

Implementing a Film Club to Enhance English Second-Language Students' Basic Interpersonal Communicative and Basic English Literacy Skills

Topics: Student learning

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Abstract

Most language developers focus on cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) at university level, while basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) rarely feature, as it is assumed that students would already have acquired these skills during their schooling years, which is not the case for most first-year students at the Qwaqwa campus of the University of the Free State (UFS). Accordingly, in 2014 a general English literacy module (GENL1408) was established on the campus to improve students' BICS before they continue to complete an academic literacy module (more focused on CALP). To enhance its effectivity, a film club was created as part of the module. This research study aimed to determine how this film club should be implemented as part of GENL1408 to optimize student engagement and BICS in English, by exploring the effectivity of the film club.

In order to establish the film club impact, the following four objectives were aimed for, and met: a) an extensive literature study of Second Language Acquisition, and student engagement was completed; b) information on the perceptions of students regarding the use of a film club were gathered by means of questionnaires (quantitatively and qualitatively); c) the results of an experimental and a control group of GENL1408 students' pre- and post-tests were gathered to determine if the film club had an effect on their BICS; and d) guidelines and strategies to optimally implement a film club for the sake of the development of BICS and improving student engagement were developed and consolidated into a framework for optimal ESL learning and student engagement when using films.

Because this study drew from the fields of Teaching and Learning and language acquisition, theories, models, and frameworks from both fields were consolidated under the theory building approach of constructivism, to form a new framework relevant for this study.

Methodologically, this quasi-experiment was pragmatically completed, as an exploratory embedded longitudinal mixed methods intervention. A two-year action research study was completed, where testing of the intervention was embedded within the larger theories of student engagement, the input hypothesis, the affective filter hypothesis, and the BICS/CALP distinction. Results of the first cycle were used to adjust the intervention for the implementation in cycle two. However, all results were used to ultimately create a framework for optimal ESL learning and student engagement when using films. This framework provides a concise system of conceptualising a film club intervention, ensuring its relevance within different contexts. This framework aligns four important elements: the context suitable for the film club intervention; general or generic guidelines broadly defined; the operational or practical examples that illustrate various ways in which the guidelines can be applied within practice; and the test instruments suitable to test the effectivity of the film club intervention

Keywords: student engagement, BICS/CALP, second language acquisition, teaching and learning