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The Effect Of Peer Advisors On Esl Students' Perspectives Of University Academic Tasks

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**THE EFFECT OF PEER ADVISORS ON ESL STUDENTS'
PERSPECTIVES OF UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC TASKS**

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Department of Graduate Studies and Research
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ABSTRACT

A review of the related literature revealed that international students face specific academic challenges. The goal of this research was to investigate the effect of international student peer advising sessions on English as a Second Language (ESL) international students' perceptions of their language skills and strategies for dealing with academic tasks.

The research design included a control and an experimental group with a pretest and a posttest administration of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and the Xu International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment (ISALNA-2) instruments. Qualitative data was also collected. The participants in the study were upper-intermediate level international students in an intensive English program at a large metropolitan university. Scores ($n = 23$) on the SILL and the ISALNA-2 were used to investigate the changing perspectives of students receiving similar information from different sources, classroom teachers and peer advisors or only classroom teachers. Peer advising sessions were provided to the experimental group of students. The focus of the sessions was advice and direction in language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) for university academic tasks.

A split-plot analysis of variance was employed to analyze the quantitative data obtained from pre- and posttest administrations of the instruments. Analysis of the data did not reveal a statistically significant effect of the peer advising sessions as regards the improvement of scores on the SILL and ISALNA-2.

Qualitative data ($n = 29$) indicated that the experimental participants were positively impacted in understanding the necessary language skills necessary for academic success. Interviews with the peer advisors revealed that they had enhanced their understanding of

university expectations and had developed a higher level of confidence as a result of their participation in the advising sessions.

Qualitative data revealed positive attitudes by the peer advisors in giving language skills information and by the ESL international students involved in receiving that information. The study format could contribute to future studies and may have implications for the development of international peer advising for English language instruction, foreign student orientation programs, host family programs, and programs linking foreign students with American student study partners.

This work is dedicated to my loving father, Eric Roth, wherever you are in heaven. You saw me start on my journey and now you know I reached the top of the mountain.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA:	Analysis of Variance
APA:	American Psychological Association
CMMS:	Center for Multilingual Multicultural Studies
Comp.:	composition
<i>df</i> :	degrees of freedom
EAP:	English for Academic Purposes
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
ESL:	English as a Second Language
ETS:	Educational Testing Service
<i>F</i> :	the F statistic
GTA:	graduate teaching assistant
IEP:	intensive English program
IRB:	Institutional Review Board
ISALNA:	International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment
<i>M</i> :	mean
MLA:	Modern Language Association of America
<i>n</i> :	number of participants
<i>p</i> :	probability
PAL:	peer assisted learning
SARC:	Student Academic Resource Center
<i>SD</i> :	standard deviation

SILL:	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TA:	teaching assistant
TESOL:	Teacher of English as a Second Language
TOEFL:	Test of English as a Foreign Language
U.S.:	United States
U.S.A.:	United States of America
UCF:	University of Central Florida

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance

The United States has become the host to an increasing number of foreign students during the second half of the twentieth century. Over 580,000 foreign students were enrolled in American colleges and universities in the 2002-2003 academic year and constituted approximately 4.6% of those schools' total enrollment (Open Doors 2003). Even after the events of September 11, 2001, the interest of foreign students studying in the United States has remained strong (Arroyo, 2003; Why international, 2002). International students take their education quite seriously, valuing that education for the intrinsic reward of academic pursuit and for career-related reasons (Boyer & Sedlacek, 1986).

Foreign students must show English proficiency on entrance examinations before they are allowed to study in academic degree programs in the United States or other English-speaking countries (Spaulding & Flack, 1976; Tasker, 2001). The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is an examination that is required for admission into most U.S. colleges and universities and measures English skills in reading, writing, structure (grammar), and listening (Reid, 1997). Many international students believe that an acceptable admissions score on the TOEFL ensures that they have adequate English skills in the areas of reading, writing, structure, and listening to succeed in an American school of higher education. In reality, even if an international student can answer the questions on the TOEFL, he/she may still need help with English to be successful at the university.

College-level English proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking is very important for academic success in institutions of higher learning in the United States.

Many international students come with advanced English skills that they have acquired in their native country, but others do not have these necessary skills. One way that international students can acquire the necessary academic skills is by studying English at an intensive English program (IEP) when they arrive in the United States (Reid, 1993).

Although English proficiency is important for academic success, international students may also need adjustment to American academic life in other ways. They may not be familiar with the academic and social culture of American schools. For instance, they may not be able to write research papers using specific formats, take copious notes from lectures, or read vast numbers of pages before each week's class. These regularities of American scholarly achievement are often new to foreign students. They are unaware of how Americans become successful at college or the time management skills necessary to complete readings and assignments in a timely fashion (Horowitz, 1986).

A study done by Ming Xu in 1990 used the International Students Academic Language Needs Assessment (ISALNA) instrument to evaluate international students' English proficiency, assess their academic language needs (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), and test the impact of English proficiency indicated by self-ratings and selected non-linguistic variables on students' academic performance. The results strongly suggested that English proficiency (as measured by a higher score on the ISALNA) was the single most important factor influencing international students' academic coping ability. Self-perceived English proficiency can be used to diagnose international students' language deficiency and inform institutions of what language skills international students need. Another important finding of the needs assessment was that, although receptive language skills (reading and listening) were seen as being more frequently

used, productive language skills (writing and speaking) were perceived as more problematic to international students than receptive language skills (Xu, 1990).

For this reason, some intensive English programs (IEPs) have developed transitional, “bridge,” programs to prepare English as a Second Language (ESL) international students for academic study in their chosen fields and to ease acculturation and language needs problems (Lucas & Wagner, 1999). ESL teachers in these programs inform ESL international students about areas that may cause problems, language skill areas they should practice more, as well as about cultural adjustment and its accompanying concerns, as well as other issues the students may find when they reach the university (Horowitz, 1986; Mangubhai, 1994).

Faculty in these specialized English programs know that there are many different types of language learners and many different purposes for learning ESL. These specialized English programs know that there are many different types of language learners and many different purposes for learning ESL. Research by Ehrman and Oxford (1990) suggests that learning styles, learning strategies, and language learning aptitude might bear close relationships to successful student language learning. Oxford conducted studies using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as an instrument to collect data that measured preferences for learning strategies and learning styles (1996b). Validity of the SILL rests on its predictive and correlative link with language performance (course grades, standardized test scores, ratings of proficiency) as well as its confirmed relationship to sensory preferences. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) contend that the SILL exhibits strong relationships between motivation, proficiency, and psychological type as well as some correlations among language performance, learning style, and setting characteristics. They assert that more proficient learners appear to use a wider range of learning

strategies in a greater number of situations than do less proficient learners, and this variety of strategies helps them to become more self-directed and can improve their academic performance.

Another consideration is the source from which international students get their information to aid their future educational and career goals. Many international students get advice from many sources on their way to a U.S. college or university. These young people are constantly exposed to advisors- parents, teachers, counselors, police- all of them adults. Because young people can be significantly more sensitive around these advisors, it is quite natural for them to look to each other for support, direction, and trust. A recent survey of a group of adolescent students ascertained that these students consistently seek out each other for help rather than seeking help from parents, counselors, teachers, and other helping agents (De Rosenroll & Moyer, 1983).

An additional set of advisors for ESL international students is the ESL teachers in their English programs. These teachers may inform the ESL international students about problems that they will encounter, such as requisite language skills for academic study, culture shock they may experience and its accompanying affects, and other eventualities of campus life with which they may contend (Horowitz, 1986; Mangubhai, 1994). From the perceptions of some young people, the generation gap tends to decrease the believability of statements made by adults and to increase the acceptability of information received from peers. Therefore, one solution to the problem of receptibility of information can be students acting as academic advisors (Brown, 1965, 1977).

International student peer advisors could be uniquely qualified to help other international students face, solve, and cope with academic and social problems associated with the adjustment

to a new learning environment (Layman, 1981). Students are often more willing to accept advice and direction from a peer advisor who has, at one time or another in his/her college career, experienced similar emotions and problems (Brown, 1965). Also, students tend to feel more at ease in the presence of an advisor who is a fellow student and not in a perceived judgmental position.

Peer advisors may empathize with the student experience more as fellow students, and this can be the key to successful advisor/advisee relationships. Consequently, peer advising can be productive because the advice and guidance received by the advisee is given on a level with which advisees can identify, is in their comfort zone, and, therefore, is more easily internalized (Creaser & Carsello, 1979).

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the affect of peer advisors on ESL international students' perceptions of their skills and strategies in dealing with and solving academic challenges based on scores on the SILL. The study also examined the English language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) that ESL international students considered they needed more for academic success as indicated by the responses to the Xu ISALNA-2.

Scores on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) instrument, measuring language learning strategies and styles, and the Xu International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment (ISALNA-2) instrument, measuring necessary university academic language skills proficiency, were used to investigate the different perspectives of students receiving similar information from different sources. The control group received the usual classroom instruction. The experimental group received the classroom instruction and engaged in peer

advising sessions. Both the classroom teaching and peer advising sessions provided advice and the sessions had as a primary focus language skills including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The peer advisors were students who were enrolled in local colleges and universities and had experienced similar problems as the sample of international ESL students.

A review of the related literature revealed that international students face specific academic challenges in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The researcher's experience in working with ESL international students leads her to believe that the significance of this study lies in the effect of the peer advisors, who can empathize with the student experience because they are fellow students, and that can be the key to successful advisor/advisee relationships. A cooperative program with students acting as academic peer advisors can successfully communicate information about language learning strategies necessary for ESL students to succeed in an academic setting. Peer advising can be more productive because the advice and guidance received by the advisee is given both on a level with which the advisees can identify and feel comfortable (Creaser & Carsello, 1979).

Research Questions

1. Do international students who have peer advisor language skill sessions achieve a significantly higher score on the SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) than international students who do not have language skill sessions with peer advisors?
2. Do international students who have peer advisor language skill sessions achieve a significantly higher score on the Xu ISALNA-2 (International Student Academic

Language Needs Assessment) than international students who do not have language skill sessions with peer advisors?

Key Definitions

EAP- English for Academic Purposes. These are classes that teach English through content used in academic programs.

ESL- English as a Second Language means learning English as a new language. This may actually be the student's second, third, fourth, or other language, but it is still referred to as ESL.

English language proficiency- This is the level of language skill a student has at his/her current level of language study in English.

IEP- An Intensive English Program is a language instruction program that includes four to six hours each day devoted to English language study over a period of time that can be from six to sixteen weeks.

Language skills- These are Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking skills used to communicate in English.

Peer advisor- For the purpose of this study, a peer advisor was an international student who had completed the intensive English language preparation program and was enrolled in a United States college or university. He/she had consented to act as an advisor about language needs and academic tasks to other students who were enrolled in the intensive English program.

Peer assistance- A general term used to denote an educational practice in which students interact with other students to attain educational goals.

PAL- Peer Assisted Learning is a specific approach of peer interaction.

SILL- The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning is a 50-item, Likert-type scale instrument that was developed by Rebecca Oxford to determine indicators that measure preference for learning strategies and learning styles for students learning English as a Second Language.

Student academic/university tasks- These are assignments and course work that are necessary to complete a degree at a United States college or university.

TOEFL- The Test of English as a Foreign Language is a language assessment test administered to non-native language speakers to demonstrate proficiency in English before entering English-speaking colleges and universities. Components of the TOEFL are listening, grammar, reading, and writing.

Upper-intermediate ESL student- A student in Level 3 out of 4 levels in the intensive English program. The program is divided into beginning, lower intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced skills levels.

Xu ISALNA- The International Students Academic Language Needs Assessment is an instrument written by Ming Xu to assess international graduate students' academic language needs and self-assessed proficiency in English to meet those needs. There are two versions of the Xu ISALNA, the original version, and the Xu ISALNA-2, the revised version, which was adapted for ESL international students currently enrolled in a language preparatory program. The Xu ISALNA also included an International Student Interview Protocol, an open-ended interview instrument, revised for this study into the International Student Information Form.

Limitations

The study was limited by the following constraints:

1. A limited number of students from a single, metropolitan university intensive English program, made up the sample, thus limiting its generalizability to other populations.
2. Data was collected during one semester in a period of six weeks.
3. Some of the participants may have had difficulty understanding all the instructions given because of their language proficiency.
4. Some participants were absent on the days that the peer advising sessions occurred.

Assumptions

The assumptions of the study were as follows:

1. The participants would answer the questions truthfully in the instruments.
2. All ESL teachers assisting in the study would consistently follow the precise directions for administering the instruments to the participants.

Methodology

The general design of the study was experimental. The sample was English as a Second Language (ESL) international students from the Center for Multilingual Multicultural Studies (CMMS), an intensive English program (IEP) for English as a Second Language (ESL) at the University of Central Florida. The convenience sample was composed of all the upper-intermediate ESL students in Communication Skills (Listening and Speaking classes). The study

also involved international student peer advisors and the upper-intermediate ESL students' teachers.

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL) was employed to discern student attitudes toward their English language learning strategies. The International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment instrument (Xu ISALNA- original and revised versions) was used to identify perceived tasks necessary to succeed in university academic tasks. Other sections of the Xu ISALNA include the International Student Interview Protocol (also called International Student Information Form in the study) and demographic information sheets.

The peer advisors were graduates of the IEP. These advisors were administered the Xu ISALNA, International Student Interview Protocol, and demographic information sheets. Data was tabulated from the results of the instruments and a two- to three-hour collaborative meeting between the researcher and the peer advisors gave direction for the development of the Peer Advisor Session Checklists (Appendix I) of topics to be discussed in each peer advisor session. A comprehensive review of the professional literature supplemented the information for the topics used because the peer advisors' personal experiences may not have adequately covered the material. The sessions discussed English language skills necessary for university academic study in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The upper-intermediate ESL students' teachers were also given the Peer Advisor Session Checklists. A 30-minute faculty meeting with the researcher gave the upper-intermediate ESL students' teachers instructions on including all the material from the checklists in the regular upper-intermediate students' regular classes.

The research used a control and an experimental group with a pretest and a posttest of the SILL and the Xu ISALNA-2 survey instruments ($n = 23$) to determine if there was any effect of

the treatment, peer advising, on student perceptions of their English language learning strategies and language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) for performing tasks necessary to succeed in university academic tasks.

Data were collected during a six-week period in the Fall 2003 semester. During week one, the pretests of the SILL and Xu ISALNA-2 were administered. The experimental group met with peer advisors four times for one hour class periods (weeks two through five) to discuss language skills necessary for academic success in the university. The peer advisor sessions were conducted by a group of four to six peer advisors every week. The peer advisors were male and female and from different nationalities. The focus of each session was determined by the Peer Advisor Session Checklists. Each week the sessions covered a different language skill. One peer advisor was the moderator for each session and led the other peer advisors to tell the information on the checklists. This was followed by a question and answer period each week. Week one was reading. Week two was writing. Week three was listening, and week four was speaking. General strategies were also discussed every week. The researcher recorded the sessions on audio and video tape to collect data and verify that all items on the checklists were included. The researcher also interviewed the upper-intermediate ESL students' teachers to verify that the same material had been discussed in the students' classes. During week six, the posttests, the SILL, Xu ISALNA-2, and International Student Information Forms, were given.

Qualitative data were collected and revealed positive attitudes by the peer advisors in giving language skills information and by the ESL international students involved in the treatment in receiving the information from the peer advisors. The goals and activities of the peer advisors were similar to peer tutors and peer counselors as they imparted information from the

checklists. The peer advisors also demonstrated themselves to be model students who had attained success at the university.

Data Analysis

After data collection, statistical analysis of the data was performed using the Graduate Pack Version of SPSS for Windows, Version 10.0. Data were statistically evaluated using Split-plot Analysis of Variance to determine if there was a statistical relationship between a higher score on the SILL and the Xu ISALNA-2 for the treatment group with the peer advisors compared to the control group as measured with the pre-tests and post-tests. From the statistical analyses and all other interview and observational data collected, results and conclusions were formulated, reported, and related to the research inquiry of the study, which are the affects of peer advisors on language needs related to academic success for ESL students.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present study investigated the effect of peer advisors on ESL international students' perceptions of their skills and strategies in dealing with and solving academic challenges. It utilized two instruments, one that measured language learning strategies and styles and another instrument that measured necessary university academic language skills proficiency.

A review of the relevant, academic literature is related to the areas of peer advising, learning strategies and English as a Second Language (ESL) communicative language skills necessary for university academic tasks. Taken together, these factors all contributed to an understanding of peer advising as it relates to ESL international students preparing for college and university study. Qualitative data can also reveal positive attitudes by peers in sharing language skills information.

Peer Advising and Peer Assistance

Many studies have been done utilizing peers helping peers in academic situations. In this study, peer advising is related to peer assistance, a general term utilized to describe different forms of peer support. What are peers? Peers, by definition, are close to each other in age, ability, status, ethnicity, and other characteristics (Topping & Ehly, 1998). Generally, peers are individuals in similar situations who do not hold a position of power, that is, teacher or expert, in that relationship. Peers may have considerable experience in both academic and social settings or they may have relatively little (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2001). They are approachable and may have insights into learning difficulties that even the most skilled teachers may lack. Indeed,

masters of the subject matter, teachers, may have the greatest difficulty in seeing the novices' obstacles (Topping & Ehly, 1998).

What is peer assistance? Peer assistance is an educational practice in which students interact with other students to attain educational goals (O'Donnell & King, 1999). This can be "students learning from and with each other in both formal and informal ways" (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2001, p. 4). Peer assistance is the acquisition of knowledge and skill through active help and support among status equals, people from similar social groupings, who are not professional teachers. These students help each other to learn and, by doing so, learn themselves (Topping & Ehly, 1998).

Peer learning or education usually involves the offering of sensitive information from credible peers who are seen to identify with and understand the life circumstances of the recipients (Topping & Ehly, 1998). The advantage of learning from peers is that they are, or have been, in similar positions. They have faced the same challenges, in the same context; they speak in the same language and questions can be asked that may appear, in other situations, to be "silly" questions (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2001).

In peer learning, students learn with, and from, each other. Piaget (1971) believed that co-operation between peers was likely to encourage real exchange of thought and discussion. Vygotsky (1962) also valued peer learning. He argued that the range of skills that can be developed with peer collaboration or adult guidance is greater than anything that can be attained alone.

Peer assistance has been around for a few thousand years, but in schools it has been subject to cycles of higher and lower usage over the last two hundred years. These cycles have

largely been the product of political and economic factors related to the sociology of the teaching profession (Topping, 2001).

The existence of an atmosphere of respect and trust is essential to the successful implementation of peer learning. Students must know that they are safe to express their thoughts, opinions, and misunderstandings (O'Donnell & King, 1999). Teaching any subject is sometimes narrowly perceived to be the "passing" on of knowledge from an "expert" to a "novice" (Gillespie & Lerner, 2000). According to Wagner (1982), "The best way to learn something is to teach it, and that may well be one of the major benefits to the tutoring student" (p. 217).

Many studies have been done utilizing peers helping peers in numerous academic situations. Peer advising has also gone by various names, depending on the exact circumstances of the interaction- peer tutoring, education, mentoring, facilitating, monitoring, counseling, modeling, teaching, and interaction. In all cases, the people being helped were similar in some characteristic, whether it was age, gender, culture, language, situation, or another quality; there was a bond before the assistance was offered (Ames & Ames, 1989).

The work done by researchers differs in many interesting ways, including research methodology, the ages of students studied, sizes of groups studied, the types of tasks and subject domains examined, and the specific designs and approaches to peer learning that were being researched and promoted (O'Donnell & King, 1999). Some projects had helpers who assisted students of the same age, and some had older children as helpers. Any difference in age did not seem to matter, as long as the helper was more able in the subject area than the helped (Topping, 2001).

Types of Peer Assistance

For the purpose of this research, the goals and activities of peer models, peer tutors, and peer counselors closely match the peer advisors used in this study. Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) is a specific approach which includes peer tutoring, characterized by role assumptions as tutor or tutee, a focus on curriculum content, and, usually, specific procedures for interaction. Participants are trained, and peer modeling, which provides a competent example of desirable learning behavior by a member or members of a group with the intention that others in the group will imitate such behavior, is demonstrated. Other forms of peer assistance include peer monitoring, where peers observe and check the process learning behaviors of others in the group with respect to appropriateness and effectiveness. Peer assessment, where peers formatively and qualitatively evaluate the products or outcomes of learning of others in the group, is another form of peer assistance. In addition, peer assistance also includes peer education and peer counseling (Topping, 2001).

Peer teaching used in higher education may utilize “near-peers,” where the peer teacher is more advanced than the learner. Such teaching includes the use of undergraduate teaching assistants, tutors, and counselors. Another type of peer teaching, “co-peers,” involves students who are at the same level as their peers. These students can form be partnerships and work groups (Whitman, 1988).

Peer assistance can also be done by cross-age tutors, peer mentors, peer teachers, class-wide peer tutors, reciprocal peer tutors, and peer consultants. Cooperative learning and collaborative learning also use peers, but are organized by teachers. Each type of peer assistance uses slightly different criteria for the participants, the activity, the place, and the subject. For

example, parrainage is a form of peer learning which uses sponsors and is utilized in Swiss colleges (Falchinov, 2001).

Peer modeling can have strong social and attitudinal effects. Peers can model enthusiasm and cooperation. They can show that something is possible, even for peers who have little, or no, belief in their own capability. Peer models are competent but not necessarily perfect. Peers can also model problem-solving, including modeling of coping and self-correction. Observing how others do things heightens awareness of task analysis and different strategies through comparison and contrast (Topping & Ehly, 1998). Modeling, combined with verbalization of thoughts, has been found to be more effective than non-verbal modeling alone, perhaps because the learner can repeat the peer model's "think-aloud" to guide their own attempts at independent task replication, in effect a form of self-instruction. Cognitive modeling also often demonstrates strategies and skills (Topping, 2001).

Tutoring is the individual instruction of one or more adults on an informal or formal basis. Tutoring adjusts the method of teaching to the needs of the student. Using unique learning capabilities of members in the class, tutoring encourages and motivates the individual. Empathy, initiative, enthusiasm, and direction can be supplied by the tutor. Tutoring provides the student with immediate feedback. Tutoring also provides an atmosphere and a technique for involving adults in choosing, planning, and executing student learning activities, and can be easily conducted in a variety of environments, large or small, formal or informal. Students can also be involved in the learning process to provide for individual interests and specialized skill areas. Tutoring is an individualized approach to learning that can focus on verbal questions, explanations, and responses (Verduin, Miller, & Greer, 1977). Training tutors improves their

effectiveness, and more structured forms of tutoring appear to yield the best measured outcomes. The relative ability differential between the tutor and tutee is of greater significance than chronological age or the attainment level of either partner independently (Topping, 2001).

Peer counseling includes individuals from similar groups, who are not professional teachers or managers, who help clarify general life problems and identify solutions by listening, giving feedback, summarizing and being positive and supportive. This might occur on a one-to-one basis or in groups. Students in difficulty can be very reluctant to approach a professional counselor. Disclosure to a peer counselor might be more likely, especially because of higher perceived empathy (Topping & Ehly, 1998).

Bandura (1997) asserted that modeling can serve as an effective tool for promoting a sense of personal efficacy. Individuals appraise their capabilities for many skills in relation to the attainments of others. Often, in everyday life, individuals compare themselves to particular associates in similar situations engaged in similar endeavors. Seeing or visualizing people similar to oneself performing successfully typically raises efficacy beliefs in observers that they themselves possess the capabilities to master comparable activities. These individuals persuade themselves that, if others can do it, they too have the capabilities to raise their performance.

Models can teach better ways of doing things. Individuals not only experience the results of their efforts but also see how others are faring in similar pursuits. Individuals actively seek proficient models who possess the competencies to which they aspire. By their behavior and expressed ways of thinking, competent models may transmit knowledge and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands. In addition to their instructive and motivational function, modeled actions are able to convey information about the

nature of environmental tasks and the difficulties they present. In modeling controllability, the model can also demonstrate highly effective strategies for handling challenges and threats in whatever situation might arise. For this reason, individuals turn to proficient models for knowledge, skills, and effective strategies.

Peer Counseling Studies

A research report done by Gasparovic in 1975 examined factors involved in developing a successful peer-counseling program by reviewing reported results of studies from the early 1970s. Gasparovic studied peer counseling programs working with elementary age children through adults. Gasparovic's report outlined successful peer counseling programs which involved well-organized training programs, faculty involvement, parent cooperation, counselor readiness, and evaluative methods. One counseling program served high school students in Palo Alto, California, in 1971. 155 peer counselors were chosen, from 165 student applicants, because of commitment and completion of a training program. Curricula of the training included communication skills, decision-making applied to working on common problems, and strategies of counseling. In that program, peer group counseling used the influence that students have on each other, so that influence could effect changes in behavior and action. Gasparovic found that the peer influence model held great potential for assisting new students.

A study by McAuley (1982) investigated successful high school peer counseling programs in Florida that helped students work out problems with grades, study skills, vocational ambitions, drugs, and curriculum. McAuley asserted that one factor that contributed to the success of programs was the method of peer counselor selections. Other important factors cited

were training, feedback from faculty counselors, recognition of effort, and parent and administrative support.

Brown (1972) reported on several research studies that examined peer counseling programs for students preparing for, or already in, colleges or universities. Brown noted that one possible answer for the failure of college orientation programs may be a credibility factor. These programs are almost always planned, directed, and staffed by professional personnel, with limited involvement of students, except in such assisting roles as campus guide or dormitory proctor.

In his research, Brown (1972) found that today's generation gap tends to decrease the believability of statements made by adults and to increase the acceptability of information received by peers. Students listen to students more readily than they do to adults. Thus, adult-dominated orientation programs are unlikely to be as effective in helping incoming students, because adult credibility will likely be questioned by these students. Requiring information, advice, help, and reassurance during this period of adjustment, the freshman naturally turns to his more experienced peers for assistance. Brown's (1972) research investigated the faculty member's traditional role as friend and confidant of the student and discovered that it has become increasingly difficult to maintain that role as a consequence of the trend toward larger classes, busier schedules, and more formalized instruction. Added to that, as colleges and universities have grown in size, the problems of communication have further tended to impersonalize student-faculty relationships.

Baldwin (1975) studied college-level peer counseling at a branch campus of the University of Wisconsin. Student Services staff used a student-to-student counseling program

because, “The new students seemed to place a great deal of importance on the validity of the information which our student aids were able to give them. Our assistants were able to develop an incredible amount of rapport with the new students in a very short time, making the program-planning sessions increasingly more valuable” (p. 3). Baldwin (1975) noted that the information given out by professional staff during these same sessions became more believable when confirmed or reinforced by the student helpers. The success of the program was attributed to greater acceptance of peer counselors by students because they “speak the same language” and share the same problems. Counseling could be conducted informally through telephone calls, in cafeterias, and in classrooms. The student counselors were trained and provided with various reference materials they might need in their work. Reported results of the student-to-student counseling program included a decrease in the total number of withdrawals and a decrease in the total number of program changes. Faculty, staff, and students also felt that the image of the university, in responding to the individual, had been strengthened by the program. Perceived student interest increased because the use of student counseling compensated for advisors who lacked knowledge about the course requirements and about referral opportunities as well as advisors “too busy” to spend any time with students.

Brown (1965) considered peer advisors uniquely qualified to help other students face, solve, and cope with academic and social problems associated with the adjustment to a new learning environment. He reported that students were more willing to accept advice and direction from a peer advisor who had, at one time or another in his/her college career, experienced similar emotions and problems. Creaser and Carsello (1979) contended that students felt more at ease in the presence of a counselor who was a fellow student. Peer advisors empathized with the student

experience as fellow students and this could be the key to successful advisor/advisee relationships. Peer advising was productive because the advice and guidance received by the advisee was given on a level that advisees could identify and feel comfortable with, and in a professional manner as the peer advisors were trained in counseling techniques.

Studies of Peer Help for Learning

The help from peers works towards more effective learning. This learning can be through observation, participation, or explicit communication (Ames & Ames, 1989). Hull (1978) noted that participation was considered the most effective means for inducing change, followed by observation, and then explicit communication. Oxford (1996b) reported that students' focal attention to specific strategies was heightened even more when peers, not authority figures, offered the information. The use of peer-sharing can be a powerful attention-getter. Reid's (1993) research identified the benefits of collaborative or group peer work as it strengthens the community of the class, offers students an authentic audience, diversifies the pace of the class, and breaks the monotony of the lecture format. At the same time, peer-sharing also offers students with different learning styles and strategies additional opportunities for learning.

One study of undergraduate students at a large state university found that instruction and counseling on study skills could assist students to learn effective study techniques in developing positive attitudes toward learning, especially when student-to-student counseling or tutorial approach was utilized (Gadzella, 1979). The superiority of the student-to-student counseling approach may have resulted from the instructions for the counseled participants being individualized, which provided a greater opportunity for student involvement and made the content more meaningful (Gadzella, 1979).

According to Russell (1971), interest in school learning is increased when students help others to learn. He found that both the student and the helper are brought into more intimate contact with the material to be learned. Communication of the content can be improved through the use of student-oriented language which teachers may be unable to use very effectively. Subject matter gains new value as the medium through which an intimate interaction between two students takes place. As Scarcella and Oxford (1992) assert, in this way, students do not need to rely solely on the teacher for assistance. They can receive valuable assistance from their peers. In addition to helping their peers with language, students can also help their peers by providing them with information, responding to their ideas, and giving them needed encouragement. Thus, in small groups and cooperative learning activities, learners can receive considerable assistance.

One program for limited English proficiency (LEP) students was the “English for College Precollegiate Program,” an interagency effort to prepare Southeast Asian immigrant high school students in Wisconsin for success in post-secondary educational pursuits. One key component of the program was the use of peer counselors who, as native speakers of Southeast Asian languages, provided the bilingual support for the high school students in cultural, academic, and social situations (Werner-Smith & Smolkin, 1995).

Several studies focused on international students and multi-cultural diverse populations, but few studies looked specifically at peer advising programs for ESL students in IEPs preparing for United States colleges and universities. As Hull (1978) stated, for many international students there is a high premium placed on education in their home country and the best education in some fields is in the United States. Spaulding and Flack (1976) found that foreign students

receive little or inadequate pre-departure and/or on-arrival orientation, inadequate foreign student services exist on many campuses, and insufficient attention is paid by academic advisors to these students' special needs.

Ethnic Minority and Foreign Students

Studies of peer counseling for multicultural students focused on different methods of assisting ethnic minority and foreign students. Hull (1978) reported that those students indicating that they were most often in the company of American students were the most likely to have reported satisfaction with their total experience. As was to be expected, if the students had spent time with Americans, they had interacted in activities and built relationships with Americans. A series of positive generalizations seems to expand from spending time with American students.

Problems for Ethnic and International Students

Because some ethnic and international student populations historically have tended to avoid counseling services, peer counselors of various group memberships may serve an important function in disseminating information and addressing a variety of adjustment problems in a more comfortable way (Boyer & Sedlacek, 1986).

The problems most frequently cited cluster around financial difficulties, the inadequacy of academic advice and personal counseling, and insufficient orientation. The specific problems encountered by students appear to vary, depending in part on the length of time spent in this country and on their country or region of origin. Personality and national origin can be factors affecting the degree and intimacy of interaction (Spaulding & Flack, 1976). Many studies discussed ways that university student counselors can augment student service information given

in problem areas for international students such as registration advising, alcohol, drug and other campus health issues, counseling academic problems, personal issues such as homesickness and geographic distance from family, financial problems, culture shock, and cross-cultural problems such as understanding and adjusting to new social norms in social situations and teacher expectations as well as varied teaching styles (Abe, Tabot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Frisz, 1999; Lawson, 1989; Merta, Ponterotto, & Brown, 1992; Miller, 1989; Nolan, Levy, & Constantine, 1996; Reinicke, 1986; Stokes, et al., 1988; Surdam & Collins, 1984).

Coping Mechanisms for International Student Adjustment

Letters from home, telephone calls to home, association with fellow nationals speaking the home language, and “talking over things” can all be very important coping mechanisms for the foreign student in the United States. Adamson (1993) discovered that most international students who did well in content areas were those who had the opportunity to discuss the concepts they were learning in their native language with other students. Other studies have found that adjustment problems of foreign students in the United States could be eased by making available English language instruction, orientation programs, counseling, host family programs, and programs linking foreign students with American student study partners (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Meloni, 1986).

In her article, Oxford (1996b) discussed group counseling sessions with students which can be helpful for promoting strategy effectiveness. Students together in their class or small group can safely share their feelings about their language learning, their progress, and their strategies. Together, students can help each other assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of their strategy use. Individuals can re-enact unsuccessful attempts at learning, and others in the

group can interpret the situation, suggest more appropriate strategies, and encourage a commitment to try new strategies.

Effective peer education and counseling programs all have goals, methods of recruitment, selection, and training of peer advisors to provide special assistance to students so they can maximize use of student campus services. Effective programs can assist participants in adjustment, adaptation, and success on college and university campuses (Brown, 1971; Elliott, 1985).

Advantages of Peer Assistance

Peer assistance promotes certain types of learning outcomes. These include working with others; critical enquiry and reflection; communication and articulation of knowledge, understanding and skills; managing learning and how to learn; self and peer assessment (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2001).

Several studies compared the effectiveness of peer tutoring to either teacher-led instruction or some form of self-instruction. In general, results indicated that peer tutoring could be at least as effective as teacher-led instruction and that tutoring as a supplement to teaching was likely to be better than teaching alone (Topping, 2001). Students learn a lot by explaining their ideas to others and by participating in activities in which they can learn from their peers (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2001).

Tutors and tutees alike at college confront a faculty who control the curriculum, assign the work, and evaluate the results. This common position in the traditional hierarchy, moreover, tends to create social bonds among students, to unionize them. Students have always banded together to deal with the emotional and cognitive demands of college, and peer tutoring simply

gives legitimacy to the practices of mutual aid students have always engaged in on their own (Capossela, 1998). Peer feedback is usually available in greater volume and with greater immediacy than teacher feedback, which might compensate for any quality disadvantage (Topping, 2001).

Learners and helpers gain in self-esteem, self-confidence, self-belief, motivation generally, social relations beyond tutoring, and ability to understand and manage their own learning processes. Gains from being a helper have attracted more interest in recent years. Ethnic minority students and second language students gain as learners and helpers. Class-wide peer assistance is socially inclusive; everyone has an equal opportunity. The training of helpers improves the effectiveness of the delivery of the program (Topping, 2001).

One advantage of peer teaching is that anxiety caused by vast differences in age, status, and background between students and teachers can be reduced. Another benefit is that a peer tutor may possibly communicate more easily with a student, particularly a struggling student. Tutors may increase their own understanding, self-esteem and self-confidence as they teach academic materials to such students. “The success of older children tutoring younger ones derives in part from the drive to live up to culture heroes’ expectation. Additionally, there is a recurrent finding that should not surprise any teacher that the older ‘hero’ learns as much or more than the one he has taught” (Wagner, 1982, p. 18). Peer tutors may be more patient with a slow learner. Peer teaching reinforces previous learning and may reorganize knowledge more effectively and increase understanding (Wagner, 1982).

Advantages for Students

In a pilot program, high school students participated in a course with a world class citizen curriculum, designed to introduce them to cross-cultural and multicultural subject material, as well as to train them to be effective tutors/mentors. The students received credit for both the coursework and for mentoring students in the school who had recently arrived from other countries. The students' information base about other cultures was enlarged through structured interaction with their mentees, while the mentees benefited from the skilled attention of the mentors (Gartner & Riessman, 1993).

Purported advantages of peer assistance over traditional teacher-led instructional approaches, as identified by Topping and Ehly (1998), were higher academic achievement on tests, higher levels of cognitive reasoning, more frequent generation of new ideas and solutions, and greater transfer of learning across time and settings. Interpersonal relationships between students also improved and there was more acceptance of individual differences (i.e., racial, cultural, linguistic, and exceptionality). Toppings and Ehly also reported more frequent positive interactions within and outside of school; enhanced personal and social development through more positive self-concepts and feelings of self-worth and more favorable attitudes toward school, learning, and specific academic disciplines. Many other advantages were listed including active student engagement, more opportunities to respond, more frequent and immediate feedback, more fun and increased opportunities to socialize with peers. Additional advantages were that peer assistance facilitates inclusion, improves general classroom discipline, and prevents academic failure.

Advantages for Peers

Gartner and Riessman's (1993) study of the literature on peer tutoring also shows that gains for tutors often outdistance those of the students receiving help, that learning through teaching is the significant mechanism. Students recognize their importance as an educational resource; they are not only receivers, but givers and helpers as well.

Topping (2001) asserted that students who served as tutors performed better than control students in attainment in the tutored curriculum area in 33 out of 38 studies. Four out of five studies found improved tutor attitudes towards the tutored subject, and 12 out of 16 studies found the self-concept of tutors improved. Tutoring programs also had positive effects on children who served as tutors, in attitude and understanding. From his research, Whitman (1988) noted:

Students at all levels may benefit from being in a situation where they can help others. Not only do college students make excellent peer counselors, but the act of peer counseling is an effective strategy for self-help. College students can help themselves by helping other students. People giving help are profiting from their role as helper. (p. 7)

Wagner (1982) echoed Whitman's and Topping's findings:

It has long been obvious that children learn from their peers, but a more significant observation is that children learn more from teaching other children. From this a major educational strategy follows: namely, that every child must be given the opportunity to play the teaching role, because it is through playing this role that he may really learn how to learn. (p. 221).

Disadvantages of Peer Assistance

Purported disadvantages of peer assistance are that peer training requires much time. Quality of peer assistance varies with individual peer helpers. Content coverage varies by peers as do curriculum adaptations. Ethical concerns and theoretical concerns about appropriateness and effectiveness can increase for peer helpers. There are also three common problems for peer

assistance- increased noise levels, student complaints about tutoring partners or teammates, and student cheating and point inflation (when tasks are used for a grade) (Topping & Ehly, 1998).

Problems ESL Students Have with Learning Strategies

There are individual student differences in personality, learning styles, learning strategies, and motivation (Reid, 1997). Oxford (1996b) has done extensive research on ESL students' language learning strategies and styles. In her research, she discovered that one of the reasons that students have problems learning English is because it often differs drastically in thought patterns and cultural "thought styles" from their own languages. Many students who come from very traditional educational cultures do not understand when American teachers act as facilitators or consultants in the classroom rather than authoritative transmitters of knowledge. These culturally-based beliefs and attitudes can affect student motivation and, therefore, their use of language learning strategies and their ultimate language performance. These beliefs and attitudes can differ widely, and their affects in many cultures can be very strong. Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) reported that this great difference between the classroom cultures of other countries and the U.S. was very difficult for some students to accept. Those same students had disparate learning methods that were often at odds with the classroom teacher's methods. Other research by Ehrman and Oxford (1990) suggested that learning styles, learning strategies, and language learning aptitude might bear close relationships to student language learning.

Many teachers develop and use methods and materials according to their own preferred learning styles and rarely consider the learning needs of their students. Reid (1993) asserted that this mismatch in teaching and learning styles has often been cited as a major reason for poor performance by some students and for learning difficulties in second language classrooms.

Teachers tend to respond more favorably to similar cognitive types to their own type and perceive these students as “better” students. One study by Reid (1993) on the cultural differences of learning styles gave evidence that different modes of thinking are characteristic of different cultures. For example, the U.S. teaching style is mostly auditory (lecture format). Culture can also dictate certain preferences with regard to whether students prefer group or individual learning.

The current research dealt with peer advisor affects on international student perceptions of their skills and strategies on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) instrument, which measures six language learning strategy factors (Oxford, 1990). Memory strategies are techniques to get material into our long-term memory. Cognitive strategies include practice and repetition, as well as intellectual processing. Compensation strategies are those that are used to fill or compensate for gaps in knowledge or skill. Metacognitive strategies have to do with goal setting, planning work, and evaluating it. Affective strategies are those that are used to manage one’s feelings. Social strategies involve other people. Every kind of learning strategy can be a way of elaborating and deepening knowledge.

Memory

Peer tutoring works directly on skills to help students remember information that they have learned. Interaction with peers can also result in the development of cognitive or intellectual skills to increase knowledge and understanding. The peer group is widely regarded as an important influence on individuals (Falchikov, 2001).

Cognition

Style, in addition to gender and occupation, may significantly influence the choice of language strategies. Individual learning styles may be attributed to cognitive, emotional, and sensory factors (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Jones, 1998). Ehrman (1996) said that another way to describe preferences was as “comfort zones,” however, one could do tasks another way if circumstances required it. A learning style can run the range from a mild preference through a strong need to out-and-out rigidity. If a learner can shift styles to meet circumstances, he or she is at an advantage in most learning situations.

Compensation

Language is ambiguous and unpredictable. The ability to tolerate ambiguity can be a key to language learning success at higher levels of proficiency. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) discussed tolerance of ambiguity as the acceptance of confusing situations, similar to compensating for missing knowledge. They asserted that moderate tolerance of ambiguity is probably the most desirable condition for language learners. Students who are able to tolerate moderate levels of confusion are likely to persist longer in language learning than students who are overly frightened by the ambiguities inherent in learning a new language. Students who do not need immediate closure and who can deal with some degree of ambiguity appear to use better language learning strategies than students who require rapid closure.

Metacognition

Thinking about thinking, or knowing about knowing, has come to be known as metacognition. McKeachie (2002) wrote about these metacognitive processes, which include knowledge about oneself as a learner, knowledge about academic tasks, and knowledge about strategies to use in order to accomplish academic tasks. Modeling by peers can lead to greater metacognitive awareness, and thereby, more self-regulation (Topping & Ehly, 1998).

Affective

Affective strategies deal with emotions. Some students have difficulty in adapting to the traditional or “normal” conventions of the college classroom. One symptom of the difficulty is that many of these students refuse help when it is offered. Colleges offer ancillary programs staffed by professionals, but many students stayed away from these programs. Capossela (1998), in his research, found that students refused the help because it seemed like an extension of the traditional classroom learning.

Peer modeling has strong socio-emotional components, so peer models can therefore effectively demonstrate “coping.” This is especially important when the learners have difficulties or are encountering a new area of learning. Peer models can demonstrate positive emotions and self-confidence. They can also credibly illustrate how determined effort can overcome difficulties, not only as evidenced by their own past and current successes but also through their explanations of solutions to problems. By comparison, a teacher’s flawless performance may leave a weak student feeling like he/she is incapable of handling a task that is really easy, with consequent impact on self-esteem. Indeed, there is evidence that peer models can enhance

learner self-efficacy more than teacher models, with consequent positive effects on motivation and achievement which generalize to new types of problems. For the peer models themselves, the act of thoughtful modeling should heighten their metacognitive awareness, and thereby the ability to self-regulate learning (Topping, 2001).

Social

Peer tutoring, like peer assistance in general, plays an important role in education because it provides a particular kind of social context for conversation, a particular kind of community; which is that of status equals, or peers (Capossela, 1998). Students can learn much by explaining their ideas to others and by participating in activities in which they can learn from their peers (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2001). Peer teaching is a variety of peer tutoring in which students take turns in the role of teacher. This method of learning maximizes student responsibility for learning and enhances co-operative and social skills (Falchikov, 2001).

For the future, in a competitive world, children need to be able to compete. To survive, they also need to cooperate. Comparing the effects of competitive, cooperative and individualistic learning experiences, cooperation results in greater positive feelings between children and higher self-esteem and empathy (Topping, 2001).

Problems ESL Students Have with Language Skills

Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking

This study also researched the effect of peer advisors on international students' perspectives of necessary university academic language skills as measured on the Xu

International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment (ISALNA) (1990), which measures need and ability factors for the communicative skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Performing academic tasks in a second language is far more demanding than simply communicating conversationally and requires complex kinds of linguistic knowledge and abilities in order to communicate effectively. The task can be compounded even more when we factor in the educational and cultural knowledge which is also necessary to function successfully in a United States educational institution (Schweers, 1993).

Because students can lack the language, the experience, and sometimes even the awareness of what native speakers are trying to say, they are often involved in a struggle just to communicate. The problem of communicating successfully can also originate from the ESL student's limited or skewed perception of what is expected. The U.S. operates differently from other cultures; therefore, coping skills that students have in their native languages and cultures may be inappropriate for the expectations of the U.S. academic audience. This can be especially true of the college academic community with its own cultural, social, and rhetorical expectations (Johnson & Roen, 1989; Reid, 1993).

What ESL students believe about what they are learning and about what they need to learn can strongly influence their receptiveness to learning, especially their ideas of language and their views on what they can achieve in their courses. The concepts of language that students bring to their learning seem to affect the expectations they have about what it is they want to achieve (Jones, Turner & Street, 1999).

Some international students have had extensive language study in their own country, but there are also international students who have come to the United States to study because they

have not been successful in their own educational systems or whose study of both their first language or English has been limited (Reid, 1997). In the last twenty years, the understanding that language develops globally, that students benefit most from classes that draw on all four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), has led teachers at all levels to integrate multiple language modes in their curriculum. Innovative teaching techniques increasingly guide students to develop broader academic language skills through practice and experimentation with listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the academic style (Nelson, 1997).

The importance of language can be critical since it affects the main goal of international students in the United States, attaining a degree. If English skills are poor, the international student will experience more negative communication events and these negative events can jeopardize the much-desired goal of a degree. While most international students eventually cope successfully, it is estimated that 15 to 25% have significant adjustment problems. Language itself rated as the most anxiety-producing readjustment for international students (Reinicke, 1986). Students who believed their English was adequate were significantly better-adapted than those who believed it to be inadequate. According to Oxford (1996a), more proficient English learners enjoy language learning more, have more realistic expectations of success, and have a greater appreciation of the benefits of learning English than do beginners. Believing one has poor language skills could well be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Individuals tend to do what they feel competent to do. Ames and Ames (1984) claim that one's sense of competence guides preferences and choices and these have a major impact on the continuing development of talent and ability. These actions may also initiate and maintain activities, which enhance that ability.

According to research, there are strategies and attitudes which ESL students and teachers think are useful to learn to assist with academic tasks. Students in varying fields at different levels with specialized responsibilities can have dissimilar patterns of language use and differing perceptions of the importance of the four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Robertson, 1982). Johnson and Roen (1989) wrote that all speakers and writers have listeners and readers. Jones, Turner and Street (1999) contend that the focus, particularly for ESL students, should be on how to communicate appropriately and effectively, through written and oral modes, in conceptually challenging contexts, and as individual, original, and authoritative thinkers constructing their own learning. Language skills are interrelated; so, in many of the studies noted, the language skills are reported together, while in other studies the skills are reviewed separately.

University Academic Tasks and English Proficiency

Johns (1981) surveyed academic faculty about which skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) were most essential for nonnative speakers in those faculty members' classes. In that study, the teachers ranked the receptive skills of reading and listening as most essential for all academic level students. Christison and Krahne (1986) conducted a study with 80 students to determine how nonnative English speakers studying in United States colleges and universities perceived their language learning experiences and how they used English in academic settings. In general, the students in the study supported the design of most intensive ESL training and indicated the importance in academic work of the receptive skills of reading and listening over the production skills of speaking and writing. According to Adamson (1993), in a similar study,

reading was perhaps the most important academic skill. Similarly, Ostler (1980) found that a strong need was indicated by students to be able to read academic papers and journals.

The top five problems ESL students experienced in the university classroom were listening ability, differences in cultural background, oral communication skills, vocabulary, and writing (Lee, 1997). The Xu ISALNA instrument was written by Ming Xu in 1990 to assess international graduate students' academic language needs and self-assessed proficiency in English, as a tool to identify and assist in meeting those needs. Four underlying factors represented the four English language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Problems in Reading

Adamson (1993) claimed that ESL students were clearly behind their native-speaking peers who had had years of exposure to academic language across the subject areas. One primary academic task was learning how to extract information efficiently from printed text, and subsequent educational progress could largely depend upon how well this task was accomplished. ESL students who did not read widely and regularly in English might have problems with regard to development of academic language proficiency. Many students might have good decoding skills, but not understand the words they are reading (Adamson, 1993). Even if ESL students read romances, fantasy, the sports page, or fashion magazines as their literature of choice, this recreational reading would neither enrich their academic lexicon nor make them more "text wise" and "text ready" for academic reading assignments. There could also be a problem with vocabulary. Frequent trips to the bilingual dictionary could cause students to complete academic reading with less than a full understanding of the material. Many words

might be unfamiliar and confusing because of new uses of known words (Adamson, 1993). For this reason, students might often understand the words and the sentences yet not comprehend the total meaning of technical discourse (Kinsella, 2000).

Downing, MacAdam, and Nichols (1993) suggested how students should read and do research. They wrote that the information-literate student should be able to: define information needs; analyze, identify, and retrieve information effectively; critically evaluate information for bias, relevance, and importance; synthesize, organize, and present information orally and in writing; and work effectively within electronic information systems. According to Downing, MacAdam, and Nichols (1993), barriers to information literacy for multicultural students included language, technology, limited prior access to libraries, pedagogy designed for the cognitive styles of “typical” students, and information systems established around unfamiliar conceptual frameworks. For these reasons, multicultural students may need help with work in the library. Forgan and Mangrum (1985) saw that these students also needed study skills and study strategies. These study skills would be necessary for locating, organizing, and interpreting information. Study strategies can also be plans for reading textual materials in a manner that would help the reader comprehend and retain more of the information while adjusting rate and style of reading according to its purposes.

Adamson (1993) found that students consider reading to be the most important language skill for academic achievement, followed by listening comprehension and then writing.

Problems in Writing

A number of studies have been done to determine the attitudes and opinions of ESL international students about their language use in academic settings. Kroll (1979) surveyed native and nonnative students studying in the United States and asked them to rank order their writing activities according to how frequently they were used. Students reported that business letters of request and persuasion and reports, both survey and technical, were considered more important than the traditional personal essay. Ostler (1980) surveyed students who were studying in an ESL program to attempt to discover what skills ESL programs should address. Reading and taking notes were ranked by the students as the most-needed skills. Graduate students reported needing more skills than undergraduate students in writing formal papers and giving talks. All students expressed greater confidence in their everyday communicative encounters, but not as much confidence in more “creative” encounters with friends and professors in writing and speaking. Writing was one of the few areas where international students would request help from their American peers.

Most native-speaking writers have comparatively broad and predictable experiences of writing and writing instruction in English. ESL writers, however, seldom come with any substantial background in writing and writing instruction in English. Furthermore, ESL writers typically come with first-language rhetoric different from the rhetoric of academic English with which they are struggling. In this, as in other situations, those attempting to assist second-language writers may be hampered not only by the writers’ limited backgrounds in the rhetoric of written English but also by their learned patterns as educated writers of their own languages (Capossella, 1998).

Bridgeman and Carlson (1984) surveyed 190 departments in 34 universities to find out faculty views on how important writing was to academic success, what types of writing were more important in different disciplines, how faculty evaluated student writing in ESL, and how ESL and native-speaker writing differed. They concluded that faculty believed that, while writing was important to academic success, it was more important to future professional success. Types of writing varied greatly across disciplines and academic levels.

Second-language writers, already handicapped by an unfamiliar rhetoric, are likely to be writing to an unfamiliar audience as well. Part of what they need is knowledge about what that unknown audience will expect, need, and find convincing. For that reason, they view peer writing tutors as cultural informants about American academic expectations (Capossella, 1998).

Editing/proofing strategies for native-speaking writers seldom work with ESL writers, such as reading aloud and learning to use the ear to edit. This presumes that the writer hears the language correctly and is more familiar and comfortable with the oral than the written word. Neither reading aloud nor editing by ear appears to work for the majority of ESL writers as discovered by ESL writing peer tutors (Capossella, 1998).

Writing is difficult, complex work for many international students (Gillespie & Lerner, 2000). According to Jones, Turner, and Street (1999), the hallmark of success for any student at the university was mastery of academic writing. Hamp-Lyons (1991) found that, in writing, most assignments in college were done in response to a specific requirement set by an instructor. There are timelines and deadlines for working on and completing papers. Reid (1993) stated that students also needed to be aware of what they needed to accomplish for academic classes, such as the number and kind of writing assignments they were expected to complete during the term.

In many cases, students are required to write essays, for which they receive assessment marks. Fox (1994) as well as Jones, Turner, and Street (1999) considered these essays a prominent assessment in higher education that called for the “western tradition of academic writing” and those who grade the essays assume that the writer would scrupulously pursue truth in argument and narration. Jones et al. also asserted that most of the time the way individuals talk and write is determined by what the audience expects or needs. Furthermore, in Western academic context, that means making things so explicit and precise that one can follow the argument without any effort at all. The shape of this type of argumentation is usually described as linear. Thus, the premises are clearly stated and the conclusions clearly derived from the premises (Fox, 1994; Jones, Turner, & Street, 1999).

Another variable in an international student’s previous schooling may be attendance in an intensive English language program (IEP), either prior to his/her arrival in the United States or in a U.S. program. If students have studied ESL in the United States, they may have encountered the rhetoric of academic English writing and so may be relatively proficient in presenting written ideas; the concepts of topic sentence, supporting detail, and essay structure may be familiar to them. Even the students who have studied English intensively prior to their arrival may not have encountered formal and stylistic principles of academic writing (Reid, 1997).

Leki and Carson (1994) researched the skills that students perceived as most helpful in their content area writing tasks from their English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing classes. The students identified the following as most helpful: 1) task management strategies, including managing text, such as brainstorming, planning, outlining, drafting, revising, proof-reading, managing sources (e.g., summarizing, synthesizing, reading, using quotes) and managing

research (e.g., library skills, research skills); 2) the importance of rhetorical skills, including organization, transitions, coherence, and conclusions; 3) language proficiency, including grammar and appropriate vocabulary; and 4) thinking skills, such as developing and expanding ideas, arguing logically, analyzing, and critiquing.

Ostler (1980) stated that students need to be able to take notes in class and use various forms of note-taking strategies to retain more from their reading assignments. Taking good notes from lectures can be a complex linguistic task. Adamson (1993) found that the most common problems for note-takers were unfamiliar vocabulary words or idiomatic expressions. The natural speed of native speakers was another factor that can also cause note-taking problems.

Written prose usually has greater lexical (vocabulary) diversity, longer sentence length, and more subordination. Reid (1993) also added that while speech has complex sentences with simple words, writing has complex words in simple sentences.

A number of studies have demonstrated the benefits of peer involvement in many aspects of the writing process, including improved attitudes. Peer assessment in the form of peer response groups or as a component of peer editing is particularly common, and is commonly used with classes studying ESL and foreign languages. Several studies have found peer editing to be at least as effective as teacher editing, including in the lower grades and special education classrooms (Topping, 2001).

Working in peer groups can also help students see and imitate a variety of examples without the teacher's having to produce an "ideal sample." Without the pressure of a grade, students can experiment with ideas, content, and form on first drafts, which leads, in turn, to more successful subsequent drafts. International students especially benefit from feedback on

plans and drafts because they are able to try out their ideas, organizational style, and grammar on a peer audience or discuss problems before submitting their work for a final grade (Koffolt & Holt, 1997).

Problems in Listening

International students know, understand, and can explain English grammar, and often their reading skills are substantial. Usually, however, their listening and oral skills are hampered by lack of experience, by exposure to non-native English-speaking teachers, and by the culture shock that comes from being immersed in a foreign culture, the language of which sounds different from their studied English language (Reid, 1997).

For first and second semester international students, the inability to understand the professor and fellow classmates can be debilitating. Two primary causes are lack of prior experience with American spoken English and native English speakers' use of idiomatic language and reduced forms, that is, contractions and "gonna" for "going to" (Lee, 1997).

Problems in Speaking

International students view their oral communication skills as a serious impediment to full class participation. Embarrassment and imported cultural norms operate together to keep international students from asking questions or participating in class discussions. Students report that lack of confidence in their oral skills keeps them from speaking up in class (Lee, 1997). In a study by Christison and Krahne (1986), many students indicated that speaking and interaction were valuable for learning the language, but that listening and reading were more important in

helping them survive in the academic arena. Saville-Troike (1984) stated in her study that vocabulary knowledge in English was the most important aspect of oral English proficiency for academic achievement. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge in English was the most important aspect of oral English proficiency for academic achievement.

Hull (1978) discovered in his research that grammatical accuracy was of little importance for students' immediate academic needs, but the degree of active, oral participation in communication with English-speaking peers was considered a significant element for academic success. If the students feel comfortable in the class, they will often turn to a fellow student and ask for assistance, or a fellow student will "interpret." However, this will probably occur only in a class with predominantly international students because they are then less embarrassed by poor communication skills (Lee, 1997). Adamson (1993) found in his research, most students were reluctant to speak in class (even those who spoke good English). This reluctance may have at least three causes: the students' cultural backgrounds, their fear of being laughed at because of imperfect English, and their fear of divulging a lack of knowledge about the subject matter.

Smoke (1988) asked for feedback from ESL students to enhance their success in college. The students stated that they wanted pronunciation and speech classes in their ESL preparation course, so they could participate more in college. They wanted to be able to ask or answer questions in front of native-speaking counterparts and feel comfortable in class. Students also indicated their desire to be better provided with the requisite skills to read a textbook, take notes, and write papers.

Improving Language Skills and Peer Assistance

Factors that students indicated could improve their language skills in the university were talking to native speakers informally, listening to the radio, watching English TV, attending lectures and seminars in their field, attending in-session English classes, individual language learning, discussing problems with other non-native speakers, their own positive attitudes, and sympathetic teachers (Jordan, 1997; Smoke, 1988).

Teachers have been teaching English as a Second Language for many years, but there is no doubt that peer assistance works, whether it is peer advising, counseling, tutoring, or other forms of peer help. Research from many years has demonstrated that in peer assistance projects, the helpers improve in the subject area as much, if not more than, the students who are helped, but at their own level. Many studies reveal that peer assistance also improves how both helper and helped feel about the subject area, increases self-esteem, accelerates comprehensibility and therefore, allows both sets of students to succeed. There are also many reports of both helper and helped demonstrating more confidence and more appropriate behavior. Research findings support the belief that peer helping is a highly effective way of using school time (Topping, 2001).

The literature reviewed has shown a growing interest in many areas of education for the use of peer assistance to affect changes in student skills and attitudes. Many different forms of peer assistance exist. After training, international student peer advisors can employ modeling, tutoring, counseling, and other peer instructional techniques as their means to convey information to other international students who are preparing to enter the university. The research contends that students listen to students more readily than they do to adults. For that

reason, peers are sometimes able to establish an incredible amount of rapport with new students in an incredibly short time. Therefore, accordingly, adult teachers may be less effective in assisting students with information, advice, help and reassurance than new pupils' more experienced student peers.

Success in peer assistance programs has been reported in many areas of instruction from elementary through college. Peer assistance has advantages and disadvantages, but utilizing peers to help peers in many arenas of education has displayed noteworthy benefits for strategy use, preparation, and skills. Additionally, the peer advisor can gain as much as, if not more, than the student being helped.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The general design of the study was an experimental design. It used a control and an experimental group with a pre-test and a post-test of the SILL and Xu ISALNA survey instruments to determine if there was any effect of the treatment, peer advising, to student's attitudes toward their English language learning strategies and tasks necessary to succeed in university academic tasks.

Research Questions

1. Do international students who have Peer Advisor language skill sessions achieve a significantly higher score on the SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) than international students who do not have language skill sessions with peer advisors?
2. Do international students who have Peer Advisor language skill sessions achieve a significantly higher score on the Xu ISALNA (International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment) than international students who do not have language skill sessions with peer advisors?

Study Setting

The setting for the study was the Center for Multilingual Multicultural Studies (CMMS), an Intensive English Program (IEP) for English as a Second Language (ESL), at University of Central Florida (UCF) in Orlando, Florida, a metropolitan university of approximately 40,000 students. The mission of CMMS is to prepare international students for academic work at U.S. colleges and universities.

Peer Advisors

The peer advisors were a group of 15 international students who were previous graduates of CMMS. There were 9 females and 6 males. Of the group, there were 4 advisors from Venezuela, 2 from Korea, 2 from Japan, 1 from China, 1 from Taiwan, 1 from Poland, 1 from Mexico, 1 from the Ukraine, 1 from Panama, and 1 from Kazakhstan. Fields of study were: International Tourism/Hospitality Management- 4 advisors, Business/Economics- 3 advisors, Engineering- 3 advisors, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)- 2 advisors, Science Education- 1 advisor, Legal Studies- 1 advisor, and English/Journalism- 1 advisor. Languages spoken were: Spanish- 6 advisors, Japanese- 2 advisors, Chinese- 2 advisors, Korean- 2 advisors, Polish- 1 advisor, Ukrainian- 1 advisor, and Russian- 1 advisor.

Cooperating Teachers

The 12 ESL teachers were members of the staff of Center for Multilingual Multicultural Studies (CMMS), a metropolitan university intensive English program (IEP), and were currently teaching the Level 3, upper intermediate classes in these skills- Reading, Writing, Grammar, Communication Skills (Listening and Speaking), and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Preparation. The IEP is divided into 4 levels: 1- Beginning, 2- Lower intermediate, 3- Upper intermediate, and 4- Advanced. There were 17 sections of classes for Level 3 with 12 teachers- 10 female and 2 male. Three of the teachers taught 2 sections and 1 teacher taught 3 classes. All the others taught only 1 section of any Level 3 class.

Participants

The sample was composed of a convenience sample of all the upper-intermediate ESL students in Communication Skills (Listening and Speaking classes) at the IEP. The sample was divided into a control (n = 7) and an experimental group (n = 16) of students who completed both the pre-and posttests. The control and experimental groups were randomly assigned. The control group consisted of 5 male and 2 female students from Korea (2), Venezuela (2), China (2), and Peru (1). The experimental group consisted of 12 male and 4 female students from Korea (3), Venezuela (3), Colombia (2), Italy (1), Puerto Rico (1), Israel (1), Cape Verde (1), Taiwan (1), Spain (1), Thailand (1), and Brazil (1). There were 3 teachers and the researcher involved in the treatment groups with the participants.

The small number of participants is indicative of the political atmosphere of a world after September 11, 2001. The IEP, as all other IEPs of its kind in the country, has had a reduction in its student numbers as a result of lower enrollment because of the difficulty of obtaining visas and other immigration roadblocks that are common since the tragedy in 2001 (Arroyo, 2003). At the time of September 11, the IEP had a total enrollment of 370 students. Presently, the enrollment is approximately 150 students. This IEP is the largest of its kind in the state of Florida.

Instruments

The data collection instruments were the Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL) (Appendix H), the International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment instrument (Xu ISALNA- original and revised versions) (Appendix E & F), International Student Interview Protocol (Appendix C) (also called International Student Information Form in the

study) (Appendix G), and demographic information sheets (Appendix E & F). The SILL and Xu ISALNA instruments used Likert scales to collect data. The International Student Interview Protocol and Information Forms used open-ended questions.

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

The most often used strategy scale in the world at this time is the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), used in more than 40-50 major studies, including a dozen dissertations and theses, with an estimated 8000-8500 language learners (Oxford, 1990). With permission of the author, Rebecca Oxford, (Appendix B) this instrument was used with participants of this study to collect data on their language learning strategies and styles. The SILL is a 50-item, Likert-type scale instrument that was developed by Rebecca Oxford as a survey of preferred language learning strategies or behaviors (1996b). The SILL's 5-point scale used the descriptors: "never or almost never true of me (1)," "usually not true of me (2)," "somewhat true of me (3)," "usually true of me (4)," and "always or almost always true of me (5)." The overall average indicates how often the learner tends to use learning strategies in general, while averages for each part of the SILL indicate which strategy groups the learner tends to use most frequently (Oxford, 1990). Reliability of the SILL is high across many cultural groups. Validity of the SILL rests on its predictive and correlative link with language performance (course grades, standardized test scores, ratings of proficiency) as well as its confirmed relationship to sensory preferences (Oxford, 1996b).

The SILL was first designed as an instrument for assessing the frequency of use of language learning strategies by students at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey,

California. According to research reports and articles published in the English language within the last 10-15 years, the SILL appears to be the only language learning strategy instrument that has been extensively checked for reliability and validated in multiple ways. In addition to the original English version, the ESL/EFL (English as a Foreign Language) SILL has been translated into the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Thai, and Ukrainian (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

In 1989, the SILL was organized into strategy groups using the statistical procedure called factor analysis. It subdivided the instrument into six dimensions called factors. These factors are *Memory* (remembering more effectively); *Cognitive* (using all your mental processes); *Compensation* (compensating for missing knowledge); *Metacognitive* (organizing and evaluating your learning); *Affective* (managing your emotions); and *Social* (learning with others) (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990).

Memory strategies are the techniques used to get material into our long-term storage. Cognitive strategies include practice and repetition, as well as intellectual processing. Compensation strategies are those that are used to fill or compensate for gaps in knowledge or skill. These can be strategies such as guessing meanings from the context in reading and listening and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning when the precise expression is not known (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Social strategies provide increased interaction and more empathetic understanding, two qualities necessary to reach communicative competence (Oxford, 1990). Metacognitive strategies have to do with goal setting, planning work, and evaluating it. Affective strategies are those that are used to manage one's feelings. Social strategies involve

interaction with other people. Every kind of learning strategy can be a way of elaborating and deepening knowledge (Ehrman, 1996).

The SILL has internal consistency reliability in the .90s, with strong relationships between motivation, proficiency, and psychological type (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990). It has strong predictive validity with relation to language performance and concurrent validity as evidenced through correlations with language performance, learning style, and setting characteristics. The SILL also shows rather consistent differences between males and females in some settings (Hamp-Lyons, 1989; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

More proficient learners appear to use a wider range in a greater number of situations than do less proficient learners. This variety of strategies helps them to become more self-directed and improve their performance (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990). Successful students use a greater variety of strategies and match their choice of strategy to the demands of the task. A higher scaled score on the SILL indicates use of more language learning strategies.

Xu International Students Academic Language Needs Assessment (ISALNA)

The study used the Xu International Students Academic Language Needs Assessment (ISALNA) instrument (Appendix E). The International Students Academic Language Needs Assessment (ISALNA) is an instrument using a Likert-type rating scale, written by Ming Xu in 1990 to assess international graduate students' academic language needs and self-assessed proficiency in English to meet those needs. The instrument was designed to be administered to graduate students who had already attended at least one semester of a United States academic degree program. Permission to use the Xu ISALNA was given by personal letter (Appendix B)

and permission for adaptation was provided in personal communication from the author (March 13, 2003). The Xu ISALNA-2, the revised version, (Appendix F) was adapted to be used with upper-intermediate students, and the 5-point scale used the descriptors: “never (1),” “sometimes (3),” and “always (5)” for “How Often I Will Need to Do This” with spaces under the descriptors for students to choose intervals of 2 or 4 if they decided an answer was in between descriptors. A 5-point scale was used with the descriptors: “low (1),” “moderate (3),” and “high (5)” for “English Ability Now” with spaces under the descriptors for students to choose intervals of 2 or 4 if they decided an answer was in between descriptors. The Xu ISALNA also included an International Student Interview Protocol, which was an open-ended interview instrument that was administered individually to participants. The International Student Interview Protocol (Appendix C) was adapted by the researcher into the International Student Information Form (Appendix G) in the Xu ISALNA-2 for the upper-intermediate level students for this study.

Xu (1990) used the instrument to collect data (n= 245) for a study of perceived language needs, proficiency, and academic performance. Six research questions guided the study. These questions addressed: 1) the common academic tasks that graduate students were required to perform in their academic programs; 2) the difficulty that the international students perceived those academic tasks; 3) the types of linguistic competence the students perceived as more important than others for academic purposes; 4) what the international students’ academic language needs were; 5) to what extent their English proficiency, prior experience, current status, and personal characteristics predicted the international students’ academic performance; and 6) the academic difficulties experienced by the international students that were influenced by the types of prior English training and country of origin. Demographic questions in the Xu ISALNA

asked about age, gender, native language, native country, field of study, academic level that the student was entering, length of enrollment in the present English program, length of stay in the U.S. before enrollment in the present program, length of study in the student's professional field before coming to the U.S., and length of work experience in the student's field before coming to the U.S.

Factor analysis was used by Xu (1990) to separate the 38 common academic variables into four underlying factors that represented the four English language skills- reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Several questions related to each of these skill areas, divided further into two sub-factors, "Need" and "Ability," for each area. The factor analysis was performed in the original Xu study (1990). Results of internal reliability tests gave internal consistency reliability alphas ranging from .75 to .93.

Xu (1990) looked at the perceptions of what students thought of their language needs, proficiency, and academic performance after they were already enrolled and taking classes in an American university. This study used the same instrument for students at the bachelor and graduate levels, who were graduates of CMMS, and were experiencing language needs as well as proficiency and academic struggles. Those students acted as peer advisors to assist ESL international students who had not been previously enrolled in American colleges and universities. The study collected data before and after sessions where the peer advisors provided information to the ESL international students. The information included language skills presentations and discussions on peer advisor experiences in United States colleges and universities. The information provided was from the peer advisors' viewpoint. A revised version of the Xu instrument, the Xu ISALNA-2, was used to collect data to ascertain if any of the

information that the peer advisors imparted had changed the ESL international students' perception of what they would need for academic study.

Previous results (Xu, 1990) strongly suggested that English proficiency (as measured by a higher score on the ISALNA) was the single most important factor influencing international students' academic coping ability. Students who believe their English is adequate may be significantly better-adapted than those who believe it to be inadequate. Believing one has poor language skills can well be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Procedure

Before any data collection procedures, consent letters (Appendix A) were obtained from all participants in the study. Initial data collection procedures began before the beginning of the Intensive English Program (IEP) English as a Second Language (ESL) semester. The researcher performed pilot work with the Xu ISALNA-2 (revised version) to ensure proper application during the research study. The original Xu ISALNA was written for graduate students at a high level of English proficiency, so the pilot ensured the ISALNA-2 would be comprehensible by upper intermediate level students. The researcher also administered the Xu ISALNA (original version) and International Student Interview Protocol to the peer advisors.

The researcher tabulated the results of the Xu ISALNA and Protocol to obtain information on specific topics that needed to be addressed more thoroughly with the peer advisors. Because personal experiences alone may not adequately cover all the topics, the researcher used the results of the Xu ISALNA and Protocol to address topic areas in which the individual peer advisors may have had less or no experience. Topics for peer advisor sessions

with international student participants were determined by a comprehensive review of the professional literature.

The study investigated the effect of peer advisors on ESL international students' perspectives of language skills necessary for university academic tasks. International student peer advisors are uniquely qualified to help other international students face, solve, and cope with academic and social problems associated with the adjustment to a new learning environment (Layman, 1981). Students may be more willing to accept advice and direction from a peer advisor who has, at one time or another in his/her college career, experienced similar emotions and problems (Brown, 1965). Also, students tend to feel more at ease in the presence of an advisor who is a fellow student. Peer advisors may empathize with the student experience as fellow students and this can be the key to successful advisor/advisee relationships. Students acting as academic advisors can successfully communicate information about language learning strategies necessary to succeed in an academic setting, such as efficient methods for reading textbooks, taking lecture notes, writing themes and reports, and preparing for and taking examinations (Brown, 1965, 1977). Peer advising can be productive because the advice and guidance received by the advisee is given both on a level with which advisees can identify and feel comfortable (Creaser & Carsello, 1979).

The researcher developed Peer Advisor Session Checklists (Appendix I) for the ESL teachers and the peer advisors of necessary academic tasks that were used in classes and interaction sessions with the participants. The researcher developed the checklists in a two-to three-hour collaborative meeting with the peer advisors by facilitating discussions, tabulating topics, and talking over ideas to be included in the checklists. The checklist items were supported

by data collected from the instruments, interviews, and the professional literature. This collaborative session occurred prior to the peer interaction sessions with the participants in the experimental group. The peer advisors related information about their experiences and needs at the university as well as advice they wanted to impart to new students who would undergo the same struggles with adjustment to the new environment of U.S. colleges and universities. They were eager to share their knowledge with others who would follow them into the challenge of school in a new country in a different language with differing cultural expectations. Much of the material used in the peer advising checklists was anecdotal accounts of actual occurrences, problems, and solutions that the peer advisors deemed essential knowledge for new students. Many of the peer advisors commented that they had not believed their teachers when they were told the same information before they entered their institute of higher learning.

The researcher also conducted a 30-minute faculty meeting with the ESL teachers and reviewed the necessary academic tasks listed on the checklists (same as the peer advisors) for the ESL teachers to use in their regular class sessions with all the control and experimental participants of the study.

Further data collection procedures began in week one of the Intensive English Program (IEP) English as a Second Language (ESL) semester. The convenience sample was all the upper-intermediate level ESL international students in this metropolitan university intensive English program. The students were studying English to enter both undergraduate and graduate level academic study. They were placed in their classes in the IEP based solely on their English proficiency.

This intermediate-level group was divided into a control (n = 11) and an experimental group (n = 16). During week one, both groups were administered pre-tests, the SILL and Xu ISALNA-2. The experimental group met with peer advisors four times for one hour class periods (weeks two through five) to discuss language skills necessary for academic success in the new environment of the university. The peer advisor sessions were conducted by a group of four to six peer advisors every week. The peer advisors were male and female and from different nationalities. During week six, the posttests, the SILL, Xu ISALNA-2, and International Student Information Forms, were given.

The interactive sessions with the peer advisors were held in the upper-intermediate level participants' Communication Skills classrooms one day each week for four weeks. The sessions lasted one hour. The four to five peer advisors formed a panel to focus on one language skill each week- Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. Each week the panel members were composed of a mixture of male and female with different nationalities and language groups. The focus of each session was determined by the Peer Advisor Session Checklists. One peer advisor was the moderator for each session and led the other peer advisors in a 20-30 minute presentation of the information on the checklists. Each peer advisor chose a section of the checklist to discuss. This was followed by a 10-20 minute question and answer period each week. Week one was reading. Week two was writing. Week three was listening, and week four was speaking. General strategies were also discussed every week. The researcher also interviewed the upper-intermediate ESL students' teachers to verify that the same material from the checklists had been discussed in the students' classes. The participants had the availability of all the peer advisor panel members for the entire one-hour period. The researcher recorded the peer advisor sessions

on audio and video tape to collect data and verify that all items on the checklists were included. The researcher was only an observer and also collected observational notes about each session. This qualitative data was utilized for the results and description of the study.

During week six, the posttests- the SILL, Xu ISALNA-2, and International Student Information Form- were given, and the data was compiled to determine if there was any difference in groups in learning strategies as well as their perception of academic tasks and necessary English proficiency between the control and experimental groups. (see Figure 1).

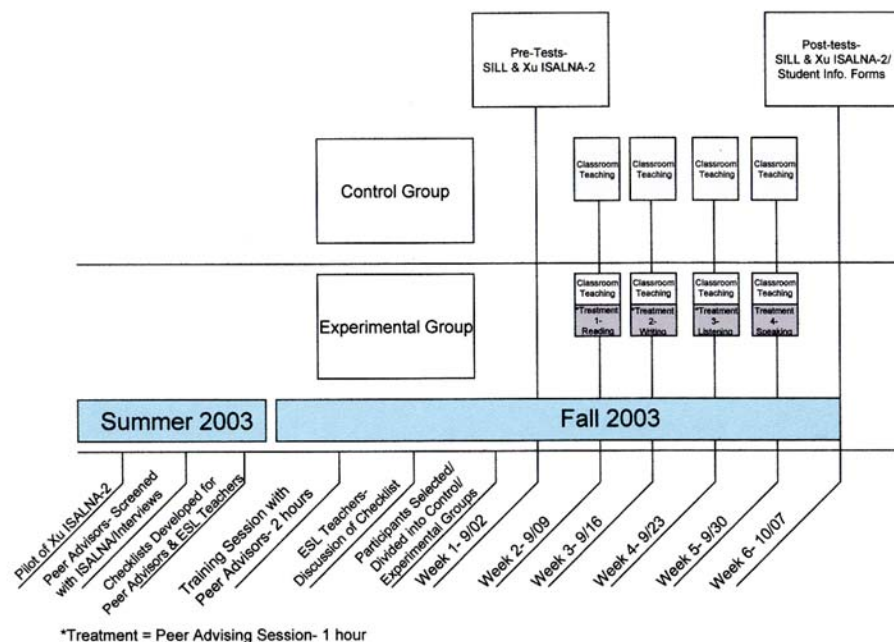


Figure 1: Sequence of Peer Advising Study

Qualitative data were collected and revealed positive attitudes by the peer advisors in giving language skills information and by the ESL international students involved in the treatment in receiving the information from the peer advisors. The goals and activities of the peer advisors were similar to peer tutors and peer counselors as they imparted information from the checklists. The peer advisors also demonstrated themselves to be model students who had attained success at the university.

There was a problem with the administration of the post-tests to the control group. The original control group was larger (11 participants), but four participants withdrew from the study. The participants did not see the necessity of completing the test again as they had done it a few weeks before. They had not received any treatment from the peer advisors, like the experimental group, so they did not see any need to take the tests again. It took some persuasion from the researcher to have any of the control group complete the tests. Even so, some did not complete the post-tests. The researcher could not force them to complete the test against their will and they declined any request. As a result, there is a smaller number of participants in the final control group than there could be even though the participants were present at the time of the administration of the posttests. There were also absences and class attrition because of students changing their class level or leaving the IEP. Some participants also changed from the control group to the experimental group after the first week. As they did this before the treatments, the researcher placed them in with the experimental group. However, because of the need for increased enrollment in the IEP, some students joined the classes of the control and experimental groups after the administration of the pre-test. The researcher included them in the administration

of the post-tests so as not to cause a disruption of the administration of the instruments; however, they were not included in the final results as they did not have scores on both pre- and post-tests.

Additionally, there was a problem with some students in both control and experimental groups because they did not understand all the English in the tests despite help from dictionaries and teachers present. Therefore, there may have been misunderstanding in the meaning of some of the questions. Some students did not complete all the questions on all the tests because of lack of English comprehension, timing of the tests (late afternoon), and lack of interest. All these factors may have affected the responses from the participants in both control and experimental groups.

One advantage to the peer advising sessions was the manageable size of the experimental group because it gave the international ESL students ample opportunity to interact personally with the peer advisors. A larger group may not have been as at ease discussing and asking questions about the problems encountered by the peer advisors. The intimate atmosphere aided in imparting a special empathy to the peer advisors' experiences and wisdom.

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis of the data was done using the Graduate Pack Version of SPSS for Windows, Version 10.0. The independent variable was the treatment used with the sample groups, peer advisor sessions. The dependent variable was the pre-test and post-test scores on the SILL and the Xu ISALNA instruments. It was assumed that the dependent variable was normally distributed. Data was statistically evaluated using Split-plot ANOVA to determine if there was a statistical relationship between a higher score on the SILL for the treatment group with the peer advisors compared to the control group with the pre-test and post-tests (Shavelson, 1996).

Another Split-plot Analysis of Variance statistical test analyzed whether there was a statistical relationship between a higher score on the Xu ISALNA for the treatment group with the peer advisors compared to the control group with the pre-test and post-tests. From these statistical analyses and all other interview and observational data collected, results and conclusions were formulated, reported, and related to the research inquiry of the study, which are language needs related to academic success for ESL students who have peer advisors to assist them.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of peer advisors on ESL international students' perspectives of language skills necessary for university academic tasks. The researcher examined both the English language proficiency levels of international students and strategies ESL international students need for academic success. The study was conducted during the Fall semester 2003 and involved two intensive English classes taking the course, Communication Skills. Descriptive statistics are presented and are followed by an analysis of the research questions.

Descriptive Data

Twenty-nine students from an intensive English program at a Florida state university program participated in the study. The convenience sample of participants in the study was from the upper-intermediate level classes of the intensive English program. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), Xu International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment (ISALNA-2) (revised version), and International Student Information Form were used to evaluate these international students' English proficiency, assess their academic language needs, and test the impact of English proficiency indicated by self-ratings and selected non-linguistic variables on students' academic performance. The SILL and Xu ISALNA instruments used Likert scales to collect data. The International Student Information Form employed open-ended questions.

Group 1 served as the control group and received no treatment. Group 2 received the treatment involving peer advising sessions. The peer advising sessions were once a week for one hour for four consecutive weeks during the semester.

Results of Hypotheses Tests

Research Question 1

The first research question was: Do international students who have Peer Advisor language skill sessions achieve a significantly higher score on the SILL than international students who do not have language skill sessions with peer advisors?

Data were statistically evaluated using Split-plot Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine if there was a statistical relationship between a higher score on the SILL for the treatment group with the peer advisors compared to the control group with the pretest and posttests.

To assess learning strategies used by students, the SILL was administered to both groups and self-reported scores were obtained. A higher scaled score on the SILL indicates use of more language learning strategies. The mean scores were reported for both groups using six factors (see Table 1).

Table 1: Mean Scores on the Strategy Factors- by Group

Factor	<u>Control (n = 7)</u>		<u>Experimental (n = 16)</u>	
	Overall Mean on Pretest	Overall Mean on Posttest	Overall Mean on Pretest	Overall Mean on Posttest
Memory (remembering more effectively)	3.03	3.59	2.86	3.01
Cognitive (using all your mental processes)	3.39	3.66	3.32	3.19
Compensation (compensating for missing knowledge)	3.29	3.49	3.18	3.36
Metacognitive (organizing and evaluating your learning)	3.87	3.89	3.56	3.59
Affective (managing your emotions)	3.17	3.36	3.01	3.20
Social (learning with others)	3.83	3.87	3.47	3.28

Pretests and Posttests

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the SILL for the factor Memory, remembering more effectively. There was a statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = 8.82, p < .01$). Memory accounted for 30% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest

and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = 3.07, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Memory accounted for 13% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = 4.24, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Memory accounted for 17% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Memory factor (see Table 2).

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the SILL for the factor Cognitive, using all your mental processes. There was no statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = .40, p > .05$). Cognitive accounted for 2% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = 3.27, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Cognitive accounted for 14% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = 1.67, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Cognitive accounted for 7% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Cognitive factor.

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the SILL for the factor Compensation, compensating for missing knowledge. There was no statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = 1.50, p > .05$). Compensation accounted for 7% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .00, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Compensation accounted for 0% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = .23, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Compensation

accounted for 1% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Compensation factor.

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the SILL for the factor Metacognitive, organizing and evaluating your learning. There was no statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = .02, p > .05$). Metacognitive accounted for .1% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .00, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Metacognitive accounted for 0% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = 1.36, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Metacognitive accounted for 6% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Metacognitive factor.

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the SILL for the factor Affective, managing your emotions. There was no statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = 1.10, p > .05$). Affective accounted for 5% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .00, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Affective accounted for 0% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = .32, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Affective accounted for 2% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Affective factor.

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the SILL for the factor Social, learning with others. There was no statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = .11, p > .05$). Social accounted for .5% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .27, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Social accounted for 1% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = 1.70, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Social accounted for 7% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Social factor.

Table 2: Within- and Between-Subjects Contrasts and Effects for Strategy Factors

Factor	<u>Time</u>		<u>Between Groups</u>		<u>Interaction</u>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>
Memory	8.82*	1, 21	4.24	1, 21	3.07	1, 21
Cognitive	.40	1, 21	1.67	1, 21	3.27	1, 21
Compensation	1.50	1, 21	.23	1, 21	.00	1, 21
Metacognition	.02	1, 21	1.36	1, 21	.00	1, 21
Affective	1.10	1, 21	.32	1, 21	.00	1, 21
Social	.11	1, 21	1.70	1, 21	.27	1, 21

Note: * $p < .05$

Research Question 2

The second research question was: Do international students who have Peer Advisor language skill sessions achieve a significantly higher score on the Xu ISALNA (International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment) than international students who do not have language skill sessions with peer advisors?

Data were statistically evaluated using Split-plot Analysis of Variance to determine if there was a statistical relationship between a higher score on the Xu ISALNA-2 for the treatment group with the peer advisors compared to the control group with the pretest and posttests.

To assess language skills (need and ability) use by students, the Xu ISALNA-2 was administered to both groups and self-reported scores were obtained. A higher scaled score on the Xu ISALNA-2 indicates use of more language skills (need and ability). The mean scores were reported for both groups using eight factors (see Table 3).

Table 3: Mean Scores on the Language Skill Factors- by Group

Factor	<u>Control ($n = 7$)</u>		<u>Experimental ($n = 16$)</u>	
	Overall Mean on Pretest	Overall Mean on Posttest	Overall Mean on Pretest	Overall Mean on Posttest
Reading Need	3.93	3.95	3.82	3.59
Reading Ability	3.37	3.50	2.94	2.99
Writing Need	3.85	3.98	3.51	3.68
Writing Ability	2.97	3.37*	2.45	2.71*
Speaking Need	3.79	4.01	3.53	3.59
Speaking Ability	3.33	3.91*	2.57	2.82*
Listening Need	3.78	4.16	3.75	3.82
Listening Ability	3.24	3.56*	2.64	2.83*

Note: * $p < .05$

Pre-tests and Post-tests

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the ISALNA-2 for the factor Reading Need- how often the skill, Reading, would be needed in the university. There was no statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = .02, p > .05$). Reading Need accounted for .1% of variance. There was no statistically significant interaction for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .08, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Reading Need accounted for .4% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental

($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = .10, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Reading Need accounted for 1% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Reading Need factor (see Table 4).

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the ISALNA-2 for the factor Reading Ability, present English ability in the skill, Reading. There was no statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = .82, p > .05$). Reading Ability accounted for 4% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .21, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Reading Ability accounted for 1% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = 3.20, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Reading Ability accounted for 13% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Reading Ability factor.

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the ISALNA-2 for the factor Writing Need- how often the skill, Writing, would be needed in the university. There was no statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = 2.30, p > .05$). Writing Need accounted for 10% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .05, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Writing Need Ability accounted for .2% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = .73, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor

Writing Need accounted for 3% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Writing Need factor.

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the ISALNA-2 for the factor Writing Ability, present English ability in the skill, Writing. There was a statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = 8.07, p < .05$) for the control ($M = 2.97, SD = .45; M = 3.37, SD = .50$) and experimental groups ($M = 2.45, SD = .72; M = 2.71, SD = .64$). Writing Ability accounted for 28% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .40, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Writing Ability accounted for 2% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = 5.22, p < .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Writing Ability accounted for 20% of variance. Scores were different between the control and experimental group for the Writing Ability factor. The control group had higher mean scores than the experimental group on the Writing Ability posttests. Possible explanations for this may be higher educational or English proficiency levels of the control group (with the remaining members) than the experimental group or the decreased size of the control group compared to the experimental group. Because the experimental group was larger, there was a possibility of larger variance in the group mean because of more members present and more variation in the scores obtained.

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the ISALNA-2 for the factor Speaking Need- how often the skill, Speaking, would be needed in the university. There was no statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest)

($F(1, 20) = .93, p > .05$). Speaking Need accounted for 4% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 20) = .30, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Speaking Need accounted for 1% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = .85, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Speaking Need accounted for 4% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Speaking Need factor.

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the ISALNA-2 for the factor Speaking Ability, present English ability in the skill, Speaking. There was a statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = 5.81, p < .05$) for the control ($M = 3.33, SD = .65; M = 3.91, SD = 1.25$) and experimental groups ($M = 2.57, SD = .75; M = 2.82, SD = .74$). Speaking Ability accounted for 22% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .93, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Speaking Ability accounted for 4% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = 7.88, p < .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Speaking Ability accounted for 27% of variance. Scores were different between the control and experimental group for the Speaking Ability factor. The control group had higher mean scores than the experimental group on the Speaking Ability posttests. Possible explanations for this may be higher educational or English proficiency levels of the control group (with the remaining members) than the experimental group or the decreased size of the control group compared to the experimental group. Because the experimental group was

larger, there was a possibility of larger variance in the group mean because of more members present and more variation in the scores obtained.

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the ISALNA-2 for the factor Listening Need- how often the skill, Listening, would be needed in the university. There was no statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = 1.65, p > .05$). Listening Need accounted for 7% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .83, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Listening Need accounted for 4% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = .41, p > .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Listening Need accounted for 2% of variance. Scores did not differ between the control and experimental group for the Listening Need factor.

A Split-plot ANOVA was used to analyze any difference in score on the ISALNA-2 for the factor Listening Ability, present English ability in the skill, Listening. There was a statistically significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) ($F(1, 21) = 7.73, p < .05$) for the control ($M = 3.24, SD = .50; M = 3.56, SD = .57$) and experimental groups ($M = 2.64, SD = .70; M = 2.83, SD = .67$). Listening Ability accounted for 27% of variance. There was no statistical significance for the interaction between times (pretest and posttest) and group ($F(1, 21) = .57, p > .05$). The interaction of pre-post tests with group for Listening Ability accounted for 3% of variance. The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was not statistically significant ($F(1, 21) = 5.83, p < .05$). The difference between groups for the factor Listening Ability accounted for 22% of variance. Scores

were different between the control and experimental group for the Listening Ability factor. The control group had higher mean scores than the experimental group on the Listening Ability posttests. Possible explanations for this may be higher educational or English proficiency levels of the control group (with the remaining members) than the experimental group or the decreased size of the control group compared to the experimental group. Because the experimental group was larger, there was a possibility of larger variance in the group mean because of more members present and more variation in the scores obtained.

Table 4: Within- and Between-Subjects Contrasts and Effects for Language Skill Factors

Factor	<u>Time</u>		<u>Between Groups</u>		<u>Interaction</u>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>
Reading Need	.02	1, 20	.10	1, 20	.08	1, 20
Reading Ability	.82	1, 21	3.20	1, 21	.21	1, 21
Writing Need	2.30	1, 21	.73	1, 21	.05	1, 21
Writing Ability	8.07*	1, 21	5.22*	1, 21	.40	1, 21
Speaking Need	.93	1, 21	.85	1, 21	.30	1, 21
Speaking Ability	5.81*	1, 21	7.88*	1, 21	.93	1, 21
Listening Need	1.65	1, 21	.41	1, 21	.83	1, 21
Listening Ability	7.73*	1, 21	5.83*	1, 21	.60	1, 21

Note: * $p < .05$

Qualitative Data

Students' Written Comments

Information was collated from the International Student Information Form that the students completed at the end of the study. Some students wrote more than one answer to the open-ended questions. Also, this questionnaire was completed by all the students in the classes at the time, even those students who had not completed both the pre- and post-tests of both instruments (control group: $n=10$, experimental group: $n=19$). The difference in the number of participants reported in the quantitative data is because some students did not complete both instruments used in analyzing the quantitative data.

1. What major will you be studying or what job are you doing now?

In the control group, there were several students ($n = 6$) in either business or the medical field. Other students ($n = 3$) were in various fields such as law, engineering, and industrial design. One student was only studying English before returning home to his/her country. In the experimental group, there was a large group ($n = 9$) that were business majors or in a business-related field. Other fields ($n = 6$) were varied, including engineering, metals and materials, safety management, personal training, exercise physiology, medical science, film, languages, international relations, and graphic design. One student was only studying English before returning home to his/her country. Both groups were a mixture of undergraduate and graduate level students.

2. How long have you studied English in your life?

The two groups were very similar in the length of study time. In the control group, studying time ranged from 6 months up to 20 years with varying times in between. Similarly, the

experimental group had English study times ranging from 2 months up to 19 years with varying times in between.

3. What are some of the typical university assignments that you think you will need to do in your major?

The control group ($n = 3$) answered that writing papers and essays would be typical university tasks. Another response ($n = 2$) included reading books and magazines. One student answered that translating scientific articles into English would be a typical task. Another said doing projects, and another said finding references. One student had no idea what assignments would be necessary.

A large number of the experimental group ($n = 7$) responded that writing papers and essays would be necessary as well as speaking a lot and doing research ($n = 7$). Pairs of students thought reading books, doing reports, listening, learning the history of their field, and discussing things with their classmates would be necessary. Others thought studying a lot ($n = 1$), making summaries ($n = 1$), and working with cases studies ($n = 10$) would be tasks they would need to perform. Only one student did not know about the work that he/she would need for his/her major.

4. What problems do you have now in your English program?

A few of the control group ($n = 4$) answered that speaking and listening were problems for them. Each of these problem areas had one student respond: reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and communication.

The experimental group found speaking ($n = 9$), writing ($n = 6$), listening ($n = 4$), grammar ($n = 4$), and vocabulary ($n = 3$) to be the biggest problems. Communication and

reading each had one student say that they were problem areas. Only one from each group did not give possible problems they were having. One student mentioned being shy because he/she did not want to make mistakes when he/she spoke

5. How many pages a week do you read for all your class assignments? Is it difficult for you to do that and stay with the rest of your class?

The control group reported between 4 and 250 pages a week for reading assignments. Most of the students ($n = 5$) said in the 10-20 page range. The majority of the students said they had some difficulty staying up with the rest of the class.

The experimental group said between 3 and 150 pages of reading per week. Again, some students ($n = 6$) reported between 10-20 pages. Almost half of the students ($n = 9$) stated that they had no difficulty keeping up with the rest of the class with their reading assignments.

6. How important is English ability to you for doing well in your major in the university?

This question was answered almost unanimously (control: $n = 8$; experimental: $n = 12$) with “very important” for both groups. In the control group, one student said, “for reading and understanding scientific literature.” Separate students in the experimental group also responded that it was “important for my job,” “I should speak better for my major,” “or for writing papers.” Only two participants in the experimental group said that English was not important for them for the university. One said that he/she was not going to the university, and another said that he/she did not know.

7. At what degree do you think your English ability is now?

Both groups (control: $n = 9$; experimental: $n = 16$) responded that their English ability was good or fair. Only a small number in either group (control: $n = 1$; experimental: $n = 3$) answered that their ability was poor.

8. Which specific language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) do you think will be the most important for your major in the university?

In the control group the responses, in order of importance, were: reading ($n = 7$), speaking ($n = 6$), writing ($n = 5$), and listening ($n = 3$). In the experimental group the responses, in order of importance, were: speaking ($n = 17$), writing ($n = 15$), reading ($n = 12$), and listening ($n = 12$).

9. Where did you study English before you came here (school, tutor, friends, family, etc.)?

Most of the control group ($n = 7$) answered that school was where they had studied English, followed by a few having tutors ($n = 3$), and one going to a private English institute. The experimental group also had English primarily in school ($n = 16$) with some students going to private English institutes ($n = 2$), learning from friends ($n = 2$) or family ($n = 1$). Only one person in each group said they had not studied English before.

10. Would you say that you are usually a good student in school (any school)? Why or why not?

The majority of students in both groups (control: $n = 7$; experimental: $n = 12$) reported that they were good students. They said it was because they studied and worked hard (control: $n = 4$; experimental: $n = 6$). Students in the control group stated they were responsible or regular students ($n = 3$). Students in the experimental group said they got good grades ($n = 5$). One each said that he/she participate in class, absorbs all the information, does his/her homework, and tries

hard to improve. Only a few in each group (control: $n = 2$; experimental: $n = 4$) admitted that they were not good students. Some reasons that individual students gave were that they were lazy, bored or did not do their homework.

Experimental Group- Additional Questions about the Peer Advising Sessions

11. What was the most important thing you learned from the peer advisors?

Some students ($n = 7$) answered, “Speaking, and I need to read more.” Another response ($n = 2$) was, “I need to provide more effort.” Individual responses were, “We have to talk a lot to improve our English because if you know how to talk, you can learn a lot.” “I will know a lot of things when I will go to a university.” “I have to study more.” “I can get writing advisement.” “I need principal abilities for the university. I need to read, write, listen, and speak to improve my English for the university.” “I will find the way to enter the university.” Only one responded, “Nothing.”

12. What was the most interesting thing you learned from the peer advisors?

Answers varied a lot. Two students answered that, “I learned about reading,” and “Don’t give up!” Individual students said, “I learned how to study better.” “I should read many textbooks when I study at the university in the U.S.A.” “It’s not impossible to learn English.” “Professors speak too fast.” “I learned that writing is very important.” “I need more skill because what I have now is not enough.” “I learned how difficult the classes are.” “I learned some American customs.” “I learned how to improve my English.” “I can make friends.” “I learned about problems of international students.” Only one said, “Nothing.”

13. Students only needed to put a checkmark by these questions.

A majority of them (n = 13) marked, I thought the time with the peer advisors was: “Interesting” and “Important to learn about English I will need for the university or my job.” Twelve students answered, “Good because they were ESL students before like me.” Ten said that it was “Valuable.” A group of students (n = 6) checked, “A good place for me to ask questions about English that I will need for the university or my job.” Some students (n = 5) answered, “Information I already knew.” A pair of students answered, “The session was not a long enough time to get information from the peer advisors.” and “Boring.” and “A waste of time.” Individual students said, “Not good information.” “I didn’t believe them.” “Nothing I can use personally.” or “Not good for me.” Participants grouped their answers to all the questions as all positive or all negative.

Summary

This chapter gave the report of the data analysis for this study. The instrument was administered and pretest, posttest, and demographic data were collected from 29 students. In order to answer each of the research questions, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a Split-plot Analysis of Variance to determine if there was a statistical relationship between a higher score from the pretests to the posttests on the SILL and the Xu ISALNA-2 for the treatment group with the peer advisors compared to the control group.

Qualitative data were collected and reported based on open-ended questions reported on the International Student Information Form. The difference in the number of participants between the quantitative and qualitative data is because some students did not complete both instruments used in analyzing the quantitative data.

This data revealed positive attitudes by the peer advisors in giving language skills information and by the ESL international students involved in the treatment in receiving the information from the peer advisors.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As evidenced in the review of literature and based on the experiences of this researcher, the challenges ESL international students face in pursuit of a degree in higher education are multiple and complex. In an attempt to provide the necessary support, institutions of higher learning have provided a variety of programs intended to facilitate the academic process of these students. International students take their education quite seriously and want to be successful in their academic pursuits and for career-related reasons (Boyer & Sedlacek, 1986). The purpose of the present study was to investigate if peer advising session provided necessary information to change ESL international students' perceptions of academic and language tasks and the strategies associated with language needs necessary to succeed at a university. The peer advising sessions conducted in this study provided advice and direction from slightly more experienced international students who had themselves experienced the challenges associated with being an ESL international student. The momentum for this approach was that research associated with peer advising indicated that young people were somewhat more likely to be willing to learn from someone who was similar in experience and age.

When the present study was formulated, the number of ESL international students in the Center for Multilingual Multicultural Studies (CMMS) was consistently between 250 and 300. From the conception to the implementation of this study, the world changed. The September 11, 2001, attacks transformed the world as we know it, and the number of international students coming to study in the United States altered drastically. Fewer students have come to study in the United States as visa requirements have become stricter and have caused delays to students' plans of study (Arroyo, 2003). This has changed the face of English as a Second Language (ESL)

classes in intensive English programs (IEPs) throughout the country. The quantitative data collected in this study did provide a statistically significant result from the peer advising sessions. Despite the small number of participants, interesting qualitative data was collected from the peer advisors and students involved in the study.

Summary of Research Protocol

This study investigated the different perspectives of students receiving similar information from different sources, teachers and/or peer advisors. A pretest/posttest design with two instruments, one instrument to measure strategy use and one instrument to measure perceived language skills for university academic tasks, was utilized to collect data. The research in this study investigated the effect of language skills sessions with peer advisors on ESL international students' perspectives of language skills necessary for university academic tasks. The focus of the study was the effect of language skills sessions with peer advisors on the perceptions of English language proficiency that ESL international students need for academic success. The peer advising sessions provided advice and direction from advisors who had experienced similar problems as the sample of international ESL students.

The purpose of the study was to find out whether peer advising changed ESL international students' perceptions of academic and language tasks and the strategies associated with language needs for the university. The peer advising sessions provided advice and direction from advisors who had experienced similar emotions and problems.

Summary of Research Question Findings

Research Question 1

Do international students who have Peer Advisor language skill sessions achieve a significantly higher score on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) than international students who do not have language skill sessions with peer advisors?

The data was insufficient to determine any statistically significant findings on this question. Because of the small sample, it was not possible to differentiate if either the control or experimental group made statistically significantly higher scores on the SILL because of the language skill sessions or the lack of them.

Research Question 2

Do international students who have Peer Advisor language skill sessions achieve a significantly higher score on the Xu International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment (ISALNA-2) than international students who do not have language skill sessions with peer advisors?

Statistically significant outcomes were found for differences between groups as well as interactions between time and groups for some of the factors considered by the ISALNA-2: Writing Ability, Speaking Ability, and Listening Ability.

A Split-plot Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze any difference in score on the ISALNA-2 for the factors Writing Ability, Speaking Ability, and Listening Ability, present English ability in the skills, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. There was a statistically

significant difference in score based upon time (pretest and posttest) for the control and experimental groups for all three factors. Writing Ability accounted for 28% of variance, Speaking Ability accounted for 22% of variance and Listening Ability accounted for 27% of variance. The control group had higher mean scores than the experimental group on the Writing, Speaking, and Listening Ability posttests. Possible explanations for this may be higher educational or English proficiency levels of the control group (with the remaining members) than the experimental group or the decreased size of the control group compared to the experimental group. Because the experimental group was larger, there was a possibility of larger variance in the group mean because of more members present and more variation in the scores obtained.

The main effect between groups, control ($n = 7$) and experimental ($n = 16$), was statistically significant. The difference between groups for the factor Writing Ability accounted for 20% of variance. Speaking Ability accounted for 27% of variance and Listening Ability accounted for 22% of variance. Scores were different between the control and experimental group for the Writing, Speaking, and Listening Ability factors.

For the other factors, no statistically significant results were recorded. Because of the small number of participants in the sample, it is not possible to determine whether the results were generalizable to a larger population for the treatment used in the study, peer advising language skills sessions, or from error. Nevertheless, qualitative data from the peer advisors and participants yielded some interesting trends for research into peer assisted learning for ESL international students.

Conclusions

Because of the small sample used in this study, it is difficult to reach any statistically-based conclusions from the present group based on the results of the quantitative data collected. However, from peer advisor and participant comments, the researcher feels that the peer advisors did have an effect on the ESL international students because of their qualitative written and verbal responses after the treatment sessions.

Additionally, the lack of response from the control group and their lackluster answers to the questionnaire, combined with some participants declining to take the posttest, impacted the study. Some of the control group did not feel that they had experienced any change in their perception or ability of English from class instruction alone; therefore, they did not want to take the same test a second time. As one student said when he refused, “We already did this. Why should we do the same thing again? It is a waste of my time.” The researcher did not find this attitude with the experimental group. They were ready to take the post-test, and some anticipated there would be a change in their scores from the original. Another interesting finding was the enthusiastic, helping attitude of the peer advisors before, during, and after the study experience.

Students’ Written Comments/Treatment and Nontreatment Groups

Significant findings from this study can be gleaned from the personal, written answers that students gave to the International Student Information Form that the students completed at the end of the study. Some students wrote more than one answer to the open-ended questions. Also, this questionnaire was completed by all the students in the classes at the time, even those students who had not completed both the pre- and post-tests of both instruments (control group:

$n=10$, experimental group: $n=19$), so it had more responses than the pre-post tests. There were marked similarities in some of the answers to the questionnaire from both groups. However, the attitude was quite enthusiastic by the experimental group. The answers given by the experimental group also were longer and more complete.

When asked about their major field of study or present job, the control group had several students ($n = 6$) in either business or the medical field. Other students ($n = 3$) were in different fields such as law, engineering and industrial design. One student was only studying English before returning home to his/her country. In the experimental group, there was a large group ($n = 9$) that were business majors or in a business-related field. Other fields ($n = 6$) were very varied, including engineering, metals and materials, safety management, personal training, exercise physiology, medical science, film, languages, international relations, and graphic design. One student was only studying English before returning home to his/her country.

The peer advisors that spoke to the experimental group were also varied in their fields and majors (see Chapter 3, Peer Advisors). In this way, the participants appreciated getting a lot of information from former ESL students who were presently in different colleges with diverse experience. The peer advisors also gave anecdotal information of the relationships between their college class experiences, their fields of study, and their anticipated use of their knowledge in the future.

The two groups were very similar in the length of study time of English in their lives. In the control group, studying time ranged from 6 months up to 20 years with varying times in between. Similarly, the experimental group had English study times ranging from 2 months up to 19 years with varying times in between. This study time similarity can also indicate that the two

groups being compared were much the same, so any findings would be more generalizable to a larger group (Shavelson, 1996).

One question asked about typical university assignments. The control group ($n = 3$) answered that writing papers and essays would be typical university tasks. Another response ($n = 2$) was reading books and magazines. One student said translating scientific articles into English, another said doing projects, and still another said finding references. One student had no idea what assignments would be necessary.

A large part of the experimental group ($n = 7$) responded that writing papers and essays would be necessary as well as speaking a lot and doing research ($n = 7$). Pairs of students thought reading books, doing reports, listening, learning the history of their field, and discussing things with their classmates would be necessary. One thought studying a lot, another thought making summaries, and still another working with case studies would be tasks they would need to perform. Only one student in this group did not indicate that he/she knew about the work that they would need for their major.

The peer advisors had talked a lot about required assignments in their different fields. Some of these examples were also given by the participants in their answers as necessary academic tasks they would be required to perform in the university. This large variety of answers could be indicative of the participants' exposure to the peer advisors and their information or could indicate more variety because of the larger number in the experimental group compared to the control group.

When asked about current problems in English, a few of the control group answered that speaking and listening were problems for them. A small number gave the answers that reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and communication were problems.

The experimental group found speaking ($n = 9$), writing ($n = 6$), listening ($n = 4$), grammar ($n = 4$), and vocabulary ($n = 3$) to be the biggest problems. One student each said that communication and reading were problems. Only one from each group did not give possible problems they were having. One student mentioned being shy because he/she did not want to make mistakes when he/she spoke. The problems mentioned by each group were similar; however, the groups placed differing priorities on the communication skills that they stated. The experimental group expressed that speaking was more problematic than reading, which the control group had emphasized as their main problem area.

Students stated widely differing opinions about the length of reading done for their studies and their ability to cope with this for their classes. The control group reported between 4 and 250 pages a week for reading assignments. Most of the students ($n = 5$) said in the 10-20 page range. The experimental group said between 3 and 150 pages of reading per week. Again, some students ($n = 6$) reported between 10-20 pages. However, the majority of the control group ($n = 4$) had some difficulty staying with the rest of the class on assignments; whereas, almost half of the students in the experimental group ($n = 9$) had no difficulty keeping up with others on reading assignments.

The peer advisors had given a lot of information on the required reading for university study. However, because of the varying majors, the requirements for different fields also differed greatly.

When asked how important English ability was for doing well in their field in the university, the answer was almost unanimous, (control: n = 8; experimental: n = 12) “very important,” for both groups. This is supported by research, as Reinicke (1986) contends that students who believed that their English was adequate were significantly better-adapted than those who believed it to be inadequate. In the control group, one student said English was important for reading and understanding scientific literature. Separate students in the experimental group also responded that it was important for their jobs, for speaking better for their major, or for writing papers. Only one experimental participant said that English was not important for them for the university. Another said that he/she was not going to the university, and another said that he/she did not know.

Replying to the question about current English ability, both groups (control: n = 9; experimental: n = 16) responded that their English ability was good or fair. Only a small number in either group (control: n = 1; experimental: n = 3) answered that their ability was poor. This is important information for the study as it shows that responses they gave on the instruments were accurate indications of their experience and perspective because they understood enough English.

When asked about specific language skills they perceived as most important for their major in the university, the control group responses, in order of importance, were: reading (n = 7), speaking (n = 6), writing (n = 5), and listening (n = 3). In the experimental group the responses, in order of importance, were: speaking (n = 17), writing (n = 15), reading (n = 12), and listening (n = 12). These answers correlated very closely to their perceived problems with English study.

The peer advisors talked about the importance of all the different language skills. Each academic field has differing skills which would be necessary to accomplish the academic tasks required for success in that major. Reading was considered necessary for all fields. This finding is supported by research by Adamson (1993). Writing was also considered very important for most majors. Hamp-Lyons (1991) found that most assignments in college were done in response to some specific requirement by the instructor. The peer advisors agreed with this statement. Listening, especially to lectures, was also considered quite important. Johns' (1992) mentioned listening as a very necessary part of classes and a skill which became easier with time and practice. For some majors, speaking was also considered an important skill, but students did not consider it of primary importance unless it was needed for oral presentations.

From the responses given by both groups, it was difficult for the research to generalize which language skills would be considered the most important and in which order. Answers that were given were diverse, depended on the students' field, and what each student considered most necessary for his/her individual study.

Where students had studied English before they came to the U.S. was again answered very similarly for both control and experimental groups. Most of the control group ($n = 7$) answered that school was where they had studied English, followed by a few having tutors ($n = 3$), and one going to a private English institute. The experimental group also had English primarily in school ($n = 16$) with some students going to private English institutes ($n = 2$), learning from friends ($n = 2$) or family ($n = 1$). Only one person in each group said they had not studied English before. This again gave indications that the groups were evenly matched in the random selection done for the study.

The majority of students in both groups (control: $n = 7$; experimental: $n = 12$) reported that they were good students. They said it was because they studied and worked hard (control: $n = 4$; experimental: $n = 6$). Reasons stated by the control group ($n = 3$) were responsibility and regular work habits. Students in the experimental group ($n = 5$) stated that it was because of good grades, participation in class ($n = 1$), absorbing all the information ($n = 1$), doing their homework ($n = 1$), and trying hard to improve ($n = 1$). Only a few in each group (control: $n = 2$; experimental: $n = 4$) admitted that they were not good students. Some reasons they gave were laziness, boredom or not doing their homework.

Experimental Group- Additional Questions

The experimental group had additional questions about the peer advising sessions. This section of the survey gave a lot of data about what students had learned from their peers. The experimental group gave many responses that indicated they had indeed been listening during the peer advising sessions and had gathered a lot of useful information for themselves. The first question was about anything important that they had learned from the peer advisors. Many of the students ($n = 7$) answered that speaking and needing to read more were important things they had learned. Another response was about needing to provide more effort ($n = 2$). All other responses were made individually. One was about studying more and needing principal abilities, which would include reading, writing, listening, and speaking to improve their English for the university. Another response was that he/she would need to talk a lot to improve his/her English because if he/she knew how to talk, he/she could learn a lot. Another also said he/she had heard a lot of things about going to a university such as how to enter the university and that he/she could get writing advisement. Only one responded that he/she had learned nothing

The second question asked about the most interesting thing that they had learned from the peer advisors. Answers varied a lot. Two students answered, “I learned about reading,” and “Don’t give up!” Individual students said, “I learned how difficult the classes are.” “Professors speak too fast.” “I learned how to improve my English.” “I learned that writing is very important.” “I need more skill because what I have now is not enough.” “I learned how to study better.” “I should read many textbooks when I study at the university in the U.S.A.” “It’s not impossible to learn English.” “I learned some American customs.” “I can make friends.” “I learned about a lot of problems of international students.” Only one student said that nothing was interesting. These answers correlated with the differences in groups from the pre-post tests because significant difference were found in need for speaking, writing, and listening ability.

The experimental group wrote about these areas of academic tasks they considered very necessary for university study. We can relate their observations to research by Bandura (1997) on modeling and self-efficacy. People actively seek proficient models of competencies that they want to accomplish. They use these models to discover effective skills to function and succeed. In this same way, the students used the models they saw in the peer advisors to answer questions that they had about what they themselves wanted to achieve, which was success at the university.

On the last set of questions, students only needed to put a checkmark as a response, and a majority of them ($n = 13$) marked that they thought the time with the peer advisors was interesting and important to learn about English they would need for the university or their job. Twelve said that it was good because the peer advisors had been ESL students before like themselves. Ten said that they were valuable. A group of students ($n = 6$) checked that the peer advising sessions were a good place for them to ask questions about English that they would

need for the university or their job. Only five of the students answered that it was information they already knew. Two said that it was not long enough time to get information from the peer advisors, was boring, or was a waste of time. Only one person answered that it was not good information, he/she didn't believe them, was nothing that he/she could use personally, and was not good for him/her. Participants either grouped all their answers to the questions as all positive or all negative.

As seen by the responses to the questions on this survey, the student comments added rich knowledge to the relevance of this study for the field. Moreover, further research could add abundant information to the advantages of peer advising for international students' academic experience.

Verbal Comments- Peer Advisors, Participants, Teachers

Some of the comments that the peer advisors offered in the peer advising sessions were anecdotes. Throughout each session, the peer advisors gave examples of different strategies that they employed to help them cope with the challenges of studying at a college level in a second language. Many of the strategies mentioned were studied in Oxford's (1996b) research on second language acquisition. Kim & Eckermann (1997) support this with the assertion that language learning requires attention to both form and function. The peer advisors often discussed how they transferred what they already knew from their previous study to what they were doing in the university here, albeit in English.

In the reading session, peer advisors discussed the importance of reading a lot in English, especially in one's field, as a way to help with vocabulary, an important necessity for academic

work in English. Saville-Troike's (1984) research discussed how important vocabulary knowledge was to academic achievement.

In the writing session, one peer advisor brought in a sample of some of his written assignments for one of his university classes and explained how hard it was to write in English and get good grades in a foreign language. In Reid's research (1993), she discussed awareness of what was needed to accomplish writing for academic classes and how difficult it was for ESL writers to keep up with the number and kind of writing assignments expected during a semester.

In the listening session, the peer advisors talked about how easy it was to understand their professors although they spoke quickly, but about how difficult it was to understand the idiomatic speech of the American students when they asked the professor questions. Some of the peer advisors spoke about coping strategies, such as reading ahead in the textbook to know the vocabulary for lectures, recording lectures, and using professors' office hours for asking questions. These strategies were discussed by Jones (1998) and Oxford (1996a) as part of their research on different learning styles and strategies for effective learners. Students learn in different ways and they have to use what works best for them.

In the speaking sessions, one male peer discussed how to talk to a girl in English (to ask her out). One female peer wanted to be able to tell a joke in English. Another talked about how to get across ideas in English when he could not think of the right words to say. One female peer said that she talked to old people to practice English because they would talk and listen for longer periods of time than young people would. All these examples of language use and strategies were illustrations of a positive attitude taken by non-native speakers to cope with their environment and improve their English proficiency in order to succeed. Jordan (1997) and

Smoke(1988) both listed many of these different ways that students could improve their language skills outside the classroom.

Some participants commented on getting to meet someone who knew about how it felt to go to school in the U.S. Another said that she could ask the peer advisors questions and get real answers that meant something because they had already been through the experience of being an international student and going to an American school. Another said, “They can tell me what is really hard about going to school in the U.S.” As Creaser and Carsello (1979) contended, students feel more at ease with counselors who are fellow students because they can empathize more with the student’s experience.

The participants’ comments supported what the study had tried to investigate, getting information from peer advisors rather than teachers. One ESL international student said that maybe she would believe them (the peer advisors) about how much work she would have to do (more than her American teachers). Another said that he really liked listening to the peer advisors’ stories about what happened to them when they first went to school in the U.S.

Some comments that the ESL students made about the peer advisors were, “They can tell me what things were easier and what things were harder to do in English.” “They can tell me how they felt when they first started in an American school.” “They can tell me where I can get help from people who will understand me.” “They can give me hints on how to make friends with Americans.” Truthfully, one student said, “I’m not sure if I learned anything, but it wasn’t boring because they (the peer advisors) used to be like me.”

After the peer advising sessions, some peer advisor comments were, “I wish someone had done this for me when I was a student.” “I think I had something to say to the students that will

help them NOT make the mistakes I made.” “I’m excited about helping other students and giving them information to help them adjust better to a U.S. school.” “I think this is a really good idea, for peer advisors to help other international students with problems about English and how to ‘do’ school in the U.S.” Russell’s (1971) research supports these statements because interest in school learning is increased when students help others to learn.

In informal discussions throughout the study, different participating ESL teachers also made comments such as, “I think it is a good idea to use peer advisors.” “The students certainly don’t believe us (teachers) when we tell them how much work they will need to do in the university.” “They think we are exaggerating at the amount of work.” “They don’t believe us until they are already at the university and have to keep up with all the reading and the written assignments.” “Maybe the students will believe other students who are doing that work right now.”

Theoretical and Practical Implications of the Study

The use of peer advisors can increase the students’ ability to cope with the academic and social problems associated with the adjustment to a new learning environment, college. These student counselors can give information in problem areas for international students. Research supports the need for help with some of these problems in language as well as social and adjustment issues such as culture shock. International students also require assistance with cross-cultural problems such as understanding and adjusting to new social norms in social situations, teacher expectations and varied teaching styles (Abe, Tabot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Frisz, 1999; Lawson, 1989; Merta, Ponterotto, & Brown, 1992; Miller, 1989; Nolan, Levy, & Constantine, 1996; Reinicke, 1986; Stokes, et al., 1988; Surdam & Collins, 1984).

As other studies have pointed out, some of the students who achieved best in content areas were those who had the opportunity to discuss the concepts they were learning in their native language with other students (Adamson, 1993). Other studies have found that adjustment problems of foreign students in the United States could be eased by making available English language instruction, orientation programs, counseling, host family programs, and programs linking foreign students with American student study partners (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Meloni, 1986). Peer advising definitely fits in with these concepts.

This study looked at one particular area of peer advising- international student academic language assistance. By learning about problem areas, solutions to those problems, and other basic language use advice, peer advisors can be invaluable to new students in surviving and tackling their new academic environment successfully.

This study is significant because peer advisors empathize with the student experience as fellow students, and that can be the key to successful advisor/advisee relationships (Brown, 1972; Creaser & Carsello, 1979). A cooperative program with students acting as academic, peer advisors can successfully communicate information about language learning strategies necessary to succeed in an academic setting. Peer advising can be productive because the advice and guidance received by the advisee is given both on a level that advisees can identify and feel comfortable with. The peer advisors have themselves had to contend with the same problems as other international students who have entered a U.S. college or university. They know about the language proficiency necessary to succeed at an academic level and their hard-won knowledge can make the transition easier for other students who follow.

A regular advising program set up using many of the guidelines of this study could be utilized for intensive English programs and other language institutes with peer advisors to relate information to international students. The information could deal with many of the language issues set forth in this study or could branch out into other necessary areas including health, relationships, and cultural understanding.

Recommendations for Further Study

It was interesting to discover that no other study had delved into this specific issue before, international peer advisors for international students at the college level versus U.S. teachers providing the same information. It would be advantageous to study this question further. Another similar study could be done with larger numbers of participants to determine if significant differences would occur between groups. Additionally, the study should be lengthened to allow the peer advisors more time to spend with the participants and to accord more time for dispensing information and allowing discussion and question time. It is not equitable to compare a small number of peer advising sessions with daily encounters with faculty. Also, more qualitative data from peer advisors could improve the peer advising program because their input could greatly improve the peer language treatments. Further tracking and use of international students as peer advisors after they complete their study period has not been done, especially as these students could be invaluable to new international students for their hard-won knowledge of English and experience with U.S. culture.

Other issues that concern international students could be considered in the areas of health, relationships, or culture. Peer advising could also be done on a smaller scale, with individual and small group interaction with international students, to intensify the experience and benefit

individual students more. Additionally, the peer advising sessions could be extended over a longer period of weeks or longer sessions per duration. The limited number of weeks of interaction may be another factor that contributed to a lack of statistically significant difference for the treatment group and the control group.

Another study can look at the effect of networking on international students. With the innovation of the Internet, the world has become a smaller place. Communication is world-wide now, so international communication is a necessity. Networking starts with individuals who are most similar to ourselves and branches out to those who are different. Understanding a new culture can take time. International students can share their encounters with Americans and their interpretations of those events with others, their peers. In this way, the understanding of all students will radiate from those that have learned about this new culture to those who have not experienced it yet.

Concluding Thoughts

Sharing experiences with other international students, peers have a distinctive advantage in communicating their own knowledge of educational and social struggles to newcomers. The chances for both academic and social success for international students are improved by learning from others rather than having to make the same mistakes themselves. The bonds of one's native country, language, or culture are valuable and, when utilized as a foundational principle in peer advising, the college experience can be more beneficial and profitable for international students new to that setting.

APPENDIX A:
UCF IRB APPROVAL LETTER



Office of Research

May 2, 2003

Monica Fishkin
173 Las Palmas
Merritt Island, FL 32953

Dear Mrs. Fishkin:

With reference to your protocol entitled, "The Effect of Peer Advisors on ESL Students' Perspectives of University Academic Tasks," I am enclosing for your records the approved, executed document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office.

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur. Further, should there be a need to extend this protocol, a renewal form must be submitted for approval at least one month prior to the anniversary date of the most recent approval and is the responsibility of the investigator (UCF).

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris Grayson".

Chris Grayson
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Copies: Dr. Kay Allen
IRB File

Office of Research
12443 Research Parkway Suite 207 • Orlando, FL 32826-3252
407-823-3778 • FAX 407-823-3299
An Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Institution

APPENDIX B:
STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL)

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Version for Speakers of Other Languages Learning English

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)
(c) R. Oxford, 1989

Directions

This form of the STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL) is for students of English as a second or foreign language. You will find statements about learning English. Please read each statement. On the separate Worksheet, write the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

NEVER OR ALMOST NEVER TRUE OF ME means that the statement is very rarely true of you.

USUALLY NOT TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true less than half the time.

SOMEWHAT TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true of you about half the time.

USUALLY TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true more than half the time.

ALWAYS OR ALMOST ALWAYS TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true of you almost always.

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Put your answers on the separate Worksheet. Please make no marks on the items. Work as quickly as you can without being careless. This usually takes about 20-30 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, let the teacher know immediately.

EXAMPLE

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Read the item, and choose a response (1 through 5 as above), and write it in the space after the item.

I actively seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers of English. _____

You have just completed the example item. Answer the rest of the items on the Worksheet.

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)

(c) R. Oxford, 1989

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.
12. I practice the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
14. I start conversations in English.
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
16. I read for pleasure in English.
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20. I try to find patterns in English.
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
27. I read English without looking up every new word.
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.

34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
38. I think about my progress in learning English.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

Part E

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practice English with other students.
48. I ask for help from English speakers.
49. I ask questions in English.
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

SILL Worksheet (continued)

Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)

(c) R. Oxford, 1989

<u>Part A</u>	<u>Part B</u>	<u>Part C</u>	<u>Part D</u>	<u>Part E</u>	<u>Part F</u>	<u>Whole SILL</u>
1. _____	10. _____	24. _____	30. _____	39. _____	45. _____	SUM Part A _____
2. _____	11. _____	25. _____	31. _____	40. _____	46. _____	SUM Part B _____
3. _____	12. _____	26. _____	32. _____	41. _____	47. _____	SUM Part C _____
4. _____	13. _____	27. _____	33. _____	42. _____	48. _____	SUM Part D _____
5. _____	14. _____	28. _____	34. _____	43. _____	49. _____	SUM Part E _____
6. _____	15. _____	29. _____	35. _____	44. _____	50. _____	SUM Part F _____
7. _____	16. _____		36. _____			
8. _____	17. _____		37. _____			
9. _____	18. _____		38. _____			
	19. _____					
	20. _____					
	21. _____					
	22. _____					
	23. _____					

SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____
÷ 9 = _____	÷ 14 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 9 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 50 = _____ (OVERALL AVERAGE)

Your Name _____ Date _____

Profile of Results on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Version 7.0

(c) R. Oxford, 1989

You will receive this Profile after you have completed the Worksheet. This Profile will show your SILL results. These results will tell you the kinds of strategies you use in learning English. There are no right or wrong answers.

To complete this profile, transfer your averages for each part of the SILL, and your overall average for the whole SILL. These averages are found on the Worksheet.

<u>Part</u>	<u>What Strategies Are Covered</u>	<u>Your Average on This Part</u>
A.	Remembering more effectively	_____
B.	Using all your mental processes	_____
C.	Compensating for missing knowledge	_____
D.	Organizing and evaluating your learning	_____
E.	Managing your emotions	_____
F.	Learning with others	_____
YOUR OVERALL AVERAGE		_____

APPENDIX C:
XU INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ACADEMIC LANGUAGE NEEDS
ASSESSMENT (ISALNA)

Academic Tasks Work Load

For each of the following academic tasks, please indicate the frequency with which you think it is necessary for you to do these in the course of your academic studies.

Also, indicate the degree of difficulty you think it takes for you to complete each of these academic tasks.

	Frequency of Encounter					Degree of Difficulty				
	Never	Sometimes			Always	Low	Moderate		High	
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. Read texts in which the content is familiar to you	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Read critically to establish and evaluate the author's position on a particular topic	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Read quickly to find out how useful it is to study a particular text more intensively	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. Do library research for class assignments	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. Read carefully to understand general information in a text	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. Read to get specific information from a text	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. Read essay or multiple choice examination questions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. Read specialized academic papers or journal articles	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. Read statistical information or graphical displays in research studies	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. Write lab/progress reports on experiments	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. Write technical/statistical research reports	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12. Write theoretical or conceptual papers	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13. Write abstracts and summaries	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14. Write lengthy term/research papers	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15. Write research proposals	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Frequency of Encounter					Degree of Difficulty				
	Never	Sometimes			Always	Low	Moderate		High	
16. Write short answers/essay answers in exams	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17. Critique research studies	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18. Write articles for professional publications	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19. Write research study/project reports	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. Describe/interpret graphs/charts	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21. Synthesize multiple sources from research	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22. Participate in class/group discussions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23. Lead discussions in class	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24. Communicate with professors and fellow students on academic issues	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25. Communicate with off campus agencies for academic experiments	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
26. Give oral reports or presentations in class	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
27. Present lectures to classes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
28. Provide arguments and counter-arguments regarding issues in your academic field	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
29. Clarify your opinions when you are not understood	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
30. Express reasoning orally	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
31. Present papers at professional conferences	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
32. Argue a position in a classroom discussion	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
33. Recognize what is important and worth noting down in lectures or discussions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
34. Understand theoretical concepts presented in class lectures	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
35. Comprehend interactions in class between professors and other students	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
36. Understand spoken descriptions or narratives as opposed to written ones	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
37. Understand class/group discussion	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
38. Understand extended speech	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

39. Please write in the approximate amount of reading and writing load you are assigned to do per week or per semester.

- a. Total number of pages of reading assignments per week:_____, per semester:_____
- b. Total number of research papers you have to write per semester:_____, average number of pages per paper:_____.
- c. Number of short reports/project write-ups:_____
- d. Number of other writing assignments:_____, please specify: _____

English Preparation

Please note how important you think the following language skills are to your academic success and how proficient you are in these language skills by circling the appropriate numbers.

	Importance to Success					Self-Rated Proficiency				
	Low		Moderate		High	Poor		Fair		Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
a. Basic English proficiency (e.g., vocabulary, grammar)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
b. Field-specific English skills (i.e., language in one's field)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
c. Listening comprehension (e.g., in lectures and discussions)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
d. Speaking ability (e.g., class discussion and presentations)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
e. Reading comprehension (e.g., texts, journal articles)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
f. Writing ability (e.g., reports and papers)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
g. Reading speed	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
h. Writing under time pressure	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
i. Field-specific writing conventions and scientific styles	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
j. Communication skills with professors and fellow students	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
k. Note-taking skills	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
l. Knowledge of cultural aspects of English language	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

General English Proficiency using English in order to:

	Importance to Success					Self-Rated Proficiency				
	Low		Moderate		High	Poor		Fair		Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
a. Take part in social interaction (e.g., conduct polite conversation, give opinions on general subjects)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
b. Travel and visit places of interest (e.g., ask for directions to a location, book tickets and ask for information)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
c. Shop and use services (e.g., discuss services or goods required, make spoken or written complaints)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
d. Obtain medical attention and health services(e.g., explain symptoms of illness or injury, read medical forms & documents)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
e. Eat & drink in public places (e.g., read menu, place orders)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
f. Use media for entertainment and information (e.g., TV, radio)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
g. Conduct personal and business correspondence (e.g., write personal and business letters, resume)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
h. Deal with officials (e.g., Read forms and instructions, argue or explain cases face to face with officials)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

What type of English training/education did you have before you started your present academic program (e.g., studied English in college, had intensive English training in the states)? _____

How long did you have that English training/education? _____ years _____ months

Did you take any of the following tests in order to be admitted to your present program? If yes, what were your scores?

TOEFL (Total) _____ (Listening) _____ (Structure) _____ (Reading) _____

GRE (Total) _____ (Verbal) _____ (Quantitative) _____ (Analytical) _____

Academic Information

1. What was your first semester grade point average in your present program? _____ and your overall GPA so far? _____
2. How many degree credits did you complete in your first academic semester? _____ and credits you earned so far? _____
3. If you took less than required course load (at least ten credits) in your first semester, please indicate the reason(s):
_____ inadequate English proficiency _____ financial reasons
_____ inadequate Academic preparation _____ others, please specify _____
4. Considering academic adjustment, language preparation, and social cultural adjustment, which is most problematic for you?
_____ academic _____ language _____ social/cultural _____ none
5. Please rate yourself in the following academic areas by checking the appropriate boxes:

Course Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Independent Research	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Overall Academic Performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
6. Have you passed your comprehensive examination (if it is applicable)? ☐ Yes
☐ No ☐ NA
How many time(s) did you have to take it before you passed it? ☐ Once ☐ Twice ☐ NA

Background Information

1. Age: _____
2. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Native Language: _____
4. Native Country: _____
5. Your Field of Study: _____
6. Academic Status: ☐ Bachelors Degree ☐ Masters Degree ☐ Doctoral Degree ☐ Non-degree
7. Type of Assistantship you have: ☐ Fellowship ☐ TA ☐ RA ☐ GA ☐ Other _____
8. Length of enrollment in your present academic program: _____ years _____ months
9. Length of stay in the U.S. before enrollment in the present program: _____ years _____ months
10. Length of study in your professional field before coming to the U.S.: _____ years _____ months
11. Length of working experience in your present field before coming to the U.S.: _____ years _____ months

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for responding. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

APPENDIX D:
XU INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC LANGUAGE NEEDS
ASSESSMENT (ISALNA-2)

Xu International Student Academic Language Needs Assessment (ISALNA)-2

(Revised Version)

Number and Type of University Study Assignments

- For each of the following university assignments, please tell how often you think you will need to do that type of assignment in your future university studies in your major every semester (How Often I Will Need to Do This).

- Also tell your English ability now for each of these university assignments (English Ability Now).

	How Often I Will Need to Do This					English Ability Now				
	Never	Sometimes			Always	Low	Moderate		High	
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. Read textbooks with material that is familiar to you	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Look for inferences that tell the author's opinion on a specific topic	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Read quickly to find out how useful a specific textbook will be to use in my studies	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. Do library research for class assignments	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. Read carefully to understand general information in a textbook	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. Read to get specific information from a textbook	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. Read essay or multiple choice examination questions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. Read specialized papers or journal (magazine) articles in my major	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. Read statistical (numbers) information or graphical displays (picture information) in research articles	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. Write laboratory/progress reports on experiments	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. Write technical/statistical research reports	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12. Write papers about important ideas in my major	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13. Write summaries of articles and research	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14. Write long research papers	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15. Write proposals (ideas for research projects)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	How Often I Will Need to Do This					English Ability Now				
	Never	Sometimes			Always	Low	Moderate		High	
16. Write short answers/essay answers in exams	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17. Write opinions of research study articles	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18. Write articles for journals (magazines) in my major	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19. Write research study/project reports	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. Describe/write meaning of graphs/charts (pictures/statistics)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21. Write using many books/articles together for research	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22. Participate in class/group discussions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23. Be a leader in discussions in class	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24. Talk/ask questions of professors and fellow students on university information needs	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25. Talk/ask questions of off campus offices for university assignments/experiments	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
26. Give spoken reports or presentations in class	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
27. Present lectures to classes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
28. Give opinions on both sides of a discussion in your major field	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
29. Make your opinions clear when you are not understood	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
30. Tell your reasons clearly	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
31. Give presentations of written articles at conferences for your major field	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
32. Tell your opinion and give reasons in a classroom discussion	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
33. Listen and know what is important and good to write down from lectures or discussions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
34. Understand scientific ideas presented in class lectures	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
35. Understand questions and discussion in class between professors and other students	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
36. Understand and use spoken descriptions or stories instead of written ones	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
37. Understand class/group discussion	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
38. Understand longer talks in English in my major	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

39. Please write in the number of reading and writing assignments that you think are assigned to do each week or each semester.

- e. Total number of pages of reading assignments each week:_____
- f. Total number of research papers you have to write each semester:_____, average number of pages each paper:_____.
- g. Number of short reports/assignments you have to write:_____
- h. Number of other writing assignments:_____, please tell what kind: _____

English Preparation

Please tell how important you think the following language skills are to your university success and what ability you have in these language skills by circling the specific numbers.

	Importance to Success					English Ability Now				
	Low		Moderate		High	Poor		Fair		Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
m. Basic English ability (e.g., vocabulary, grammar)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
n. English skills in your major (i.e., language in your field)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
o. Listening understanding (e.g., to lectures and discussions)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
p. Speaking ability (e.g., class discussions and presentations)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
q. Reading understanding (e.g., textbooks, journal articles)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
r. Writing ability (e.g., reports and papers)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
s. Reading speed	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
t. Writing under time stress	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
u. Writing for your major in correct scientific styles	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
v. Communication skills with professors and fellow students	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
w. Note-taking skills	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
x. Knowledge of cultural parts of English language (e.g., idioms)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

General English Ability to do these Activities:

	Importance to Success					English Ability Now				
	Low		Moderate		High	Poor		Fair		Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
i. Participate in social situations (e.g., make polite conversation, give opinions on general subjects)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
j. Travel and visit places of interest (e.g., ask for directions to a place, order tickets and ask for information)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
k. Shop and use services (e.g., discuss services or things you need, make spoken or written complaints)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
l. Get medical help and use health services (e.g., explain what is wrong for sickness or if you get hurt, read medical forms & papers)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
m. Eat & drink in public places (e.g., read menu, make food orders)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
n. Use media for entertainment and information (e.g., TV, radio, movies)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
o. Write personal and business letters (e.g., write personal and business letters, job application letters)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
p. Talk with officials (e.g., read forms and instructions, explain or give reasons face to face with officials)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

What kind of English school/education did you have before you started your program now (e.g., studied English in school/college, had tutoring, had intensive English training before this in the United States)? _____

How long have you studied English before now? _____ years _____ months

Did you take any of the following tests in order to be accepted and placed in your present program? If yes, what were your scores?

TOEFL (Total) _____ (Listening) _____ (Structure) _____ (Reading) _____

GRE (Total) _____ (Verbal) _____ (Quantitative) _____ (Analytical) _____

Background Information

1. Age: _____
2. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Your Native Language: _____
4. Your Native Country: _____
6. Your Major/Field of Study: _____
6. University Level You Will Be Going Into: ☐ Bachelors Degree ☐ Masters Degree ☐ Doctoral Degree ☐ Non-degree
7. How long have you been studying in this English program?: _____ years _____ months
8. How long were you in the U.S. before you came to this English program?: _____ years _____ months
12. How long did you study in your major/professional field before you came to the U.S.?: _____ years _____ months
13. How long did you work in your major/professional field before you came to the U.S.?: _____ years _____ months

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for answering the questions and thank you very much for your help.

APPENDIX E:
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

International Student Interview Protocol

The purposes of this interview are to find information about:

- 1) the typical university assignments you will need to do for your major/professional field,
- 2) university language needs to complete these university assignments, and
- 3) university language problems.

1. What major will you be studying or what job are you doing now?:
2. How long have you studied English in your life?: _____years _____months
3. What are some typical university assignments that you think you will need to do in your major?
4. What problems do you have now in your English program?
5. How many pages do you read every week for all your class assignments? Is it difficult for you to do that and stay with the rest of your class?
6. Which is the hardest for you- English for your job, English for the university, or English in social situations? Why?
7. How important is English ability to you for doing well in your major in the university?
8. At what degree do think your English ability is now (very good, good, fair, poor)?
9. At this time, can you work as well in English as in your native language in the university? Why or why not?
10. What specific language skills (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking) do you think will be the most important for your major in the university?
11. Do you think your language ability is good enough to do university work in your major? If not, what specific language skills do you think you need to study more?
12. Where did you study English before you came here (school, tutor, friends, family, etc.)? Was it enough for you to begin the university without more English education? Why or why not?
13. Usually, would you say that you are a good student in school (any school)? Why, or why not?

APPENDIX F:
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION FORM

International Student Information Form

The purpose of this information form is to find out about: the typical university assignments you will need to do for your major/professional field, university language needs to complete these university assignments, and university language problems.

1. What major will you be studying or what job are you doing now?:
2. How long have you studied English in your life?: _____years _____months
3. What are some typical university assignments that you think you will need to do in your major?
4. What problems do you have now in your English program?
5. How many pages do you read every week for all your class assignments? Is it difficult for you to do that and stay with the rest of your class?
6. How important is English ability to you for doing well in your major in the university?
7. At what degree do think your English ability is now (very good, good, fair, poor)?
8. What specific language skills (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking) do you think will be the most important for your major in the university?
9. Where did you study English before you came here (school, tutor, friends, family, etc.)?
10. Usually, would you say that you are a good student in school (any school)? Why, or why not?

APPENDIX G:
PERMISSION LETTERS TO USE INSTRUMENTS- DR. XU AND DR.
OXFORD

From: "Ming Xu" <MXU@MAIL.NYSED.GOV>
To: <mfishkin@mail.ucf.edu>
Date: 3/13/03 3:22PM
Subject: Re: permission to use survey

Dear Monica,

You have my permission to use the survey instrument and interview questions that I developed for my doctoral dissertation in 1990. My mailing address is:

Ming Xu
Education Building Annex, Room 364
New York State Education Department
Albany, NY 12234

Good luck with your research.

Ming Xu, Ph.D.
Associate, Research and Evaluation Unit
New York State Education Department
518-486-2260

>>> "Monica Fishkin" <mfishkin@mail.ucf.edu> 03/13/03 02:56PM >>>

Dear Dr. Xu,

Thank you for helping with this. If you could please acknowledge receipt of this message, it would be great.

What I need from you (to make my advisor and myself very happy) is a message stating that you give me permission to use the survey instrument and interview questions that were in your dissertation of 1990. Also, would you please give me your address, so I could send you an envelope for an official letter I can use in my dissertation.

This is truly wonderful of you.

Thank you.

Monica Fishkin
Center for Multilingual Multicultural Studies
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida
(321)823-0884

I may also contact you from my home email, which is jfishkin@cfl.rr.com

Jeff and Monica Fishkin

From: "Rebecca Oxford" <rebecca_oxford@yahoo.com>
To: "Jeff and Monica Fishkin" <jfishkin@cfl.rr.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 15, 2003 2:34 AM
Subject: Permission

Dear Monika:

I am writing from the UAE, where I am doing some lecturing. Yes, you certainly have my permission to use the SILL for your dissertation research. My only stipulation or request is that you would be willing to send me a copy of the dissertation when it is complete. Would that be OK with you? That way I can keep up with SILL research around the world, and I often learn a great deal from it.

Let me know if this is suitable to you. My best mailing address is at home: 4007 Beechwood Road, University Park, Maryland 20782.

Let me know how your research progresses. What other variables besides strategy use are you looking at in your research design? There is much need to consider proficiency and motivation, but I would like to hear what your own interests are.

Warm wishes,

Rebecca Oxford

Jeff and Monica Fishkin <jfishkin@cfl.rr.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Oxford,
I am a doctoral student and ESL teacher at University of Central Florida, and I want to use the SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learners) in a study for my dissertation. I need your permission or I will not be able to continue beyond the proposal phase at my my university.

Would you please send a reply by email giving me your permission to use the SILL? I will send on an envelope later for a formal letter for my dissertation. This would help me so much. You also helped a colleague of mine, Ekaterina Goussakova, who also used the SILL in her research. Thank you in advance.

Monica Fishkin
Center for Multilingual Multicultural Studies
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Rebecca Oxford, Ph.D.
Professor, Second Language Ed. Program, College of Education
2311 Benjamin Building
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742 USA
rebecca_oxford@yahoo.com OR ro38@umail.umd.edu
Work Phone: 301/405-8157

3/15/2003

APPENDIX H:
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Informed Consent Form

Dear Student:

My name is Monica Fishkin and I am a graduate student working under the supervision of faculty member, Dr. Kay W. Allen. You are being asked to participate in a study designed to gather information on the effect of peer advisors on ESL students' performance of academic tasks. This research project was designed solely for research purposes and no one except the researcher will have access to any of your responses. All responses will be kept confidential. Your identity will be kept confidential using a numerical coding system. With your permission, the research session will be audio- and video-taped. Only the researcher will have access to the tape. At the end of this research (by Aug., 2004), the tapes will be erased.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question(s) that you do not wish to answer. Please be advised that you may choose not to participate in this research, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Non-participation will not affect your grade. There are no direct benefits or compensation for participation. Your participation will take between approximately 2-5 hours of your regularly scheduled class time. There are no anticipated risks associated with participation.

If you have any questions or comments about this research, please contact Monica Fishkin at (407) 823-0884 or her faculty supervisor, Dr. Kay W. Allen, College of Education, Orlando, FL; (407) 823-2037. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCFIRB office, University of Central Florida Office of Research, Orlando Tech Center, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 207, Orlando, FL 32826. The phone number is (407) 823-2901.

Sincerely,
Monica Fishkin

_____ I have read the procedure described above.

_____ I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

_____/_____
Participant Date

_____/_____
Witness Date

APPENDIX I:
PEER ADVISING SESSIONS CHECKLISTS

Peer Advising Sessions

Reading

- Problems:* Not enough vocabulary
Reading speed
Load- too many pages per week
Some reading is not supported by lectures
Understanding idioms
Losing attention while reading- I start to read and by the time I get to the end, I forget the beginning.
Too many professional terms/specialized vocabulary/jargon
- Important:* Reading is necessary for research
Reading is necessary for academic study
One of the most necessary English skills for the university because there is so much reading for each class.
- Solutions:* Learn how to read faster- look for key words, main ideas
You don't have to read as much if you understand the lecture
Find related articles to study (even in your own language) to help understand
Read anything in English- magazines, novels, internet, subtitles on movies, etc.
Read articles, books, etc., in your field before the university

General Advice

- Problems:* Tests and papers are very important in U.S. universities.
Grading is different in the U.S. than in other countries.
You can't study English anymore when you get to the university. You need to know it before you get there, but you can continue to study on your own. Keep learning.
Scheduling your time
Prerequisite classes are expensive, especially if you change your major when you get to college.
Money is a problem for all ESL students. Classes are expensive.
Theory is easy, but real-life English is hard, but for some people, it's the opposite.
I have to work harder than the other students.
Socio-cultural knowledge is hard. I don't always know what to do in situations.
The college syllabus is very important.
Reading takes me 3 times as long as an American student.

Solutions: Work on vocabulary
 Use the university facilities (e.g., Writing Center, SARC, etc.)
 Speak English as much as possible outside class
 Your first university class should be in something you already know to
 give you confidence in your English and your environment.
 Ask classmates for help
 Ask your professor for help. That is why they have office hours.
 Tape record lectures. Listen to them again.
 Get a tutor.
 Keep close contact with classmates and your professor for information.
 Get in a study group
 Use the TA/GTA (teaching assistant) to answer questions.
 Organize your time so you can also have fun.

Peer Advising Sessions

Writing

- Problems:* Grammar
Time (especially taking tests)
Am I doing it right?
I have to write too fast. I make mistakes.
I don't have the vocabulary for my ideas.
Note-taking is hard. It goes too fast.
APA/MLA format for writing papers/specialized writing for certain fields (law, etc.)
I don't know what voice to write in (1st person-"I"?, 3rd person-"he"?)
Specific vocabulary/ jargon in my field
Using idioms correctly
- Important:* Writing is important for academic study.
Most of your grades come from writing assignments.
You need to give the professor what he/she wants.
- Solutions:* Use a tape recorder to help with taking notes.
Make friends with an American (good note-taker, somebody to read your writing before you turn it in)
Get a *Writer's Guide*- a book about correct format for papers (for English Comp. and especially for your master's degree)
Use the Writing Center
Write short, direct sentences. Remember to use correct grammar as you write.
Use the computer to correct spelling and grammar
Prepare (guess) questions and write answers before tests for practice.
Start writing a paper as soon as possible. You can't wait until the last minute like Americans can.
Type your papers on the computer. It's faster and you don't have to write everything over. You can move words around, use spell check and grammar check.
Organize your writing. Make a plan before you write.
Use keywords that professors are looking for (from lectures, reading)
Be sure to reread, revise, and edit your paper before turning it in. Read each word aloud to make sure you didn't leave any out.

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 - Scheduling your time
 - Prerequisite classes are expensive, especially if you change your major when you get to college.
 - Money is a problem for all ESL students. Classes are expensive.
 - Theory is easy, but real-life English is hard, but for some people, it's the opposite.
 - I have to work harder than the other students.
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- Solutions:*
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 - Ask classmates for help
 - Ask your professor for help. That is why they have office hours.
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Peer Advising Sessions

Listening

- Problems:* It's not my language.
They talk too fast for me to understand.
Other students use slang/idioms/references to culture (movies, TV, etc.) I don't understand.
Professor/student interaction
I have to pay more attention than other students.
Teachers have a bad accent in English. I can't understand their English.
- Important:* Listening is important for lectures.
I need to understand to ask questions.
It helps me to understand the ideas if I can listen well.
- Solutions:* Use a tape recorder, so you can listen to it again.
Check information in the textbook
Practice listening to English all the time.
Talk to friends from other countries (in English).
Sit in the front of the class. You can hear better and you don't get distracted.
Watch movies, TV, especially news programs, because the speakers se clear English.
Talk to people who don't know you to see if they understand you. Go to American places to find these people (restaurants, stores, bars, etc.)

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Peer Advising Sessions

Speaking

Problems: Vocabulary
Can they understand me?
Pronunciation/Accent
I'm not good. I feel uncomfortable speaking in English.
Panic/tongue-tied
Speaking- I have to do it right now! There is not a lot of chance for thinking.
Telling jokes is hard in English. I want to do this like other students do.

Important: Speaking is important to ask questions.
Class discussions
Presentations
To express and present my ideas, especially for group work

Solutions: Practice! Practice! Practice!
Listening with speaking to build vocabulary
For presentations- make a good Powerpoint. Have an American read and correct it before your presentation.
Volunteer- Then you can practice your English.
Go to the park and talk to old people. They love the company and will talk to anybody.
Don't be afraid or shy. Just speak. Do the best you can, but try to talk.
Take a speech class.
Go to Conversation Hour and participate.

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