

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT (DDG)

Effective Grammar Instruction for Adults

PROJECT TITLE

The Integration of Language and Content:
Form-Focussed Instruction in a Content-based Language Program

INVESTIGATOR

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Content-based language instruction is considered good pedagogy in a variety of language teaching settings. One approach to integrating language and content draws on research form-focussed instruction (FFI). While widely accepted that FFI has a positive impact on language learning outcomes, studies have also highlighted the influence of factors such as program and learner differences with regards to the effectiveness of particular FFI options. In addition, anecdotal and empirical research has shown that teachers in some content-based classrooms are reluctant to use FFI options that will draw learners' attention to language and away from content.

The study described in this proposal explores the effectiveness and effect of FFI in a content-based language program designed to prepare adults for employment in a specific workplace sector. The study aims to measure learners' progress in terms of both language and content outcomes as well as their reported awareness of language and content in the instruction they receive.

The participants in the study will be two groups of adult learners enrolled in a content-based ESL program for Early Childhood Educators. While both groups will receive the same content instruction, one group will receive FFI targeting 2 specific grammatical forms. The other group will receive meaning-focussed instruction only. Pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test written and oral assessments will be used to measure gains in linguistic and content knowledge. A questionnaire will be used to investigate the question of learner shift in attention.