

M.A. Project Application
College of Education
California State University, San Bernardino

**Registration information will be
filled in below after application
is approved:**

Please register via TRACS for:
ETEC 699 - Section _____
Call # _____

Note: Permission is required to enroll in ETEC 699 (Master's Project). To obtain permission this application must be completed. You must obtain the signatures of your first and second readers. In most cases, the first reader will be your assigned program advisor. Submit completed application to ETEC support personnel in Chaparral Hall 102.

Name: Robert J. Miller

Social Security # XXX-XX-XXXX

Address: 31-XXX Northwood Road
Desert Hot Springs, CA 92241-8123

Home Phone: 760 XXX XXXX

Work Phone: 760 XXX XXXX

Estimated Quarter of Project Completion: Summer 2006

Proposed Title of Project: An Innovative Approach to Grammar Instruction in the High School Language Arts Classroom.

Please give a brief description of proposed project:

This proposal is an effort to ascertain whether specific, non-traditional grammar instruction can help improve the writing style of students in a high school setting. State mandated graduation exams and standards tests both test students' knowledge of grammar and writing. Research shows that teaching grammar in the traditional way has no effect on improving student writing. Therefore, finding a way to teach grammar that will improve student writing is necessary. To conduct this study, the researcher will obtain a writing sample from the students prior to the beginning of the study, and a writing sample on the same writing prompt will be gathered at the conclusion of the study. The improvement in the complexity and maturity of the students' writing style, as measured by complete and complex sentence structure, will determine the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of the non-traditional grammar approach to improving writing.

Who will be studied?

The study will consist of the students in two English III classes at Indio High School. The number of students will be approximately 60, and the breakdown of boys to girls will be approximately equal. All students will be either 16 or 17 years of age. The majority of students come from low socio-economic households and are almost exclusively Latino in ethnicity.

Who is the target audience for this project?

The target audience is mainly the primary researcher. He wants to see if writing will improve in a meaningful way that still allows for the teaching of grammar, which is required if students expect to score well on the California state standards tests and on the SAT and ACT tests. A secondary audience would be the rest of the English department at the high school who would benefit in their classrooms also if this research yields positive results.

When will this study take place?

This study is planned for a four-week period ranging from approximately May 1, 2006, to June 1, 2006.

What results is the project going to produce?

The results from this project will be to determine if there is an improvement in the creation of more complete, complex sentences in the writing of the students. Specifically, the researcher will be hoping for a decrease in sentence boundary errors such as sentence fragments, and run-on sentences (including comma splices) and an increase in the number correctly written complex sentences per essay. Although the teaching of grammar cannot improve the content or the organization of a student's writing, this study hopes to show that targeted non-traditional grammar instruction can improve the style and maturity with which students can express the content of their writing.

How do you plan to produce the project?

Students will first be asked to respond to an essay prompt asking them to describe a controversial issue of importance to them. A team of English teachers (number to be determined later) will evaluate these essays at the high school; each essay will be read and scored by three different teachers. The readers will be evaluating the essays in three areas: number of sentence fragments, number of run on sentences, and the frequency of subordination. After a four-week course of non-traditional grammar instruction that focuses on methods of using grammar to improve student writing, there will be a post-study essay identical to the pre-study essay (e.g. the prompt will ask students to describe a controversial issue of importance to them). The same team of teachers at Indio High School will evaluate these essays, and they will be evaluating the essays in the same three areas. The difference in the results of the essays at the end of the study will be compared to the results of the essays given at the start of the study to determine the effectiveness of the non-traditional grammar approach on improving student writing.

First Reader:

Second Reader:

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Printed Name

Department Chair's Signature & Date

Signature

Date

Distribution: white, Student; yellow, First Reader; pink, MA Project File.