Immersion Learning at Aphasia Camp: Analyzing Student Video Reflections

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The Importance of Immersion Learning

- NSSE data on immersion experiences:
  - The earlier the better (prior to specific content courses)
  - Leads to better retention and performance in subsequent content courses
  - Evidence for senior capstone experiences (synthesis & reflection)
  - Important for integrative learning – combining non-credit bearing experiences (such as immersion) with coursework/credit bearing
  - Dispel misconceptions
  - Cultural competence
  - Service learning – community-based

Immersion Learning Research

- Extends & fosters counter-learning
- Fosters commitment to future community work and activism (Austin et al., 2000).
- More than just geographical cultures – sharing experienced culture associated with disease/impairment (St. Clair & McInerny, 1999; Zorn, 1996; Ryan et al., 2000).
- Learning gains through immersion are dependent upon amount/quality of pre-training (Austin et al., 2000).

Immersion Learning at Aphasia Camp

- Based upon coding scheme by Hoeppner, Clark, Sather, & Knutson, 2012

- "Today was a really great experience. I communicated with some people who have more severe aphasia, so I actually got to practice [emphasize] some of the communication techniques that we’ve been working on in, um, our prep sessions."

- "Yeah! And it was a great time [smiles] so once again I’m just um, gonna take all the experiences with me and ya know, have this experience now and use it in my future and ya know, as a resource to look back to and make connections with."

- "I’ve had a good time seeing some of the students who have been here before some of the older students, using some of their communication strategies with the campers. Um, I’ve learned a lot from them just from observing them and from seeing how they interact with the students. Some of them are just really good at it and I can just tell that they are going to be really, good speech pathologists, so that’s really cool to see as well just being a junior and watching the seniors."

- "So, um, I don’t know, just a really positive experience today. I feel like I’m learning to communicate with people with aphasia in a lot more of an effective way, I guess? Um, so I’m hoping that I continue this into the rest of the weekend."

- "Um, and then I went and helped out at archery today as well, so a lot of the people that really loved it and loved to do the shooting, um they went out there and did it again."

Implications

- Students who serve as Aphasia Camp staff experience a number of learning experiences
- These learning experiences align with previous research about immersion experiences in other disciplines and prior research findings from Aphasia Camp experiences
- Students reflect upon a number of other experiences, which are yet to be fully examined
- Video reflections elicit some information consistent with past research of written reflections and small group debriefings
- Video reflections may facilitate different types of statements, given a forum for free-flowing thought

Future Directions

- Complete alternative open coding of reflections to express any other learning outcomes not captured by the a priori coding or constrained by existing categories
- Sort statements by student-reflectors and day of camp to examine evidence for progression in reflection depth, content, and perspectives
- Validate a priori and open coding through a blinded coder who is not involved in the camp implementation
- Compare exam scores of students in the Aphasia course who attended Aphasia Camp with those who did not

Data Collection

I. Students reflected each evening via iPad
II. IRB approval was granted to examine videos as archival data sets
III. Student researchers transcribed 58 video reflections (20 students during the three day camp)

Procedures & Coding Methods

- Transcribed videos were reviewed by an independent research assistant to remove identifying information (student names, camper names, and anything that identified the day of camp)
- Transcripts were segmented into codeable statements
- Statement boundaries were based on content rather than punctuation
- Multiple ideas in the same segment were kept together to avoid loss of meaning or intent
- Statements were coded according to a priori categories established by a previous camp immersion article (Hoeppner, Clark, Sather, & Knutson, 2012)

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