



Adult Students' World Language, Literacy, and Culture Learning in a Nonformal Setting: SOTL Engagement



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Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine seven adult students' learning about world languages, literacies, and cultures in the World Language and Culture Program (WLCP).

The following research questions guided this study: 1) What did adult students learn in the WLCP? 2) How did adult students learn in the WLCP?

Materials and methods

This study was conducted in a large western land-grant university during the spring semester of 2019.

Data sources included 21 interviews, 14 observations with 14 field notes, and 14 artifacts. Data were collected over four months (12 weeks, 2 days per week, an hour per class) during the spring semester of 2019. I employed thematic analysis to make sense of the data and construct themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

Drawing on the Deep Approach conceptual lens, I used Tochon's Interpret Analyze Present Interact (IAPI) curriculum model as a template to identify meaningful, personalized, and engaged learning. Specifically, this study's focus was on IAPI's two integrative components crucial in developing language and literacy proficiency, ACCESS and VOICE.

Results

The findings revealed two themes related to the research questions:

What students learned?	How students learned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everyday language and literacy practices (reading, writing, listening, and speaking within contextualized situations merging the IAPI curriculum model) ○ Aspects of cultural practices (e.g., geography, religion, traditions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Independent practice ○ Peer collaboration ○ Instructional scaffolding

Everyday Language and Literacy Practices		
Reading	Speaking	Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ letters in words ○ words in basic sentences and expressions ○ phrases in expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ basic phrases ○ words to describe actions or emotions ○ conversational phrases ○ colloquial expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ basic sentences ○ short essays

How Participants Learned	
Individual Practice	Meaningful Interactions with Peer and Instructional Scaffolding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ read verbalized phrases, ○ rehearsed verb conjugations, ○ wrote words, phrases, sentences, essays ○ conducted grammar translations ○ created an oral dialogue within a situational context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ collaborated (e.g., pair-share activities, learning from peers) ○ received oral and written feedback, ○ received scaffolded instruction (demonstrations and examples)

Conclusions

The seven adult students in this study reported that the WLCP played an influential and indispensable role in learning world languages, literacies, and cultures because the target languages were learned from native speakers.

This study sheds light on the central process of adult students' learning. It reveals that the WLCP involved experiential and contextualized learning under the guidance of natives peaking teachers who brought real-life experiences to the classroom (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). Rogoff (2014) suggests that students learn best within meaningful contexts where they are able to self-regulate their learning and work closely with their peers.

Further research will capture quantitatively experiences and perspectives of participants from different nonformal settings.

Acknowledgments

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Literature cited

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