created a barrier for potential new students. Chepe further stated, "I have family members who do not come to school, because they do not know how to read or write. They are afraid." The male potential new student indicated that he had poor experiences

in school. He also indicated that he did not have much education in his country. As a result, he did not choose to get an education in the United States. His fear keeps him from taking advantage of new opportunities.

Arnold took advantage of these new opportunities by moving his family to a state that has a smaller Latino population, like Minnesota. His life experiences taught him, that he will not learn English in states that have high Latino populations. He reported, “In some states, such as California, Georgia, and Texas you do not need to speak English, because so many things are in Spanish.” He moved his family to Minnesota to help them a bilingual lifestyle.

A bilingual household is very important to Arnold. He wants his children to grow up bilingually. Arnold also indicates that his children are very proud of him for trying to learn English. “If they see you learning, they will appreciate you more.” Gabriella also feels a bilingual environment is important. She states, “My children refuse to speak Spanish, yet this my language.” She wants her children to learn Spanish, so they can communicate with her family in Mexico. A bilingual household allows parents to communicate with their children and children to communicate with family members in other countries.

They both indicated that they have seen families where the children do the interpreting for the parents. Bianca stated, “My children do not like to interpret for me, but they do. They do not have patience with me nor do they want to help me learn English.” Life experience has taught Bianca that she needs to come to classes to learn English. She has had to overcome obstacles. When she was younger, she had to work to make money for her family. She also had to pay daycare. Attending school meant

paying more money for daycare. Her check was small, so paying extra daycare was not a feasible option for her. Now her children are older, so she can come to school. She knows that she needs to learn English. Her life experiences work to empower her.

Brianna also has a positive attitude toward learning. She has watched and experienced the personal struggles her family has had to deal with. These struggles have motivated her to make a better life for herself in the United States. She understands the importance of learning English and the benefits English will give her. Benefits that arise out of one's decisions motivate students to continue studying. Brianna states that, "People are so worried about their bills, like paying the rent and forget that speaking English leads to a better life."

Families also motivate students to study. Life experiences that result from being married or single also impact student attendance. Their children and spouses motivated them to come to classes, yet they were also barriers to attendance. Arnold stated, "One day it was cold outside and I was tired, my wife said do not go to school." Gabriella said, "My children ask me how school went when I get home." Santiago said, "My wife and I had to take turns to come to classes. She came first, and now it is my turn. We have young children." These participants make sacrifices to better their families. These sacrifices are also reflected in terms of their attendance. Arnold and Santiago stated, "We sometimes have things we need to do like repairs, so we cannot come." Their life experiences and culture had taught them the importance of being responsible. This sense of responsibility is reflected in their lives and their families. In the Latino culture families are extremely important.

Cultural Values

I define cultural values, as the values that a culture uses to guide their decisions. The Latino culture is guided by many values. Familialism is one of these values (Marín and Marín, 1991). The results of the writing task revealed that 15 out of 15 participants thought it was important to maintain their language in their houses. Their children learn English in schools and Spanish in the house. Gabriella, Arnold, and Santiago wanted to create this bilingual environment because it allows their children to communicate with family who live in Mexico. Their family in Mexico only speaks Spanish. A bilingual environment also keeps the family united by language. Family is a very important value for Latinos, but they also have other values that are important too.

Time flexibility is a value for Latinos. Latinos are present-oriented families, so they are frequently late for appointments and events (Marín and Marín, 1991). In the United States, time is very important. Lateness is not accepted. In Latino cultures lateness is not a problem. In the United States lateness is a problem. Participants indicated that in previous classes, they have attended the teachers did not like them to arrive late.

Time was also an issue given for not attending classes. The participants stated that work schedules are inconsistent. Marisol said, "Sometimes we are home at 3:30 and sometimes it is 5. It is hard for us to come to school, when we work late. We are tired and want to see our children. My family is very important to me." Ruth agreed. "I am a single parent and want to see my child. I know that English is also important."

The participants in the study realized the importance of knowing English in the United States, especially in Minnesota. The United States was a whole new world to

Lupe, when she came here. She had always heard about the American Dream. When she came to the United States and Minnesota, she understood. She describes her first expression of the United States. “It was something out of a dream. There were new cars and new houses. People I did not know would wave at me. There was enough food for everyone. I knew I was in a good place.” Lupe indicated that when she arrived here, she did not speak English. She had to learn it, because she knew she could get a better job.

She knew English was power. Power is a cultural value. Consistently throughout the focus groups and discussion group and writing tasks the participants indicated that knowing English leads to a better life. Two of the participants chose to write in English for the writing task. These same two participants also felt very strongly about maintaining their language. The participants write in English to show respect for the dominant culture. They are also learning English to show respect for the dominant culture. Respect is very important for Latinos. They show this respect in the way they interact with each other.

Peer relations

I define peer relations, as the ways people interact and impact each other. Two other cultural values can be seen through peer relations. They are allocentrism (collectivism) and *simpatía* (Marín and Marín, 1991). Allocentrism is based on group affiliation rather than individual success. Peer influence and conformity are two examples of allocentrism that was discovered in this study. *Simpatía* means Latinos utilize behaviors that create enjoyable and tranquil social interactions.

The importance of these peer relations was revealed in the focus groups. Many of the participants indicated that their class attendance was based on their friends, family

and children. These groups of people were responsible for motivating them to come to classes. Franco's cousin brought him to class. Chepe came because Pancho told him to. Brianna came because her brother used to come. All of these people came because of a peer relation, which is an example of allocentrism.

These relations also maintain attendance. Gabriella indicated that for her coming to class was a way of relaxing. Her attendance is based on the relationships she has with her peers in class. She states, "One funny comment can distract you from your problems, because it makes you laugh. We like each other and have fun. We are like a family."

Work is a very important part of peer relations. The focus group results indicated that better communication at work was essential. Better communication at work was dependent on peer relations. Participants said they will try to communicate more, if they feel accepted by their peers. Acceptance creates *simpatía*. The participants all agreed that class was a comfortable, supportive, and active place. Teresa felt it was important to know the teachers cared. "When teachers call and check on us, we know they care. Knowing the teachers care makes me want to go to classes."

Arnold also felt that the interactions between the students in class were also important. He stated, "For him classes allow him to learn about other cultures." He also like interacting and laughing with the people in class.

Peer acceptance and relations are very important in the Latino culture. A few of the participants indicated that conformity was responsible for many of their cultural actions. Conformity can be based on the influence of peers. Gabriella said, "If students had a bad experience, they tell their friends and no one goes to class." Gabriella's

comments show how peer influences create conformity in acceptance. The friends do not attend class, because another friend had a bad experience.

Arnold offers another example of conformity by way of acceptance and peer influence. Arnold characterized his culture as being more inclined to read a magazine that has pictures over a book. His culture is accustomed to watching soap operas and letting the television entertain them, rather than reading a book and using ones imagination. He further adds that no one questions this dependence on the television and soap-operas.

Arnold states, “Our culture is very different from other countries.” He feels the reason some people do not learn is because they think “Why do I need English, if I can get by or speak for myself at the hospital, police, and work? Gabriella adds, “That is why I did not study in Los Angeles. My husband could interpret for me. He could understand everything and later explain it to me. Now I can do more of it myself. In Minnesota, there are fewer bilingual things.” While peer relations work as a motivator, they also work as a barrier.

The interaction of each of these distinct themes helps each student determine how he or she will respond in a given situation. Each person is an individual and thus has different goals, dreams, and reasons for his or her actions. The factors that enhance and hinder attendance also maintain one’s identity.

Study Links to Literature Review

Hispanics are the fastest growing immigrant group in the United States. They have in many ways single-handedly revolutionized society today. Examples of their culture can be seen in many ways, including stores, restaurants, bilingual services, and

even television programs. People recognize and identify these aspects of the culture. These aspects help to remind people of who Latinos are, which leads to a public identity for this culture. However, a very private identity also exists for the individuals. Research by Gouveia, Clemente, and Espinosa (2003) supports earlier research by Goffman (1959). They found that every person has a private and collective identification. The private identity consisted of factors that are unique to the individual, while a collective identity is more focused on roles and relationships.

My research found that the participants in this study maintain a public identity at work, stores, and other public places. They use English to try to communicate, which aids in personal empowerment. The students have learned that even though English may be hard to learn it is necessary. It is the language of opportunity. As one acquires their new language the role of their public selves becomes more focused and prominent. At the same time, the fact that seven out of fifteen participants identified themselves as Latinos rather than as Americans and that all fifteen participants wanted to maintain their language shows that one's private identity is also a very strong means of identification. This is further supported by research by Matthews-Aydinli (2008). This research showed that students want to learn English, but not at the cost of sacrificing themselves. My research supports this. All of the students in class want to learn English, as a means of a better life for themselves or their children, yet each one maintains their culture. Culture maintenance is created through one's private identity. Speaking Spanish in the home and teaching their children cultural values is a way of maintaining their culture.

English is the language that holds the United States culture together (Tse, 2001). It is very probable that Hispanics also feel their language is a glue that holds them

together. When we refuse to accept or ask them to give up their language, we threaten their cohesiveness.

My research supported the importance of Latinos maintaining their culture. The students want to be members in the new country, yet they are torn. “The result is a paradox of contradiction in which language minority students are often confused as they strive to become “mainstream,” while encountering the hurdles and barriers imposed by systematic racism.” (Urrieta and Quach 2000, p. 27).

A primary reason for attending classes was based on improved communication, for example at work. Peirce’s 1995 work supports this. Students make investments in new language because this will lead to increased resources and cultural capital. The majority of the students’ responses addressed the issue of work, which led to a better future for them and their children.

Menard-Warwick (2005) indicates that many of these investments arise out of family or personal situations. These investments also arise as a result of extrinsic, intrinsic, and instrumental motivation. The participants were intrinsically motivated to be better, extrinsically motivated to get better jobs, and instrumentally motivated to use their new language to keep their jobs. The continuous frequency to which the focus group participants referred to the importance of their families illustrates the investment each participant has made to their family and future. These investments led to personal empowerment.

Furthermore my research supported the previous studies on barriers. Sacrifice becomes a key component of this barrier discussion (Illeris, 2003). Participants in all three parts of the data method collection indicated that at times they were tired, however

English became a way for them to get better lives. They want their children to have better lives than they do.

Mercer (1990, as cited in Fairchild, 2003) identifies three types of barriers. They are situational, dispositional, and institutional. Work is an example of a situational barrier. The participants in my research frequently mentioned that work was both a barrier, but also a motivator. Hayes's research (1989) which found that work, transportation, and low priority of education along with others were viewed as the main barriers to participation. My research also supported this research.

While barriers to participation were a big part of the research, an understanding of Latinos and their views was also important. Peer relations were very important in increasing students' motivation to attend classes. The participants in my study attended classes because someone else was in class or brought them to classes. The students' motivation to attend increased because they had friends in class. Marín and Marín (1991) offer an explanation for this way of thinking based on Latinos cultural values. They labeled and identified basic Latino cultural values. Allocentrism means Latinos are more concerned with the group, rather than the individual. They are sensitive and concerned with creating pleasant relationships, which is based on another cultural value of "simpatía". Simpatia means Latinos utilize behaviors that create enjoyable and tranquil social interactions. The participants were quick to support each other's ideas and never really disagreed with each other about what was being said.

Marín and Marín (1991) also addressed the idea of conformity in the Latino culture. Allocentric attitudes and simpatía are also responsible for conformity in the Latino culture. Latinos value the group and pleasant relations. Conformity in the Latino

culture is based on complacency. They are willing to accept their circumstances as they are. My research supported this issue of conformity. The participants explained this issue of conformity by relating it to learning English. Some people are able to function in the United States without knowing English, thus they are willing to accept their life as it is. They are able to survive, so for them knowing English has no real value. Their culture values are maintained in the new country.

Cultural values create the framework upon which personal empowerment, life experiences, and peer relations are viewed. Personal empowerment, which is gained through work, family and culture is enhanced by peer relations. Life experiences, which are impacted by ones' peers, culture, and self-esteem, lead to a plan of action. The participants in this study developed their plan of action based on a need to communicate better. Communication became their goal for learning English. Research by Dörneyi (2001) views the goal as the engine that leads the action. Marzano (1992) concluded that individual goals as set by the students lead to higher motivation, efficiency, and achievement (as cited in Tileston, 2004). The participants in this research study were highly motivated to accomplish their goal and achieve something more with their lives.

Their goal of learning English was also enhanced by the way they viewed their classes. The participants indicated that class was a comfortable, supportive, and active place. It was also important that the teacher was concerned about them. Research by Wlodkowski (1999) labeled union as a sense of connectedness. Connectedness means each person feels important and belongs, while at the same time knowing that each person is cared for and cares for others.

Summary

Personal empowerment, life experiences, cultural values and peer relations work together to influence a person's decision to attend classes. In my study these four themes show why some students attend classes and others do not. They show a pattern of interaction that supports the importance of looking at the big picture when conducting research. Many times when a student stops attending classes, we look for one answer. My research has shown that many factors can influence a student's class attendance. If we look beyond just the obvious, we can get a better overall understanding of the student. A bigger picture also shows us factors that we can control, such as encouraging personal empowerment and understanding how life experiences, cultural values, and peer relations impact students.

The results of this study have highlighted many of the themes identified in the literature review. These themes include identity, motivation, investment, and barriers. Chapter five will look at my conclusions, the limitations of this study, and suggestions for future research. Chapter five will also address ways of increasing attendance in free adult English classes.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

As stated in chapters one and two a huge discrepancy exists between the number of students eligible to attend adult ESL classes and the number that actually do. This study was designed with two specific purposes in mind. The primary purpose was to understand how attendance fits into the bigger picture of the students' lives. The secondary purpose was to ascertain new methodologies and additional insight as to why this gap exists. Research was gathered that answered the question what factors affect Latino students' attendance at free adult English classes?

In chapter four the results of my study were presented and discussed. These results helped me to gain an answer as to how attendance fits into the bigger picture of the students' lives. In chapter five, I will summarize what I have learned from this study, discuss limitations of the study, offer additional suggestions for further research, and implications for my program and for me as an educator. In this chapter I will share the new methodologies and additional insight I gained.

Lessons Learned

From the information gathered for this study, four main themes emerged. These four themes are: personal empowerment, life experiences, cultural values, and peer relations. The lives of my students and their decisions are guided by these four themes. A failure to understand how these themes and situational and dispositional barriers

impact their decisions sets programs up for poor attendance. Poor attendance leads to a greater gap.

The students choose to learn English as a result of the interrelations of these four themes. Each theme has a very important function and purpose. Personal empowerment is a result of a desire to be able to function without an interpreter and to be more independent at work and in the store, hospital, and school. Personal empowerment also leads to job advancement. Life experiences were based on lessons learned. The students were able to reflect on their own experiences and choose how to change their lives positively. Culture values are important, because they sustain the students' heritage. These values were learned at a young age and thus have great importance in the students' lives. These values are not forgotten when the students' enter the United States, but rather they continue to serve as a model of how to live. Conflict that arises between the old and new cultures leads to resistance. Peer relations are the causes of attending or not attending. The way the students interact in class creates both positive and negative feelings. In addition the opinions the students' have about classes influences other students to attend.

As educators, we have the ability to create a positive environment in the classroom. If we understand that our students are guided by their situation, we can work on building a community of trust and a sense of belonging. This understanding also allows educators to meet their students' needs.

Prior to this project my view on classroom attendance was based on surface knowledge. Surface knowledge was knowledge gained by the obvious. My generalization was that students were not attending, because they were not motivated.

This project has taught me two main lessons. The first lesson is that attendance in class is based on more than just motivation. It is based on the interaction of factors that when viewed as single entities may not seem that powerful. However, the meshing of these factors is an extremely powerful deterrent or motivator. The four themes that emerged from my research support this conclusion.

The second lesson is that as educators, we need to look beyond the surface. Our students come to us with histories that impact their lives. They come with baggage. We need to let the students talk, rather than listening to preconceived notions. As educators of adult ESL students, we have to get involved in our students' lives. We have to recognize that their lives enhance our teaching.

Limitations

While this study did offer me new insight and label specific factors that affect attendance, it was not perfectly executed or designed. I know for the future that I would do some things differently.

The sample size, while not too small, was biased in terms of gender. Currently I have more males in class, so the sample was based on male responses. Of the 26 people in the same size only nine of them had children. Roughly a third of the sample had children, which may have led to skewed results. The other problem with the sample size is that most of the people were under 30 and single. My results may have also been impacted by age and marital status.

Another limitation was the time of year. It is getting colder, so students are not able to attend classes as easily. In the Spring and even Fall, students can come to class on their bikes, but not in the Winter. Many people are also sick during this time of year and

often come to class sick, which affects concentration. Finally, the economy is really bad right now. Students are working extremely hard to make extra money for the holidays and potential imposed vacations. The students typically have less consistent attendance at this time of year.

A final limitation of the study was trying to gather too much data at one time. I think it would have been better to conduct two focus groups with each group. The first focus group would just brush the surface of issues, while the second focus group would dig deeper into the students' thoughts. Students would have practice doing the focus groups and the key questions could be more broken up. At times the students seemed at a loss as to how to answer the question. These questions designed should also take into account the overall educational level of the group. The students, who had a higher level of education, shared more opinions and experiences.

Implications for Educators and Programs

As educators, we want our students to trust us and value our opinions, which means that we must value theirs. Teachers need to learn about their students beyond just the obvious, but rather who they are. They need to know about their culture. Research has proven that a positive relationship between the educator and students is essential.

Educators need to create communication. They need to encourage students to share what is happening in their lives. They also need to recognize that at times their priority is not the same as the students. Positive communication lets students know that the door is always open. It also allows educators to know best how to plan lessons.

The Latino culture is based on a collective point of view. They value the success of the group over that of the individual. They have grown-up in a culture that embraces

people. Educators need to understand peer relations become very important in getting students to class. It is important for educators to encourage students to bring friends to school. It is also important that students honestly feel they are benefiting from classes. Positive experiences are great reasons to come to class.

Programs need to be aware of their students needs. They need to listen to the students' needs rather than trying to find a quick solution. They also need to advertise in places where the students' go. Programs should plan activities that address the target population's values. The Latino culture is a people culture. Activities that allow them to socialize might be good ways of getting students to attend classes. A non-threatening environment is essential to getting students in the door.

Recruitment ideas

Our program currently does many things to help recruit students. We allow students to come when they can. Our classes have specific start and end times, but students are allowed to come when they can. Punctuality is an issue for some of our students, so we address this by an "open door policy."

Our program also acknowledges that some of our potential population has transportation issues. Transportation issues include unable to drive, find a ride, or walk due to the weather. A student who attends classes four hours a day can earn a taxi ticket. This ticket is good for both a round trip from their home to school. The tickets can only be used to go to and from school.

Attendance problems arise out of an inconsistent work schedule. Our program addresses this by talking with the larger employers in town and trying to find out their

potential schedule for the week. Educators also go to the companies and talk with the students about classes.

These three ways of enhancing recruitment have positively impacted our program. However, we still have a lot of potential students that are not attending. An additional way of recruiting students is by trying to do some kind of daycare. Parents frequently ask, if they can bring their children with them. I have tried this before and it does not work. A daycare staffed by positive high-school role models would allow students to attend class and give high-school students some additional money.

Another way of increasing recruitment would be to have the taxi pick students up from work. Sometimes these potential students do not have rides either. If we know when they are going to finish work, we could pick them up. We could provide them with an apple or sandwich to eat.

Having social activities in non-threatening environments would also be great advertising. A picnic in the park followed by games. Students would be encouraged to bring a friend. These activities could be family oriented too. Flyers would be used for the activities and to promote classes.

Future research

I feel this is a very important study. The future of many ABE programs is based on their ability to retain and recruit students. A better understanding of the students' thoughts and culture leads to more successful programs. The principal problem is getting at this information accurately and honestly.

I have four ideas of future studies that I think would greatly enhance the research base. These ideas address the gap between the number of students served and the number

of students not being served. I feel these studies would add valuable insight to the field of adult education in ESL.

First, a study that looked at male and female perceptions of factors affecting attendance. Traditionally this culture is very gender oriented. While times have changed and this gender inequity is not the same as before, childhood experiences and lessons are not easily forgotten. It would be interesting to see how the responses vary.

Second, a study that targeted potential students and former students would be very interesting. Obviously something is motivating the students in class to come. They have overcome their barriers. What are the barriers that keep these other students from coming?

Third, a study that addressed the issue of compensation would also be very interesting. It would not need to be a financial compensation. It could be anything. Students could receive this compensation for a period of weeks and see if it impacted attendance.

The last study would address the issue of recruitment. A current student and potential new student or former student would be paired up. They would be responsible for motivating each other to come to class. I think this study could shed some very interesting information on attitudes and creating a family environment.

Final Summation

My research offered additional support to a lot of previous studies. I was surprised to see that my research did find some barriers, which were not as important in my study as in other studies. I felt that fear and past experiences would play much larger roles in my study. I was surprised that they did not.

My research has taught me a lot of things. I have come to understand that establishing a positive relationship with the students is a great motivator. The students have helped me to see that the more a teacher values them, the more they

value the teacher and thus education. It is important for anyone who works with people to understand that what you do matters.

Acceptance becomes a key issue. Work schedules are not something I can control. I need to accept them and deal with it. I can however, control what happens in my classroom. The environment is essential.

I will use everything I have learned to plan better lessons. I will also look at implementing some of the recruitment suggestions. Finally, I am going to implement to put up a suggestion box encourage the students to practice their English by putting positive comments or negative comments in the box.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, an Austrian-British philosopher in his book *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* believed that “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (1922, p. 68). It is also important to know that “The limits of my understanding means the limits of my knowledge.” I know have a greater understanding thus more knowledge.

APPENDIX A

Student/Participant Information

STUDENT/PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Name	Focus groups	Discussion group and writing task	Interview
Bianca	Yes	Yes	
Pancho	Yes		
Chepe	Yes		
Franco	Yes	Yes	
Brianna	Yes		
Gabriella	Yes	Yes	
Santiago	Yes	Yes	
Arnold	Yes	Yes	
Martin		Yes	
Oscar		Yes	
Ruth		Yes	
Marisol		Yes	
Abraham		Yes	
Juan		Yes	
Jorge		Yes	

Carlos		Yes	
Leonardo			Yes
Roberto			Yes
Teresa			Yes
Pablo			Yes

STUDENT/PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Name	Marital Status	Age	Children	Years in the U.S.	Education
Bianca	Married	40 – 50	Yes	13 years	Primary
Pancho	Single	20-30	Yes	3 years	Primary
Chepe	Single	20-30	No	2 years	University
Franco	Single	20-30	No	2 ½ years	Middle
Brianna	Single	30-40	No	8 years	Secondary
Gabriella	Married	30-40	Yes	21 years	University
Santiago	Married	30-40	Yes	11 years	Middle
Arnold	Married	30-40	Yes	4 years	Secondary
Martin	Single	20-30	No	7 years	Secondary
Oscar	Married	30-40	Yes	2 years	Secondary
Ruth	Single	30-40	Yes	15 years	Secondary
Marisol	Married	40-50	Yes	18 years	Primary
Abraham	Single	20-30	No	2 years	Primary
Juan	Single	30-40	No	8 years	University
Lupe	Single	30-40	Yes	18 years	Middle
Carlos	Single	10-20	No	2 years	Middle
Leonardo	Single	20-30	No	5 years	Primary

Roberto	Married	30-40	Yes	5 years	Primary
Teresa	Married	20-30	No	3 years	Middle
Pablo	Married	40-50	Yes	25 years	Secondary

APPENDIX B

Focus Group Topic Preview

English and Spanish Versions

FOCUS GROUP TOPIC PREVIEW (ENGLISH VERSION)

Focus Group Potential Question Areas

Thank you very much for participating in my focus groups.

My research question is **What factors affect Latino students' attendance at free adult ESL classes?**

The questions I will be asking you will be about the following topics:

Please take time to **think** about these topics. You do not have to write anything down on paper.

1. ESL class attendance
2. Opinions about English classes
3. Purposes of English classes
4. Benefits of English classes
5. Recruitment -How students find out about ESL classes?
6. Important things in your lives (Example, family)
7. Education here and in your country.
8. Good and bad experiences in school. (teacher, class, classmates)

FOCUS GROUP TOPIC PREVIEW (SPANISH VERSION)

Preguntas de los grupos de enfoque

Muchos gracias por tu cooperación en mis grupos de enfoque.

Mi preguntas de investigación es **Qué factores afectan a estudiantes Latinos asistir a clases gratis de Ingles por adultos?**

Los preguntas que yo voy a preguntar a usted tiene estas temas:

Porfavor toma tu tiempo **por pensar** en estas temas. Tu no necesitas escribir nada en esta papel.

1. Asistencia en clases de Inglés.
2. Opiniones sobre las clases de Inglés.
3. Propósitos de las clases de Inglés.
4. Beneficios de clases de Inglés.
5. Reclutamiento – Como súpo de clases de Inglés?
6. Cosas importantes en sus vidas (Ejemplo, familia).
7. Educación aquí y en tu país.
8. Las experiencias buenas y malas en la escuela (maestras, clases, compañeros).

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Questions

(English and Spanish Versions)

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS (ENGLISH VERSION)

Focus Group Questions

Opening Questions:

1. Tell me a little about yourself –
Where are you from?
How long have you been in the U.S.?
2. What is best memory and worst memory of school? (Here or in your country)

Introduction Questions:

1. How did you learn about classes? (hear about).

Transition Questions:

1. Why do you come to English classes?
When you come to classes what do you hope to learn?
What is the hardest thing about learning English?

Key Questions:

Tell me five or six things that are important to you in your life.
(Example family).

Prioritize them.

How much time do you spend doing each of these things?

How much time do you want to spend on each of these things?

Which of these factors are barriers to attending class?

What are other barriers that you can think of?

Which of these factors keep people attending classes?

What are other factors that you can think of?

What reasons do your friends and family give for not attending classes?

Who influences you to attend classes?

Make a list of the best ways you know of to recruit new people.
What can our program (school) do to encourage you to continue
in classes?
What makes a good ESL class?

Ending Questions:

1. Clarify comments
2. Summarize
3. Anything else you want to add.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS (SPANISH VERSION)

Preguntas de mis grupos de enfoque.

Opening Questions:

1. Dime poquito sobre tu mismo.
¿De dónde eres?
¿Cuanto tiempo tu has estado en los Estados Unidos?
2. ¿Cual es tu mejor recuerdo y (o) peor memoria de la escuela?
(Aqui o en tu pais).

Introduction Questions:

1. ¿Cómo supo de las clases?

Transition Questions:

1. ¿Por qué usted viene a las clases de Inglés?
¿Al llegar a clases, qué esperamos para aprender?
¿Cuál es la cosa más difícil para aprender Inglés?

Key Questions:

1. Dime cinco o seis cosas que son importantes para usted en su vida.
(Por ejemplo – familia)

Dar prioridad a ellos.

¿Cuánto tiempo usted pasa hacer cada una de estas cosas?

¿Cuánto tiempo te quieres gastar haciendo cada una de estas cosas?

2. ¿Cuál de estos factores son obstáculos a los que asisten a clases?
¿Cuáles son otras barreras que usted puede pensar?

3. ¿Cuál de estos factores mantienen a la gente asistir a clases?
¿Qué otros factores se puede pensar?

4. ¿Qué razones le dan sus amigos y familiares para que no aisten a clases?
¿Quién influye en usted a asistir a clases?

5. Haga una lista de las mejores maneras ustedes saben para contratar
(reclutar) a nuevas personas.

6. ¿Qué puede hacer nuestro programa para alentar a seguir en las clases?
¿Qué hace un buen ESL profesor (maestro) o clase?

Ending Questions:

Clarification

Summarize

Anything else you want to add.

APPENDIX D

Writing Task Questions

WRITING TASK QUESTIONS (ENGLISH AND SPANISH VERSIONS)

1. Who are you? (¿Quién eres tú?)

2. What things make you feel welcome in this community?
(¿Qué cosas o personas te hacen sentir bienvenido en esta comunidad?)

3. What makes you feel unwelcome? (¿Qué es lo que te hace sentirte no ser bienvenido en la comunidad?)

4. In your houses, what language do you prefer to speak and why?
(En su casa ¿Qué idioma prefiere hablar y por qué?)

Thank you. 😊 😊
Gracias. 😊 😊

APPENDIX E

Short Informal Interview Questions

SHORT INFORMAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Two to four people (2 past attendees and 2 potential attendees).

Questions:

2 past attendees (inactive)

1. Tell me about your experience in our program (school).
(Dígame acerca de su experiencia en nuestro programa (la escuela).
2. What could our program do to help you attend again?
(¿Qué podría hacer nuestro programa para ayudarlo a asistir otra vez?)
3. Why did you stop attending our program?
(¿Por qué dejó usted de asistir nuestro programa?)

2 potential attendees

1. Tell me what you know about ABE and ESL classes.
(Dime lo que usted sabe de ABE y clases de ESL.)
2. What could our program do to help you attend classes?
(¿Qué podría hacer nuestro programa para ayudarlo a asistir clases?)
3. Are you interested in coming to classes at this time?
(¿Está usted interesado en venir en estos momentos a nuestras clases de Inglés?)

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