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Full Immersion's Effects on Students' Scores in a Secondary German Classroom



Emily Stillman
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Introduction

With this action research project I intend to improve the scores of my German II: Pre-IB students through the gradual introduction of full immersion instruction. Students' project scores, quiz scores, and journal entries were evaluated and compared to previous scores and to the control group's scores in order to determine if full immersion days, in which only the target language is spoken, ultimately helped my students to score higher on their graded work. I hoped to not only improve test scores, but also to improve the fluency and grammatical accuracy of my students.

Literature Review

The research that is available suggests that there are many benefits to introducing full immersion instruction into a foreign language classroom. The benefits include closing the learning gap between students from different social and cultural backgrounds and between students with differing ability levels. There is also abundant research providing evidence that a set of bilingual instructional strategies would best benefit student learning. With a mix of research both supporting and contradicting the idea that full immersion will help to raise student scores, the topic is proven to be a well researched and a greatly disputed topic among professionals.

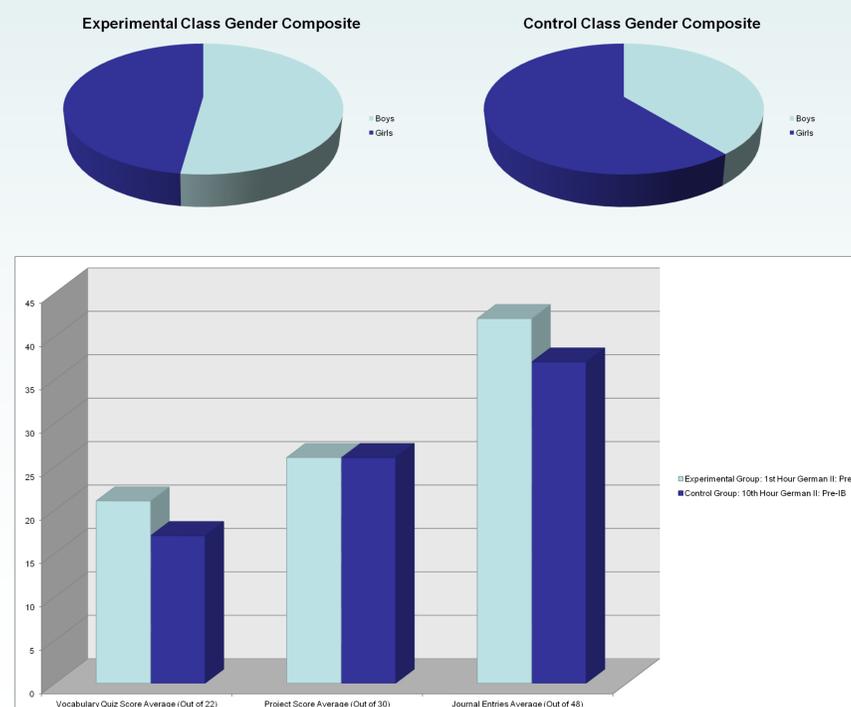
Research Question

Will full immersion days, in which only the target language is spoken, will ultimately help my students to score higher on their graded work.

Methodology

As a control group, I have another German II: Pre-IB class that received the same instruction, but without the full immersion days. Data was collected through unit project scores, chapter quizzes, and journal entries. Their class' quiz, project, and journal scores served as a comparison to the data that was collected in the experimental group. Unit seven was observed and data was collected from their project, quizzes, and journal entries. The unit consisted of roughly two to three weeks. They had one project, one to two quizzes, and four to six journal entries within the two to three week span.

Chart /Graphic



Conclusions

After the collection of data from this research project, it can be concluded that there is a correlation between the use of the target language and student scores. The causation cannot be determined due to various extenuating factors such as school environment or student participation.

As the scores for written work were significantly higher for the experimental group, it may suggest that there is a higher correlation between the use of the target language and written scores, but no causation can be determined.

As all of the experimental group's scores were equal to or greater than the control group's scores, it can be determined that there was no negative effect on students' scores when implementing more target language instruction into the classroom.

Implications

Impact on Student Participants

This action research supports the idea that greater use of the target language will not deter student learning. Therefore, this project helped students to gain a new learning experience in German.

Impact on Me as a Teacher Education Candidate

As a future teacher, I will use this action research within the classroom by implementing full immersion within the classroom, if not entirely, at least periodically. I do have further questions about how students' abilities in speaking and writing are affected by immersion and if there are any major differences.

Impact on the Field of Education and Other Teachers at the School

I believe that this study has changed my understanding of teaching and student learning in that I understand that there are many different ways to teach that may benefit students.