

A modified Sustained Silent Reading program in beginning adult ESOL classes

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Practitioners: Portland Community College

Research associates: Portland State University

NCSALL Adult ESOL Lab School

The Lab School: A National Labsite for Adult ESOL

A partnership between
Portland State University &
Portland Community College

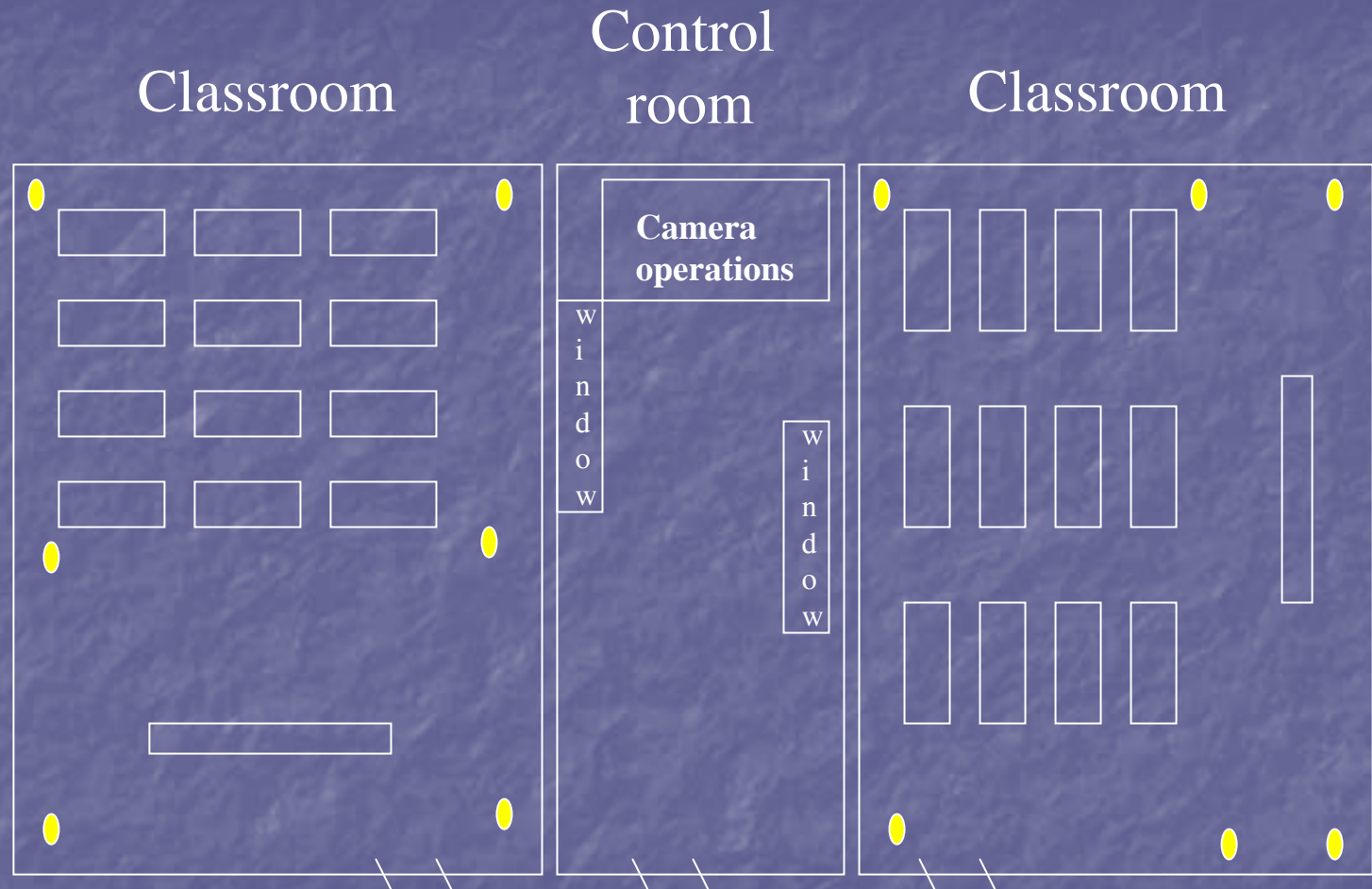


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Institute of Education Sciences

Lab School Setting

- Classes are a regular part of Portland Community College (PCC) and their Adult ESL program
- PSU site in downtown location, close to public transportation, convenient for ESOL students
- Two dedicated classrooms equipped with 6 ceiling microphones
- Adjoining observation/technology room
- Adjacent research/practitioner office space

Layout of classrooms and observation/recording space



Structure of the Lab School

- Paired classes facilitate random assignment of students to experimental and control classes
- Digital recording of classrooms allows for detailed coding and analysis of second language acquisition and pedagogy
- Custom software allows researchers and practitioners to select and stream across the Web examples of second language acquisition and classroom practices

Lab School Data Sources

- Classroom data
 - Experimental
 - Observational
 - Teacher reflections
- Administrative data
 - Advancement
 - Hours of instruction
 - Persistence
- Labsite Student Study
 - Standardized assessments
 - Yearly in-home interviews
 - Video sample

A modified Sustained Silent Reading program in beginning adult ESOL classes

- Part 1 – the reading experiment: methodology and findings (35 minutes)
 - Question/answer (10 minutes)
 - Part 2 – reflections and implications (35 minutes)
 - Question/answer (10 minutes)
- <15 minute break>
- Discussion

A modified Sustained Silent Reading program in beginning adult ESOL classes

- Why an experiment?
- Why *this* experiment?

A modified Sustained Silent Reading program in beginning adult ESOL classes

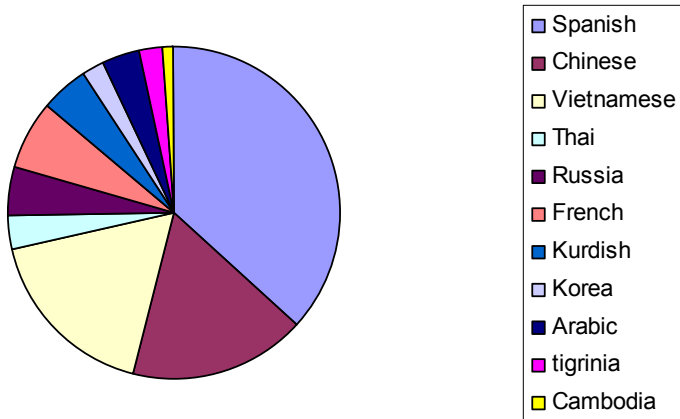
- Practitioner/researchers
- Students
- Design – Experimental and Control groups
- Assessment measures

Subjects: students

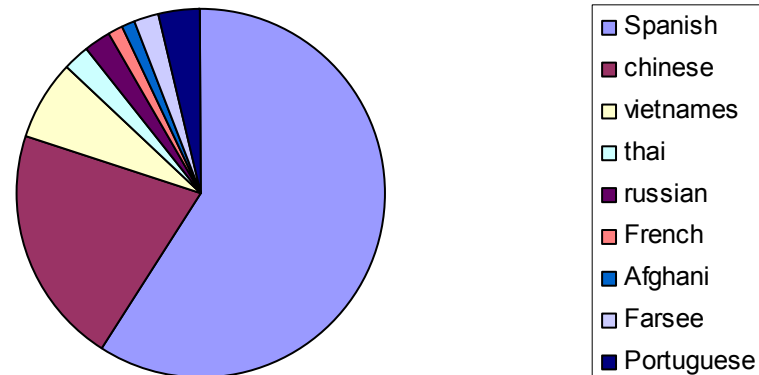
- n=182 (experimental + control)
- Portland Community College's Levels A & B -- beginning-level (SPL 0-3) adult ESL students
- Years of education 0 to 19 years
- Ages 17-77
- Primary language groups – Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese

Student Languages

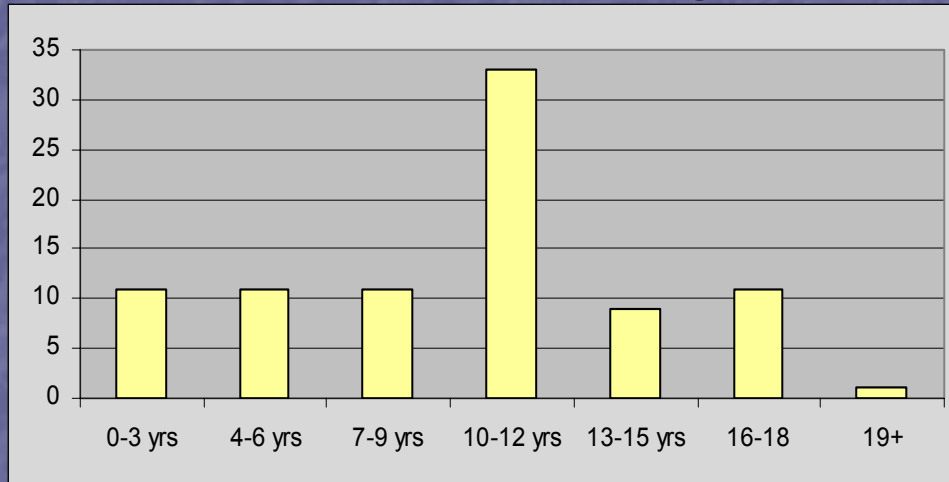
Language_Control group



Language_Experimental condition

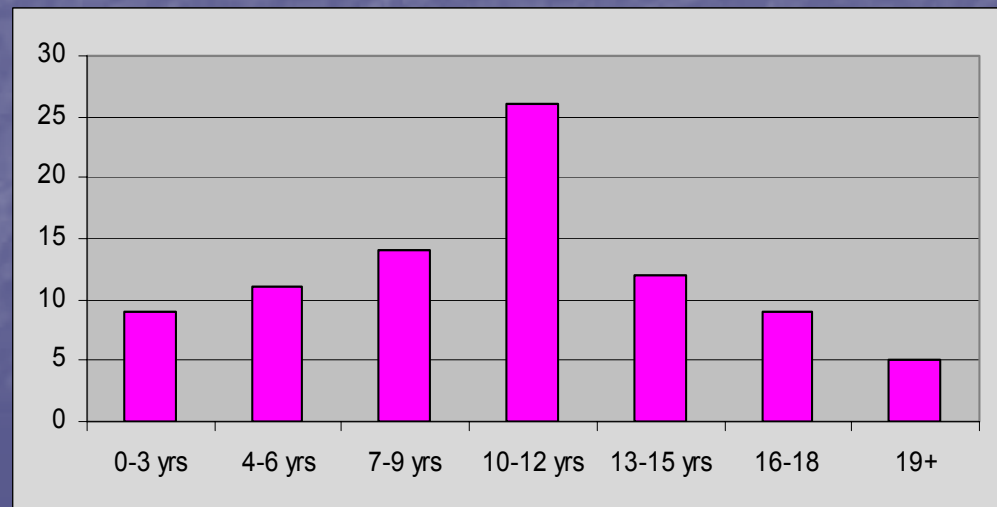


Students' years of prior education (by condition)

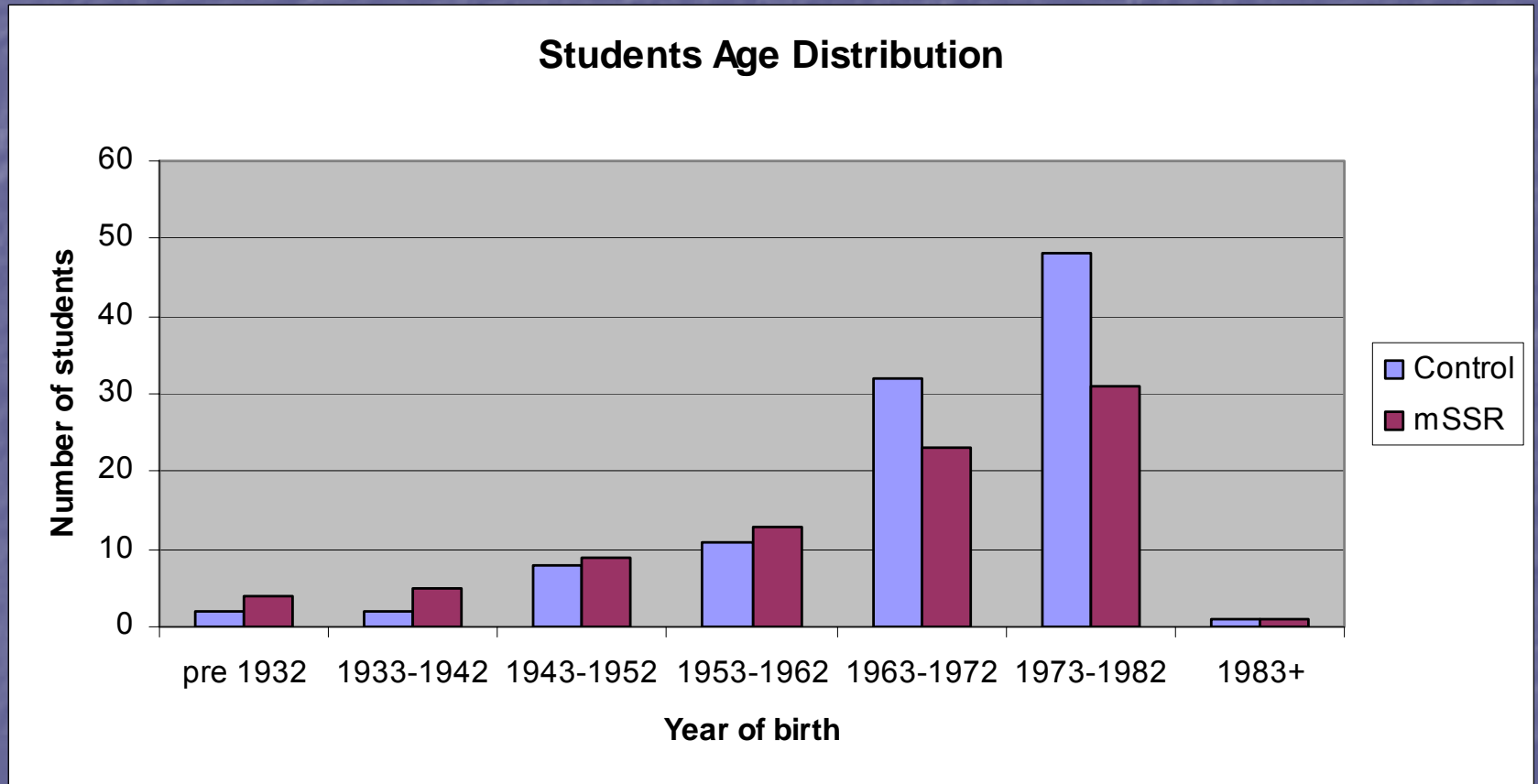


Years of prior
education –
Control condition

Years of prior
education –
Experimental
condition



Students' age distribution



The reading experiment

- To compare modified sustained silent reading (MSSR) with existing (“control”) methods of teaching reading to beginning adult ESL learners (Levels A and B)
- Students randomly assigned to a condition and remained in that condition for one year
- Paired classes (experimental, control)
2 level A classes and 2 level B classes.
- Two teachers alternated conditions after 6 months

Research design: the class schedule

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Fall 2002</u>	<u>Winter 2003</u>	<u>Spring 2003</u>	<u>Summer 2003</u>
Modified SSR	Level A	Level A	Level A	Level A
Modified SSR	Level B	Level B	Level B	Level B
Traditional	Level A	Level A	Level A	Level A
Traditional	Level B	Level B	Level B	Level B

- Dominique Brillanceau
- Sandra Banke

Research design: the classes

- Year-long experiment (four 10-week terms)
- Two 3-hour class sessions/week (6 hours total)
- First 90 minutes of each class – integrated skills instruction as per PCC's curriculum
- Last 60 minutes – designated treatment (traditional reading approach or modified Sustained Silent Reading)

“Experimental” condition: Modified Sustained Silent Reading

- student selected own reading material Students spent
- 30 minutes of silent reading
- Student pair: oral “post-reading activity”
- Students completed a reading log

“Control” condition: Existing instructional practices

- **Reading materials selected by the teacher**
- **Pre-reading typically included:**
 - **Schema activation exercises**
 - **Structure, vocabulary, & phonics exercises**
- **Silent and/or choral reading**
- **Reading follow-up typically included:**
 - **Comprehension checking activities**
 - **An application to the learners’ own lives**
 - **Writing (e.g. response journals)**

Video clips

Lab School Data Sources

- Classroom data

- Experimental
- Observational
- Reflective

- Administrative data

- Advancement
- Hours of instruction
- Persistence

- Labsite Student Study

- Standardized assessments
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Results - Administrative data

1. How long students stayed in the program (persistence)
2. The highest level achieved by each student (advancement)
3. The hours of classroom instruction

PCC program features

- Four level adult ESOL program (A-D)
 - Serves SPL 1-6 (CASAS listening 180-235)
 - Multiple sites at which students can attend day and evening classes
 - Year-round program of 4 ten-week quarters
- Placement & advancement
 - New students are placed based on CASAS Survival skills listening test
 - Students are advanced to the next program level based on instructor assessment of student performance of course outcomes

Results:

Number of quarters attended

Students in this experiment started in the lowest of the two levels of instruction

- Level A
- Level B

How long students stayed in ESL classes (i.e. persistence)

- No statistical difference between the two conditions
- Students stayed in classes about the same number of quarters (~ 1-2 quarters)

Results:

Highest level attained (i.e. advancement)

At the end of each quarter, students either:

1. Quit the program
2. Stayed in the same level
3. Advanced a level

18 months after the start of the experiment, students could have completed up to six quarters of ESL courses and had the potential to move through the ESL program and into the highest level

Results:

Highest level attained (i.e. advancement)

- Again, no statistical difference in highest level attained
- Range of classes to which students advanced similar across conditions
- Participation in experiment neither impeded nor enhanced students' advancement through the PCC program

Results: Hours of instruction

- No statistical difference between the two conditions
- Average ~ 60 hours of instruction for both conditions

Results (forthcoming) Labsite Student Study TESOL 2005

- How much language development each student experienced
 - Is being assessed through annual in-home interviews (LSS). Second interviews completed by December 31, 2004.
 - Assessments on vocabulary, oral language and literacy

Questions/Answers

Reflections -- Dominique

- The advantage of going first: designing the intervention
- sense of ownership
- by 2nd term, observations pointed out to weaknesses of SSR for low level readers.
- Concept of "package"
- the 3rd and 4th term were control condition "package"

Audio file - Dominique

Reflections -- Sandra

- Pluses and minuses of going second
- Effects on instruction and classroom community
- Changes in beliefs about nature of teaching

Audio file - Sandra

Implications - research

- Imposition of experimental design changes the control condition into an experiment as well
- Despite constant monitoring of experimental design, implementation inconsistent even in the best of laboratory environments
- Teaching and learning as a transformative process

Implications -- practice

- Authentic context for practice of reading skills learned in class
- Quiet, structured time to read
- Opportunity for interaction and learning from self-selected text
- Post-reading sharing provides discourse practice in *authentic* setting