

Action Research Proposal Presentation

Digital Platforms in Ms. Grewal's English as a Second Language Learning Lab

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LING 612 (SUMM21): Research Methods in

Applied Linguistics

ARR Presentation

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August 13th, 2021

The Plan Forward for this Presentation

Intro + Context

- Purpose
- General Introduction
- The study group
- The study location/institution

Research Issue + Hypotheses + Literature

- The issue under investigation
- Research Question
- Null hypotheses
- Relevant theory and research in the TESOL field

Study Design + Ethical Considerations

- The main and sub design suited for the purpose of the study
- Independent and dependent variables
- Consent, anonymity, and confidentiality

Interventions + Data Collection

- Techniques and treatments
- Kinds of data to be collected
- Data collection tools
- Validity and reliability of the tools

Analyses + Outcomes + Conclusion

- Measurement techniques and tools
- Expected outcomes
- Follow-up action
- Caveats
- Final takes
- References
- Appendix

Educational Context

- **Purpose of the Study:**
 - to examine the relationship between introduction and use of digital platforms in my classroom and ESL students' increased motivation and improved written English skills.
- **General introduction:**
 - this study will elucidate educational issues in my classroom and with proposed intervention and techniques it will examine the same toward finding a conclusion to them. The results will guide me on further actions to take and the study's potential uses in my practice and the field.
- **Description of the class, program, institution, and location of intervention:**
 - my LINC 5, ESL class includes 5 adult students taking English Literacy classes at a not-for-profit education society, called P.A.L.S., led by volunteers in the city of Edmonton, in Canada. 3 students are females, and 2 students are males;
 - all of them have different first languages. They are learning English here in Edmonton as their second/additional language. They have completed high school in their respective home countries and none of them has a diploma or university (post-secondary) education.

Introduction to the Research Issue

- **Learning focus and issue under investigation:**
 - Lack of motivation for, and weak skills in, English language writing as demonstrated by the study group
- **Research question:**
 - What impact does the use of digital literacy platforms have on students' motivation to write as well as the production of written English language in a LINC 5 class?
- **Hypotheses:**
 - Null hypothesis 1: The use of digital literacy platforms has no significant impact on students' writing ability in a LINC 5 class.
 - Null hypothesis 2: The use of digital literacy platforms has no significant impact on students' motivation to produce written English language in a LINC 5 class.

Literature Review (Theory)

1. Constructivism (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, p. 72)
1. Learner-centered learning environments (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, p. 73)
1. Knowledge-centered learning environments (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, p. 75)
1. Assessment-centered learning environments (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, p. 76)
1. Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, pp. 80-83):
 - a. Social Presence
 - b. Teaching Presence
 - c. Cognitive Presence
1. Blended or hybrid learning (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, p. 108, 115, 116, 168)
1. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Perspective theory (Lightbown & Spada, 2017, p. 118)

Literature Review (Research)

1. Wells's (1999) clarification about Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT) (p. 7).
1. Taylor, Atas, & Ghani (2017) note many benefits that blended or hybrid learning provides (as cited in Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, p. 109).
1. Sociocultural Theory on internalization of discourse and demonstration of language proficiency by learners (Guzmán Gámez & Moreno Cuellar, 2019).
1. Blended learning is extensively evidence based (Zhang & Zhu, 2017 as cited in Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, p. 170).
1. Dr. Norman Vaughan, the Co-founder of the Blended Online Design Network (BOLD) and a member of the Community of Inquiry Research Group (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, p. 210), has collected and practised evidence for these approaches to be beneficial for both learners as well as their instructors (Chapter 7).
1. U-learning or Ubiquitous learning as described by Ramón (cited in Conde et. al, 2008, p. 61 as cited in Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, p. 128) is a breakthrough development in technology-based learning .

Justification

There are many reasons why the study topic, the design, and the literature have been chosen as points of departure.

- It is important to delve into this issue because online or digital learning is becoming the new norm, especially since the pandemic hit with more and more students and learning having to be moved distant and online.
- Students sometimes do not respond to traditional methods of teaching and learning and may want to try out new sources to learn where they can have fun and practice their skills at the same time.
- My target students have been learning through ESL teaching techniques that haven't changed much in the past. Their demonstration of low motivation and not-at-par English skills call for a change.
- As Dr. Vaughan states, digital learning when blended into traditional or in-person learning formats benefits both students and teachers (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2021, Chapter 7). This research study shall add to the inventory of evidences collected by in-practice researcher teachers for students and other educators of ESL.
- As discussed at length in the Literature Review (Research) section of this presentation (previous slide), and benefits that many research designs show for different academic settings, making an effort to try and apply those to the ESL field, which hasn't been much researched into, can work wonders for future pedagogical practices and design.

Research Question, Null Hypotheses, Research Variables

- **Research question:**

- What impact does the use of digital literacy platforms have on students' motivation to write as well as the production of written English language in a LINC 5 class?

- **Hypotheses:**

- Null hypothesis 1: The use of digital literacy platforms has no significant impact on students' writing ability in a LINC 5 class.
- Null hypothesis 2: The use of digital literacy platforms has no significant impact on students' motivation to produce written English language in a LINC 5 class.

- **Variables:**

- Independent variable(s): Writing practice achieved via digital interventions of the study, i.e., using Google docs and Issuu
- Dependent variable(s): Rubric scores; improvement in the production of English language and motivation to write

Design of the Study

- It is a primary and cross-sectional mixed-methods study with one-group experimental practical action research design.

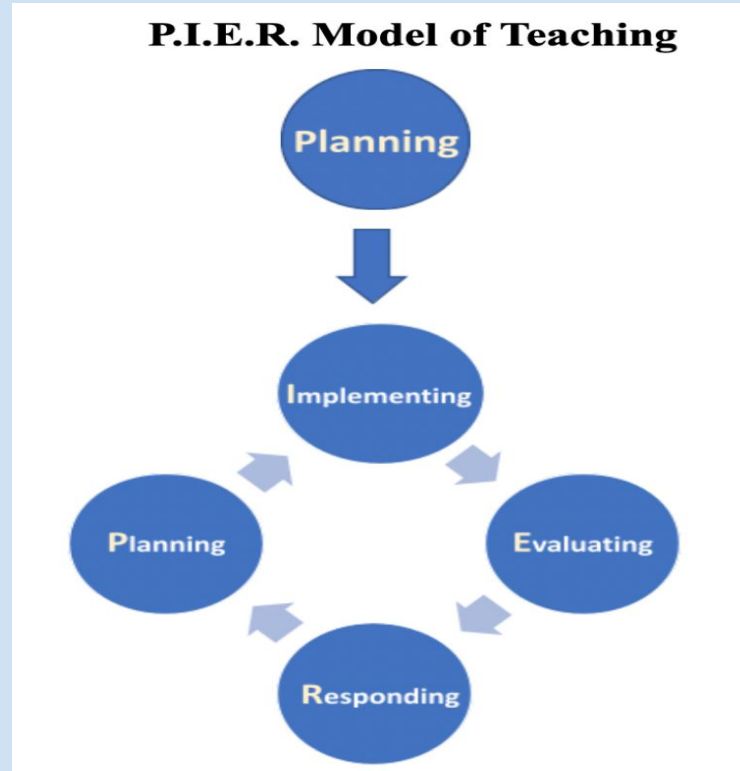
Primary, Cross-sectional

Mixed-methods

One-group Experimental

Practical Action Research

Action Research in Teaching through the P.I.E.R. Model



Source: Moulden, 2021, p.7

Setting & Participants

- My LINC 5, ESL class includes 5 adult students taking English Literacy classes at a not-for-profit education society, called P.A.L.S., led by volunteers in the city of Edmonton, in Canada.
- 3 students were females, and 2 students were males.
- All of them have different first languages.
- They are learning English here in Edmonton as their second/additional language.
- They have completed high school in their respective home countries and none of them has a diploma or university (post-secondary) education.
- This group is selected as they are all ESL students, an ELT field that I wish to explore more into.
- The candidates have similar English proficiency levels at the current point in time and all have similar level of literacy skills, especially in terms of Computer and English skills, from their respective home countries.
- They all have shown identified in the past, during class discussions, how the incorporation of digital literacy and the education of the same can be beneficial in their personal and professional lives.
- The study is expected to take about 4 weeks (20 school days) to accomplish.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting a research study, the following considerations can be taken care of to ensure that it be conducted in honest, ethical and moral light (TPST2, 2018; Creswell & Gutterman, 2019, p. 598):

- Beginning the study by obtaining an informed consent from the participants using a well drafted, easy to understand consent form.
- Full disclosure of information to the participants about the purpose of the study, and involving them actively in all processes during the study.
- Use of personal information like that on education and ethnic background with permission.
- Explaining well the researcher's roles and participants' roles in the study.
- Showing respect to and maintaining collaboration with the participants.
- Maintaining confidentiality for the data gathered.
- Making participants aware of their rights to withdraw anytime from the study, for example.
- Respecting the campus/research site.

Ethical Procedures

The following procedures shall be administered for this action research study (Moulden, 2021e, p. 28).

- Permission from the administrator in charge of the organization shall be sought.
- Preparation of consent forms including detailed information on the purpose and procedures of the study shall be carried out.
- Recruitment of student participants shall take place.
- Signed consent from the participants after they have had their queries answered shall be obtained.
 - The consent form will be inclusive of permission seeking to use information that will be collected as the experiment unfolds or at the end for analyses, including any audio or video recordings (if applicable).
- P.I.E.R. Model of Teaching with focus on research shall be implemented here (Moulden, 2021e, p. 29) (Slide 10 in this presentation).
- Candidate numbers shall be used instead of their names when analyzing data.

Here's the link to an exemplary consent form that can be used for this study to gain permissions:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FyzT-9YfWI246YplcgKHJqYsx4vcvIJifsYwU2DV2jc/edit?usp=sharing>

Interventions/Treatment

- **Intervention 1:** Participants will be introduced to Google Docs and asked to practice the application by doing free writing on any topic of their choice- a 3 hour class. Students will practise this step for one week (five school days).
- **Intervention 2:** Participants will be introduced to Issuu, a digital publishing platform, where they will be taught how to create a free, basic account- a 2 hour class. Teacher will work with the student participants to help them resolve any issues they may encounter in creating their accounts for next two days.
- **Intervention 3:** Participants will be instructed on creating a story or biography on Google Docs on the topic 'My Favorite Food(s)'- a 2 hour class. They'll have a week (five school days) to work on this activity. During this time they'll also receive feedback. Students will make corrections and follow suggestions to create a final piece by the end of this week.
- **Intervention 4:** Participants will be guided on how to upload a document on Issuu for it to be published- a 2 hour class. They will then have three days to upload their own story for publishing it online.

The treatment, without pre- and post-test activities and the final questionnaire, will take about three weeks (15 school days).

Data Collection Procedures

- **Pre-test:** Students will be asked to create a story on paper/computer about their favorite festival. Feedback will be provided and they will have three days to finalize their piece which shall be graded against the rubric created for the study.
- **Interventions:** (please see the previous slide)
- **Post-test:** The stories that students create on Google docs (intervention 3) shall be graded against the rubric created for the study.
- **Post-intervention questionnaire:** Students will be given a questionnaire with 2 closed-ended and 3 open-ended questions about their experience with the whole research, with Google Docs, and with Issuu. This phase will be completed in two days.

Data Collection Tools

Pre-test Worksheet (scheduled to be completed over 3 learning days)

Session 1 & Activity: Date: _____

Create a story or write a biography on the topic 'favorite festival.' You can write about a festival that you enjoy the most, and why, or you can create a story, fictional or inspired by reality, featuring a character and their experience with their favorite festival. You may choose to write the story on a piece of paper or type it on a computer.

Session 2 & Activity: Date: _____

Once your instructor has provided you with feedback, work on any improvement suggestions. You will also make the fair and final copy of the story you created above.

Intervention Worksheet (scheduled to completed over 3 weeks or 15 learning days)

Session 3 & Activity; Date:_____

You will be introduced to Google Docs, an online platform to create written or graphic documents. You can practice in this application by doing free writing on any topic of your choice. This is a 3-hour class. You will practise this step for one week (five school days).

Session 4 & Activity; Date:_____

You will be introduced to Issuu in detail, a digital publishing platform, where you will be taught on how to create a free, basic account on Issuu. This is a 2-hour class. Your teacher will work with you to help you resolve any issues you may encounter in creating your accounts for the next two days.

Session 5 & Activity; Date:_____

You will create a story or biography on Google Docs on the topic 'my favorite food(s)' - You can write about a food or foods you enjoy the most, and why, or you can create a story, fictional or inspired by reality, featuring a character and their experience with their favorite food. During this time you'll also receive feedback. You will make corrections and follow suggestions to create a final piece. You'll have one week to work on this activity (five school days).

Session 6 & Activity; Date:_____

You will be guided on how to upload a document on Issuu for it to be published- a 2 hour class. You will then have three days to upload your own story for publishing it online.

Post-test Worksheet (scheduled to be completed over 8 learning days within the timeframe of the interventions)

See Session & Activity 4 and 5

Post-intervention Questionnaire (scheduled to completed over 2 learning days)

Follow the link: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1chULeFx7180FGgjBuFil-Zruzj3tK3EB5rDA7dx7z5c/edit?usp=sharing>

Validity & Reliability

- Task/test focus: The focus of the instruments as well as the interventions is to assess and improve writing skills in English.
- Content and design of items: It is such that participants don't get overly confused with the new strategy or project but still be able to experience something fresh and exciting.
- Clarity of instructions: Participants shall be given clear and complete instructions at all times. They will be approached to make sure that they know what is expected of them and if the instructions are crystal clear. Only when all five participants thoroughly understand the purpose of the study and the procedure, including activity instructions, each segment will be implemented.
- Rubric: See Appendices. For ease of use, and consistent and accurate scoring.

Data Analyses

- Analyses shall be relatively simple, yet effective.
 - Pre- and post-test results will be graded using the rubric developed and scores will be assigned to this quantitative/numeric data.
 - Difference in scores obtained before and after the interventions will be considered to reach conclusions about the study.
 - This analysis will inform about their performance after the treatment.
- Questionnaire responses, both open- and closed-ended questions shall be triangulated, tabulated and coded.
 - Qualitative data will be analyzed subjectively.
 - Quantitative scores will be assigned to the closed-ended responses.
 - This analysis will inform on the motivation and experience of candidates after the study.

(Moulden, 2021e)

Expected Outcomes

- The results from this study shall be used in my teaching for the same or future ESL students.
- After obtaining the data and analyzing them, response plan shall be developed whether to tweak, keep as is, or disregard the treatment administered.
- Results shall be shared with P.A.L.S. and other educators who work there.
- It will be my attempt to get the results published so that other educators in the field can use it.
- As mentioned earlier in this presentation, in the Justification section (slide 7), research considering incorporation of technology in academics and higher education is being sufficiently undertaken but data still lack when it comes to ESL and ELT fields on this subject.
- It is hoped that this study will not only inform on the effects of using technology with in-person teaching and learning in language classes but also aims to inform and motivate other researchers to examine how using technology in ESL classes can increase success of ESL students in other walks of life.

Caveats/Limitations

- Although the participants in this study are at LINC 5 English level according to the Canadian Language Benchmarks, and all of them have not received college or university education after completing their Grade 12 in their home countries, their liking for English language is not the same. Future studies could take this aspect into account.
- Furthermore, they may have fondness for one module of English, say Speaking, and may not be much interested in Writing. Data collection procedures in this study only focus on Writing to collect data to be measured for proficiency gained in English language Writing when they may do better on other skills after treatments like this, and not necessarily in Writing.
- Future researchers could look into better triangulation opportunities, i.e. more sources of data collection to enhance the accuracy and reliability of the results. Although mixed-methods approach in this study did bring benefits of both verbal and numeric data, there is still room to improve.
- Research teams or principal investigators could gather and make use of a multidisciplinary team. This can prove for the overall design and process of the study to be more refined and effective.

Final Takes

This research proposal has attempted to lay a simple yet detailed account of a future research study in a field that has not been much delved into. A few limitations have been identified and it is hoped that educators and researchers can use those as important points to consider when planning their research. Methods of analyses can be tweaked per the study aim. Regardless of some potential shortcomings of the design and application of the study proposal, it is expected that the study will bring out important information for the research focus and question of the study and inform my practice starting at a local level. My ESL students, both current and future, can benefit from incorporation of technology into the usual pedagogical approaches that teachers like me use. It is hoped that this study can motivate educators and researchers to understand the need to find solutions at a local level by conducting such action research studies for issues that happen in their own classrooms, taking into consideration ethical issues at the same time. When started at one's own classrooms, such studies have the potential to bring greater changes in the entire educational world.

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Appendix

Rubrics to compare pre- and post- intervention results:

Please follow the link to the document: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/14pwwiKd15b-4foUVtRRcR3OrDafj4ylsEjt0WDrePmw/edit?usp=sharing>



THANK
YOU!