Language Orientation and Student Success in Online Learning Environments: A Case Study

by

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ABSTRACT

With the increase of academic courses moving to online instruction (Blake, 2011), it is only natural language education also would make the leap to online platforms. Following Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory (SCT), the purpose of this study is to test the differential effect of the presence of a language learning orientation module in online environments as well as exploring the possible variables affecting student success in module and non-module containing courses. The *effectiveness* of the module is measured by triangulating *student success* as defined and tested by Kerr et al. (2006) using their quantitative TOOLS (Test of Online Learning Success) instrument and collecting qualitative data in the form of journal entries and surveys. Data were collected from 1st year university Spanish courses from both a control group (no module use), as well as an experimental group (module use). Case study data from both control and experimental groups showed trends related to student success and may help to shed light on the pedagogical implications of language orientation modules in both online and face-to-face language learning environments while providing avenues for future research designs to explore the effectiveness of the aforementioned modules in online environments.

Keywords: language orientation module, student success, online learning

DEDICATION

... for “Nana”

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation Term

1. CALL……..…..Computer Assisted Language Learning
2. DL…….……..…...Distance Learning
3. F2F…….……...….Face-to-face
4. LOM…….……..Language Orientation Module
5. L2……...Second Language
6. MSLQ…….…….....Motivation Strategies for Learning Questionnaire
7. OL……Online Learning
8. OLL……Online Language Learning
9. OLS……Online Learning Success
10. OSO…….……Online Student Orientation
11. SLA……Second Language Acquisition
12. SOCC…….…….....Sense of Classroom Community
13. TOOLS…….…….....Test of Online Learning Success
14. ToT…….……...……...Time on Task
15. ZPD……...……..Zone of Proximal Development

Introduction

With the increase of technology in our everyday lives, it is inevitable that teaching and education would eventually make the leap to online platforms. Blake (2011) states "[t]he growth rate for online courses averaged 19% over this last decade, while total enrollments have only grown by 1.5%; these trends in favor of online learning show no signs of abating" (p. 20). Following this uncontrollable shift, it is only natural that language learning also would make the transition to online environments. This of course creates a myriad of new issues related to pedagogy and teaching, however, some questions will continue to be just as prevalent in an online environment as in a face-to-face (F2F) environment. One such topic is how to prepare students for the language learning process.

The purpose of this case study is to test the differential effect of the presence of a language learning orientation module in online environments. The main objective will not be to measure the *effectiveness* of the individual components of the module, but rather the effectiveness of having a module versus its absence in similar courses. The effectiveness of the module will be measured by triangulating *student success* as defined and tested by Kerr et al. (2006) using an adapted version of their TOOLS (Test of Online Learning Success) instrument and collecting qualitative data in the form of journal entries. This qualitative/quantitative analysis was carried out using data collected from both a control group (no module use), as well as a test group (module use). Data were collected from first year university Spanish courses in an effort to see what effects orientation modules have on student success.

The following pages will present a review of literature containing the theoretical framework for this study (Vygotsky, 1978), as well as a critical review of studies related to *Computer Assisted Language Learning* (CALL) and *online language learning* (OLL). Also, an examination of studies related to the effectiveness of language orientation programs as well as student success in online learning will be elaborated. Next, the research questions will be presented, followed by the methodology, which will detail the participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis of the present study. A discussion of the results of each case will follow with a synthesis of results and discussion relating all case study data back to the research questions and review of literature. Finally, the paper will conclude with a summary of findings and their theoretical and pedagogical implications in addition to analyzing the limitations of this research and suggestions for future research.

Review of the literature

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory (SCT) has long been a focal starting point in many language-related studies due to language's interactive nature. Research on online language learning has become more prevalent since the turn of the century due to a boom in online course offerings and the challenges that present themselves in this new context (Blake, 2011, 2013). On the one hand, the issue of preparing students for online language learning is an issue that has received little attention in the literature. On the other hand, several studies (Bozarth et al., 2004; Cho, 2012; Scagnoli, 2001) have explored the creation of general online language orientation programs to help increase student success which is defined as a "combination of attending class regularly, being internally motivated, setting goals, and having certain learning styles [which] are related to student

achievement (Kerr et. al, 2006, p. 92). Student success and online learning has been investigated (Matuga, 2009; Stavredes & Herder, 2013; Ushida, 2005; Yang et al., 2011) to shed light on the factors that contribute to the former in the latter. The following paragraphs will review this literature to form a base for the present study.

Sociocultural Theory and Language Learning

Vygotsky's (1978) SCT forms the theoretical framework for this study. His theories on social interaction are divided into two main areas. First, he posits that humans learn first on the social level, followed by the individual level:

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57)

A second aspect relates to the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) which provides the learner with scaffolding to help them reach an area of understanding or skill that could not have been reached without interaction with a knowledgeable peer. Furthermore, Vygotsky argues that human mental functioning is a mediated process organized into signs, tools, activities, and concepts. To accomplish mediation, language use, organization and structure play key roles (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007). In more practical terms, developmental processes take place through involvement with cultural and linguistic formed settings. The module discussed in this research will act, in theory, as a mediating tool to provide the scaffolding participants will need to reach higher level skills necessary for effective online language learning.

Computer Assisted Language Learning and Online Learning

Blake (2011) explored trends in online language learning (OLL), which take place in web-facilitated, hybrid[1], or completely online courses. In the first decade of the 21st century, academic courses experienced sharp increases in online course offerings (19%), while total student enrollment only grew slightly (1.5%). Blake highlighted that this trend shows no sign of slowing down and cautioned that many people worry about the possible degrading effect that online education will have on our educational system. However, he suggested that many of the same problems are prevalent within our traditional F2Fteaching methods, such as variance in teaching style, information delivery, instructional design, and success rates.

Blake (2011) reviewed other studies that investigated the efficacy of online learning and cited Grgurovic (2007) as finding "that students who took all or part of their classes online performed better than those in traditional face-to-face learning environments ($p < .01$); furthermore, students involved in blended/hybrid learning environments did better than those in purely online courses ($p < .001$)" (as cited in Blake, 2011, p. 21). Blake suggested that the previous results showed a positive correlation between time on task (ToT) and language success. Interestingly, with such growth he noted that very few studies existed with respect to comparisons of OLL and traditional second language (L2) learning. However, he stated that two areas, *tutorial CALL* and *computer-mediated communication* (CMC), have received some attention within CALL. Richards et al. (2002) defines CALL as "the use of a computer in the teaching or learning

[1] Blake (2013) defined *blended/hybrid* courses as those "courses that combine in class instruction for part of the week together with independent work the rest of the time that is supported by a combination of dedicated CALL programs, internet activities, and/or online chatting" (p. 133).

of a second or foreign language" (p. 101). CALL may take the form of many activities which parallel learning through other media or are extensions or adaptations of print based activities.

Tutorial CALL is defined by Blake (2011) as being "very often associated with grammar exercises of the mechanical type or what people have often referred to in pejorative terms as 'drill-and-kill'" (p. 21). Nonetheless, he argued that these types of exercises have a place in L2 curriculum. Blake agreed that some students have expressed their appreciation for the more individualized orientation of tutorial CALL over social networking such as online chat platforms and discussion boards. Blake mentioned the importance of lexical acquisition especially as students progress from novice to intermediate levels:

> "[f]rom the students' perspective, then, developing an adequate L2 lexicon will not happen without some form of explicit instruction or graded reading program" (p. 22).

Computer mediated glosses seem to help with the complex, yet distinct areas of lexical acquisition and reading comprehension.

A second area of comparison between traditional L2 instruction and OLL is the use of CMC which is defined by Richards et al. (2002) as "using one or more computers to facilitate communication between two or more people" (p. 102). Blake (2011) separated this type of interaction into *asynchronous*[2] and *synchronous*[3] interaction.

[2] asynchronous communication is defined as "in COMPUTER ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING, communication that is not instantaneous and can be accessed and read by the recipient at a later time" (Richard et al., 2002, p. 37).

[3] synchronous communication is defined as "in COMPUTER ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING, this refers to communication that is instantaneous, with all participants logged onto their computers and sending messages in real time" (Richards et al., 2002, p. 533).

Examples of asynchronous communication include e-mails, blogs, and discussion boards, while synchronous platforms include video chat programs, and instant messaging services. Blake stated "[w]ith respect to L2 instruction, CMC allows instructors and learners to engage in meaningful negotiations with all of the positive benefits associated with scaffolding that have been reported in the literature for face-to-face exchanges" (p. 25). Blake felt that the research on this topic supported his statement and several approaches to CMC research involving SCT showed promise in bringing empirically sound results to support the use of CMC in OLL. Blake concluded that the field of CALL no longer concerns itself with which form (tutorial CALL or CMC) is better, but rather, which is most appropriate according to the objectives and context of the task. Furthermore, he supported the use of CALL as it quite possibly makes a connection with those students who have grown up in an age where technology is prevalent, with far reaching capabilities beyond single courses that could allow for many language learners to become lifelong language learners.

Blake (2013) also explored the emerging digital classroom and technology's role in foreign language learning. Blake stated the process of second language acquisition (SLA) is "both an intensive and time consuming activity" (p. 1), citing the Foreign Service Institute's (FSI) estimation that between 700 and 1,320 hours of instruction are needed to reach a high level of fluency. More specifically, Blake mentioned that romance languages, like Spanish, need around 600 hours to reach fluency which fails in comparison to the 150 hours of instruction a traditional L2 learner starting their studies at the postsecondary level would receive over the course of a four-year academic study. These graduating students barely reach FSI requirements for achieving proficiency in

romance languages, while students of other language families (i.e. Russian, Chinese, etc.) more often than not fail to reach proficiency. Blake affirmed that those students starting before the university level don't perform much better because there simply is not enough ToT.

To address the need of more ToT, Blake (2013) suggested the use of technology, especially in the absence of study abroad. However, he cautioned that technology is "merely a set of tools that are, for the most part, methodologically neutral" (p. 2) and elaborated that whether or not technology can help language learning and SLA depends on the curriculum of the program. Blake supported the use of CALL in terms of CMC as a means of interaction to accomplish language learning in a well-designed framework sought to help acquaint both experienced and inexperienced online language educators with the possible advantages of technology in these virtual contexts. He also attempted to dispel myths of the future of the ever increasingly technologically adept world in relation to language learning such as the false fear that technology will replace language teachers. With this particular myth, he cautioned that those teachers who do not adapt to technology will be replaced, but teachers will still be needed to run programs, create materials, train students, and facilitate learning.

Blake (2013) attended to issues in online learning such as web pages in service of L2 learning, a history of CALL, CMC, putting SLA theory into practice, using social networking and games for L2 learning, and distance learning (DL) for languages. The latter applies the theories and practices of CALL, CMC, and other technologies to accomplish learning in many different types of learning environments as in blended, hybrid, teleconferencing or virtual contexts. Blake noted the demand for these types of

courses come from both administrators and students alike. On the one hand, with the reduction of physical contact time hours, students are free to adapt their schedules to their work, and location needs. On the other hand, students often mistakenly want fewer hours as they believe it means less work when the contrary is the truth with online and hybrid courses often times requiring much more self-management and self-motivation than the students are willing to dedicate to their studies.

When exploring the difference between online and F2F language courses, Blake (2013) found no significant difference in comparative studies with online students sometime performing better, but never worse. However, he cautioned that several controlled and uncontrolled variables such as instructor, student, and task type will continue to be focal points of future research. In light of this, he suggested that language educators focus on creating the best curriculum design possible to account for contexts in which both technology is and is not used. Blake supported the Sloan Consortium's guidelines for offering online language instruction that varied from writing clear macro (i.e. syllabus) and micro (day-by-day) level objectives and providing help in both technical and context issues to featuring interaction and ensuring the quality of the online course is comparable to the traditional classroom. Most importantly, Blake stressed the importance of not only orienting students on how to learn online, but helping them redesign themselves as self-directed, independent learners.

Effectiveness of Orientation Programs

Despite the addressed need for online language orientation programs (Blake 2013), to this author's knowledge little literature is available on the effectiveness of such programs or even traditional language orientation programs. The following pages will

discuss orientation programs in general to draw connections to their possible relationship and application to language orientation programs.

Scagnoli (2001) investigated student orientations for online programs. She also noted a trend towards online learning and discussed issues related to the design of online orientation programs. Scagnoli called for the need for virtual environments that engage new online students and suggested the creation of online orientation programs for this student population that mimic F2F orientations as many higher education institutions already have established programs to help adult and high school students make smooth transitions into postsecondary education. Scagnoli affirmed "[o]rientation for online courses serve the same objectives as orientation for college, in that it can facilitate academic and social interactions, increase students' involvement, enhance the sense of belonging to a virtual learning community, and help retention" (p. 20). She also stressed the importance of the need for orientation programs to bring all students to a similar starting point to avoid as many delays, frustrations, and technological problems as possible.

Successful orientation programs need to account for the type of program, the courses offered, the technological applications used in the program, the social interaction in the virtual learning environment, the students' location/background, and the instructors used for the orientation (Scagnoli, 2001). The program, according to Scagnoli, deals with the special considerations that come with the creation of new programs versus the transfer of a pre-existing programs to an online format, while the course considerations take into account the change in delivery method of the required material. Both instructors

and students alike must know how to use the applications and technology required for the course as Scagnoli affirmed:

> "[a]n effective design of this orientation in the uses of applications would be crucial to the success of the virtual learning experience because this will set up the basis for student's confidence in the use of the internet for learning" (p. 22).

The technology related to online learning therefore changes the social interactions in this new virtual learning environment. Scagnoli suggested that orientation programs can help build a sense of community as students can find classmates during the preliminary stages of the orientation process. Furthermore, she affirmed the importance of meeting people in the academic and professional development of the student which can contribute to student success, and feelings of connection and commitment to the program.

Scagnoli (2001) also elaborated on the special considerations to keep in mind in the online orientation design process when dealing with student and instructor location, background, and previous knowledge. On the one hand, she noted that with the advent of distance learning programs, the student population may not only come from different states, but different countries with varied cultural practices. Therefore, she suggested that orientation programs not only deal with technology related issues, but also, with making students aware of cultural differences while promoting diversity and inclusiveness. On the other hand, the instructor population may also have varied online and intercultural experience that also can be addressed during the orientation program.

Three strategies for the types of orientation programs (face-to-face, online, and combined methodology) to be used in online programs were discussed by Scagnoli (2001). First, she explored the possibility of using face-to-face orientation programs as an effective, but unusual, means of preparing students to function in virtual learning

environments. Scagnoli noted that the technological level of students is easily identifiable in a face-to-face orientation in which case they can receive immediate feedback and hands on help. Second, she discussed entirely online orientation programs and stressed the importance of having "live help" as students' questions need to be addressed in the moment just as the face-to-face orientation program. Remote and online orientations can take place using websites, CD-ROM, or other applications. When students have limited availability, Scagnoli suggested a combined methodology of face-to-face and online components. Both programs can complement each other while focusing on the training of technological skills, providing group, team and course information. She concluded that traditional and modern elements of education must be accounted for in online orientation design.

Bozarth, Chapman, and LaMonica (2004) described the analysis undertaken to design a 1 credit-hour online orientation course for first-time online learning students. They carried out the study in response to a request from a client school within a university system that reported several key areas of need in their program at the time: (1) students are not trained properly because the training is more an afterthought, (2) students cannot apply the lesson directly with their home or office computer, (3) training approaches lack consistency and completeness, (4), students cannot request assistance with configuration issues, (5) students cannot test the technology in a realistic setting, and (6) the approach does not reach beyond campus and limits the number and types of students served. The client also suggested setting course expectations, online etiquette education, support resource inclusion, and student assessment of online learning readiness as potential topics for the new course. Bozarth et al. supported these identified

needs with a review of literature on online learning requirements and determined the need for the course could also be extended to other universities within the state university system in question.

Bozarth et al. (2004) carried out a needs analysis using a survey designed to shed light on key areas that both instructors and students alike might identify to include in the new orientation program. Primarily, they identified five target audience groups consisting of the client's instructors and students, the instructors and students of North Carolina State University, and students participating in online courses at the University of Phoenix to help triangulate responses. The questionnaires were distributed to one group of students and instructors at a time via discussion boards and email. Bozarth et al. also conducted an informal focus group with online instructors to gather additional information about key information identified by the instructors' questionnaire responses. The research team took note of responses from the focus group which was used to further extract data.

The instructor questionnaire was sent out to 53 individuals of which 17 responded. A common theme found by Bozarth et al. (2004) among instructor responses was the misconception among students on the amount of time they had to spend in their online course on a weekly basis and the level of perceived interaction and frequency of contact in many courses. Instructors also reported varied descriptions of basic technology skills from tasks such as opening and sending attachments, to using discussion boards and configuring browsers. In any case, instructors most expected students to enter their course with basic technology skills while at the same time reported that students' largest

problem area was also poor technology skills followed by poor time management and interaction skills.

Bozarth et al. (2004) reported students as wanting to know instructors' expectations before taking an online course as the most helpful aspect of an orientation course. The students also reported poor time management as the most difficult aspect of online learning, which mirrored instructors' perceptions of student problem areas. Conversely, the students did not highly identify technology skills as an area of concern when accounting for the difficulty of online courses. Furthermore, in regards to technology skills, the students reported difficulties with technology problems beyond their control such as inconsistent internet connection, system failures, and poorly designed coursework features. Bozarth et al. also found that despite reporting some problems with online learning only 20% of student respondents said they would take a free 1 credit-hour course.

Time commitment and management were determined by Bozarth et al. (2004) to be an area of need in online orientation courses as well as technology skill development despite the discrepancy of need and identification by both instructor and student groups. The research team also made online orientation recommendations based on reinforcing common course expectations, establishing realistic understanding of online courses, providing feedback, increasing instructor availability, and creating the option to test out of certain sections so students with different abilities can spend less time on components of the module in which they possess strong skills. Bozarth et al. concluded that online orientation programs should strive to meet the needs of its student and instructor population while preparing both students and instructors for the technological and time

demands of the course. Moreover, institutions should consider such orientation programs to form a mandatory part of the entire program as many students contradictorily expressed a lack of interest in participating in an online orientation course despite reported need.

Cho (2012) explored the developmental process of online student orientation (OSO) programs and affirmed despite a demonstrated need, there has been little research in the area. He explained the developmental process of an OSO program in terms of instructional system design (ISD) models starting with the analysis and design phases followed by the developmental and evaluation phases in higher education. Specifically, Cho described the process of the creation of an OSO program for a university in the American Midwest that, at the time of data collection, served over 3,200 students spanning 127 courses taught in 29 different departments.

The first phase, analysis, included needs assessment, task analysis, and context analysis which were accomplished through interviews, observations, and data analysis. The needs analysis portion determined the new OSO program wanted to address lack of understanding of online learning, Blackboard[4], and problems with technical issues while continually checking student readiness. To define the tasks students needed to learn, Cho also performed a task analysis reviewing 20 online course syllabi from the university in question encompassing a wide array of subject matter, as well as a thorough review of literature, and compared the readiness surveys of 8 existing OSO programs at other institutions. To complete the analysis phase, he observed 26 online courses and

[4] Blackboard is an online learning platform that allows instructors to place materials in a single virtual place. Students may have the ability to collaborate via discussion boards, access announcements, or even review material and take quizzes/tests.

categorized the online contexts as either highly or minimally interactive based on the existence and prevalence of key characteristics such as interactive discussion, review, and collaboration. As both contexts (highly and minimally interactive) were determined to exist, Cho chose to simulate both types of courses in the new OSO program. Furthermore, he identified possible learning resources, ways to interact between users, and the types of online learning tasks required.

The second phase, design, incorporated the data from the task analysis to create four modules of content for the OSO that were validated by faculty, administrators, and instructional technology researchers: (1) What is the nature of online learning?; (2) How to learn in Blackboard?; (3) What are the technological requirements to take an online course?; and (4) What learning skills and motivations are necessary for online learning? Within each module Cho designed topics which were further divided into subtopics. For example, module 1 was divided into four topics: Learning Environment, Assignments, Online Communication, and Learning Resources. Each topic within module 1 then had a range of subtopics such as "between students" and "between students-teacher" found under online communication.

The third phase, development, focused on the aesthetics and task practicality of the OSO program. Cho (2012) integrated the OSO program into Blackboard per the client university's request and included visual charts, examples, and screenshots of Blackboard. He avoided the use of identifiable information in all photos and primarily used the photos in module 2 "How to Learn in Blackboard" to increase authenticity. As the client university wanted to have quiz experience before taking an online course, quizzes were implemented as a common form of evaluation. The quizzes consisted of 35 self-efficacy

questions each, as Cho advocated self-efficacy or a person's belief about their capacity to perform an activity to be a "powerful predictor of online students' academic success and behaviors" (p. 1056).

The final phase, evaluation, used both formative[5] and summative[6] elevations. Due to time constraints, only a formative review of module 1 was conducted in which Cho invited two faculty members and one online student to participate in a discussion on ways to improve the OSO program. Alternatively, Cho administered an online summative evaluation consisting of 28 questions on a Likert scale[7] and two open-ended response questions to 63 volunteer students in two online courses: one designed to teach pedagogical content knowledge, and the other to teach medical terminology to nursing students. Cho divided the Likert questions into six categories: navigation, content, accessibility, design & development, understanding, and satisfaction. The results of the evaluation phase found that students provided positive ratings for all six categories. Moreover, Cho and a fellow instructional technology researcher coded the remarks to the free response questions and determined many positive statements were made such as "it was a great orientation." Cho stated his research to not be a definitive answer, but to be helpful for other institutions planning to develop an OSO program. He concluded that it is important to follow a sound framework, listen to stakeholders in the process, and develop quality content.

[5] Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) define formative assessment as the "systematic, planned exercises or procedures constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of student achievement (p. 351).

[6]Summative test is defined as "a test that aims to measure, or summarize, what a student has grasped and typically occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction. (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 353).

[7] The Likert scale ranged from "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree.)

Student Success in Online Learning

Ushida (2005) investigated the role of students' attitudes and motivation in second language learning in hybrid language courses. She also examined what factors affected student success in the online context. Ushida collected student data from three online language courses: 14 participants in an elementary Spanish course, 7 participants in an intermediate Spanish course, and 9 participants in an elementary French course. All students met with their instructor once a week for 50 minutes of F2F class, and once again for 20 minutes (in either F2F or online contexts) for oral practice. All other activities were carried outside of class time with online materials and a work plan that included chat sessions, and bulletin board assignments. Ushida collected quantitative and qualitative data using three sets of questionnaires (general background, general technology, and the attitude/motivation test battery [AMTB]), observations, interviews, class participation/attendance and course grades.

Data analysis included a combination of the qualitative and quantitative instruments which were used by Ushida (2005) to address three research questions. The first two questions related to patterns of motivation and attitudes and how those constructs related to their L2 learning, whereas the third question related to how students' attitudes and motivations may, at least indirectly, affect student success. Ushida found statistically significant differences for attitude towards French/Spanish culture, French/Spanish course anxiety, and teacher competence and inspiration suggesting that anxiety, cultural perceptions, and course delivery methods affect student success. Furthermore, she observed a modest nonsignificant correlation between students'

motivation scores and attendance rate as well as a high correlation between motivation scores and students test results.

Qualitative data gathered described the different ways in which the teacher of each course influenced student's immediate learning situations. Ushida (2005) noted that the elementary French teacher focused on grammar which prompted less student preparation and limited interaction while the elementary Spanish teacher focused on guiding individual students to use the language in activity-based lessons. The intermediate Spanish teacher also focused on individual meetings and felt they were the strength of the course. Ushida found that students generally had positive feelings of motivation, but tended to have relatively high anxiety due to lack of knowledge of the environment, and lack of familiarity with authentic communication, however, she noted student anxieties decreased significantly by the end of the semester. Ushida concluded that motivated students can take advantage of online learning, but effective online instruction can also motivate students.

Yang, YoonJung, Mathew, and Worth (2011) investigated the differential impact of classroom community on effort in online versus face-to-face courses. They also attempted to control for gender and team learning orientation. Yang et al. defined sense of community as the "feelings of belonging, value, mutuality, and involvement among members of a group" (p. 621). They sought to find out if there were gender differences present, and the extent team orientation and student sense of classroom community (SOCC) predicted effort expenditure in online versus face-to-face environments. Yang et al. distributed a recruitment email encouraging students to participate in the study, and allowed students to choose to speak about an online or a face-to-face course while

completing the survey and demographic questionnaire. They recruited 799 college students from seven different colleges within the same university, of whom 619 answered questions about traditional face-to-face courses, and 177 were surveyed about their online courses. Demographic data revealed 64.1% were female, 78.5% were white, 88.9% were single, 51.6% were unemployed, 98.6% had experience taking face-to face courses and 56.8% had experience taking online courses showing the types of students enrolled in online courses.

To collect data, Yang et al. (2012) conducted a 49-item, 7-point, Likert survey ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) consisting of measures on students' SOCC (30 items), team learning orientation (15 items), and the amount of effort they contributed to any course of their preference (4 items). Within SOCC, there were five subcategories: shared goals and responsibility, student-instructor interaction, value and interest, peer respect, and emotional connection. Yang et al. reported means and standard deviations for each measure in relation to class delivery format and gender. The found by statistically significant interactions, male students expend more effort in online environments compared to female students and overall gender differences were more salient in online environments than in their traditional counterparts. Yang et al. concluded college student effort expenditure in online versus face-to-face courses depends on SOCC in both environments although value and interest are strong predictors in online courses.

Stavredes & Herder (2013) explored online course design and strategies related to student success as a means for professional development of online faculty. The authors elaborated on various topics such as online learner characteristics, materials development and effective course and instructional design. Specifically related to the latter, Stavredes

& Herder discussed cognitive scaffolding strategies which are related to Vygotsky's (1978) SCT by way of the ZPD. Stavredes & Herder (2013) posit the "key to incorporate cognitive scaffolding strategies is to use the right amount of scaffolding to support learners in their zone of proximal development" (p. 86). They adapted four types of scaffolding in online environments which were based on definitions originally conceptualized by Hannafin, Land and Oliver (1999): procedural, metacognitive, conceptual, and strategic scaffolding which will be elaborated in the following paragraphs.

According to Stavredes & Herder (2013), procedural scaffolding guides learners how to use resources to navigate and work in the online environment. Learners often have difficulty performing in this online context especially when a clear design template is not provided (Stavredes & Herder, 2013). Proper procedural orientation can reduce student stress and anxiety while helping students to understand course expectations through orientation to course structure, "start here first" documents, faculty expectation sections, and course roadmaps. Metacognitive scaffolding guides learners how to think about and manage their learning. Stavredes & Herder state this type of scaffolding "supports planning, monitoring, and evaluating processes to support learners as they engage in learning to ensure they are processing information efficiently and effectively for storage and retrieval" (p. 88). They associated types of metacognitive scaffolding with planning tools (what to do), monitoring tools (progress checkers), and evaluation tools (reflection).

Stavredes & Herder (2013) also explored definitions of conceptual scaffolding, which guides learners through complex problem solving and helps them to identify and

organize concepts into meaningful constructs that aid the learning process. This type of scaffolding can help learners with little prior knowledge to comprehend new material and includes worksheets, templates, and knowledge maps which show the relationship of important concepts. The fourth scaffolding type, strategic, provides help at appropriate times in the online environment through instructor driven support which includes real world explanations, alternative explanations, and demonstrations. Stavredes & Herder (2013) closed by expressing the importance of using these instructional scaffolding strategies to promote student success in online learning.

Matuga (2009) explored self-regulation, goal orientation, and academic achievement of secondary students in online university courses. The participants in the study were 40 high achieving secondary students (average GPA of 3.8 out of 4.0) of which 32 were female and 8 were male. Data was collected from four sources: students' responses to an application essay, oral focus group meetings conducted by researchers, student evaluations conducted on the last day of classes, and Motivation Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) which was completed as a pre- (at the beginning of the course) and posttest (at the end of the 6-week course) measure. The MSLQ was the primary instrument used in the study and consisted of 30 items on a Likert scale from 1 (not true at all for me) to 7 (very true for me).

Matuga (2009) found that 95% of students passed the course and 90% earned an A (4.0) or a B (3.0) on a 4.0 scale. She grouped students into three categories: high achieving (A), average achieving (B) and low achieving (C, D, and E), and found that 48% of students showed interest in the subject of the course (science), while 43% felt taking an online course would be advantageous for their academic career by reducing the

number of courses they had to take. She concluded that high achieving students were more motivated from the start of the course and increased their motivation during the course compared to lower achieving students who experienced a decrease in motivation. Contrastingly, she concluded that high achieving students became less likely to self-regulate at the end of a university online course while low and average achieving students were able to more effectively self-regulate by course end. Matuga's results point to the importance of motivation and self-regulation in online learning and student success.

Kerr, Rynearson, and Kerr (2006) conducted three studies to describe the construction, development, and validation of a stable, structured, Test of Online Learning Success (TOOLS) to contribute to online learner and student success identification. Kerr et al. identified three goals for their studies: (1) describe how the TOOLS test was constructed and validated, (2) outline the contributions the TOOLS test made to knowledge of online learners, and (3) review research that supported their findings.

The first study conducted in 2002 focused on developing the TOOLS subscales. Kerr et al. (2006) conducted an initial needs analysis of 30 institutions that offered online courses and online self-reported student assessments. They maintained the 50 most common items for the initial version of the TOOLS test which included computer skills, time management, motivation, academic skills, the need for online delivery and learning skills. Kerr et al. administered the original TOOLS test and six self-reported surveys to 188 students attending a public four-year university. The self-reported surveys included Rosenburg's self-esteem scale, index of learning styles, metacognitive reading strategies questionnaire, academic intrinsic motivation questionnaire, and Trice's Academic Locus of Control Questionnaire. Kerr et al. showed a simple and stable five-factor structure that

demonstrated that successful online learning was related to other success variables such as learning style, self-esteem, and reading strategy knowledge.

The second study began in 2003 when Kerr et al. (2006) determined the structure, internal consistency, and criterion validity of the TOOLS test while establishing a scoring procedure and measure. They used a revised 45-item version of the TOOLS test with a Likert scare from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), a demographic questionnaire, an eight-item computer self-efficacy measure, and the metacognitive reading strategy questionnaire to collect data from 91 students enrolled in one of four online courses at a four-year university. Kerr et al. found that online learning success and independent learning where positively correlated with all criterion measures while academic skills stood out as a significant contributor to course success. They also developed initial scoring procedures by summing all 45 newly established items and calculating the means of the redefined categories of the TOOLS test: computer skills, independent learning, dependent learning, need for online delivery, and academic skills. Kerr et al. concluded a consistent five-factor measure was created with moderate to high internal validity (.63- .84) which led them to decide no other item or scale revisions were necessary.

The third and final study was also conducted by Kerr et al. (2006) in 2003 using the previously validated TOOLS measure to continue to test its usefulness, and reliability as a means to determine student abilities and profiles. They used a pretest/posttest design to ascertain if 76 students could improve their online learning skills via fifteen weeks of face-to face instruction and concurrent online learning. Apart from the TOOLS test, students completed a 36-item measure of technology use and an eight-item computer self-

efficacy measure. Students specifically completed the TOOLS pretest during the second-week of classes, and later the posttest during the fourteenth-week. Kerr et al. concluded the time between test and retest acted as a treatment and scores improved as a result of general instruction and practice. Particularly, they found four emergent characteristics related to predicting and understanding online student success: reading and writing skills, independent learning, motivation, and computer literacy, while positing that personal attributes such as motivation, goal-orientation, technology need, and good study habits are important for online learning success even though instructors have limited influence on such attributes.

Based on recommendations in previous research that call for evaluating the effectiveness of online orientations using pre- and post-results between groups (Cho, 2012), the purpose of the present study is to determine the effectiveness of a language orientation program to help fill a lacuna in studies to date relating to online orientation in language education and student success at the post-secondary level.

Research questions (RQs)

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. RQ_1 - Is there a differential effect of the presence of an online language orientation module on student success in online language courses?
2. RQ_2 - What variables affect student success in online language courses that do not use orientation modules?
3. RQ_3 - What variables affect student success in online language courses that use orientation modules?

Methodology

Participants

The participants for this study were initially comprised of 21 students (7 males, 14 females, average age = 31.8 years old) entering into one of two online Spanish 101 courses at a university in the Southwestern United States. Spanish 101 courses at this university were 4 credit courses titled “Elementary Spanish” and are described as covering the fundamentals of the language and emphasizing listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The version of the course in which the participants were enrolled was a completely online version lasting 7.5-weeks. Spanish 101 courses at this university can be hybrid (7- or 15-weeks) or completely online (7- or 15-weeks). Some students at the university are enrolled in completely online degree programs, while others are enrolled in campus courses with the option of taking internet courses.

Of the 21 students, 16 belonged to the control group with no module use (5 males, 11 females, average age = 36 years old) and 5 to the experimental group with orientation module use (2 males, 3 females, average age = 20.6 years old). The difference in initial participant numbers was due to the disproportional size of the classes. The experimental group had an enrollment maximum of 35 students while the control group’s enrollment maximum was 66. Due to attrition, only 12 participants remained with the control group consisting of 10 participants (5 males, 5 females, average age = 35.8 years old) and the experimental group consisting of 2 participants (1 male, 1 female, average age = 21 years old). However, of the 10 participants in the control group who completed the study, 5

participants had to be discarded due to their reported frequent language use[8] as children and/or adults. Three participants reported speaking Spanish and or having considerable contact with another language as children. Another participant reported speaking Hawaiian as a child, while the last participant reported having a masters in Russian and speaking French on a regular basis. Only L2 learners of Spanish who were native speakers of English and who had no informal exposure to Spanish outside the classroom or extensive formal exposure to languages other than Spanish were chosen as participants for this study.

To create equal gender and participant ratios for control and experimental groups, a simple random sampling of the five remaining qualifying control participants was carried out to select one male participant as only one female participant remained to match the only female member of the experimental group. First, the males in the control group were arranged alphabetically by university username. Second, a consecutive cardinal number starting with one was assigned to each participant (1-4). Third, a simple random sampling of this stratum was performed using a random number generator developed by Urbaniak and Plous (2013). The results yielded male participant four (see Appendix A).

The final case study consisted of N = 4 (average age = 23 years old). The participants were made up of equal genders, 2 control group participants (1 male, 1 female, average age = 25) and 2 experimental group participants (1 male, 1 female, average age = 25 years old). In general, all participants entered the Spanish 101 courses

[8] This language use was related to both the target language (Spanish) and other languages apart from English used by participants such as Russian, German, etc.

in a similar age group (21-28), without taking any previous foreign language courses at the university level, and all participants had taken at least four or more online learning courses as determined by a self-reported background questionnaire. To protect the identity of the participants involved, arbitrary pseudonyms were assigned to each participant. The following sections will explore each participant's background in more detail.

Control Group Participants.

Sue. Sue was a 22-year old female in her sophomore year of undergraduate studies who reported her cumulative GPA to be 4.0[9]. The Spanish 101 course she took was her first language course at the university level; however, she did report having taken one French course in high school earning a 98%, but as she had limited formal study in high school, and did not report speaking French, the participant was included. Sue's country of birth was reported as being the United States of America and she did not report speaking any other language other than English as a child/adolescent nor did she identify herself as a heritage language learner[10].

Samuel. Samuel was a 28-year old male in his junior year of undergraduate studies who self-reported his cumulative GPA to be 3.0. The Spanish 101 course he took was his first language course at any level and his country of birth was reported as being the United States of America. Samuel did not report speaking any other language other

[9] All GPA scores were reported on a 4.0 maximum scale for this study.

[10] As this study relates to foreign language education, Valdés' (2001) definition of *heritage language learner* for foreign language educators is adopted: "[a] student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English" (p. 38).

than English as a child/adolescent and did not identify himself as a heritage language learner.

Experimental Group Participants.

Andrew. Andrew was a 21-year old male in his senior year of undergraduate studies who self-reported his cumulative GPA to be 3.68. The Spanish 101 course he took was his first language course and his country of birth was reported as being the United States of America. Andrew did not report speaking any other language other than English as a child/adolescent and did not identify himself as a heritage language learner.

Tammy. Tammy was a 21-year old female in her junior year of undergraduate studies who self-reported her cumulative GPA to be 3.87. The Spanish 101 course she took was her first language course and her country of birth was reported as being the United States of America. Tammy did not report speaking any other language other than English as a child/adolescent and did not identify herself as a heritage language learner.

Participants in the study were fairly homogenous. All participants were from the United States, between the ages of 21 and 28, with GPAs found in the 3.0 to 4.0 range. None of the participants reported identifying themselves as a heritage language learner, and only one participant had limited experience with language courses. A summary of participants can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Summary of Participants

Part.	Group	Age	Gender	Year[a]	GPA	COB[b]	Heritage	LC[c]
Sue	C	22	F	2	4.00	USA	No	1
Samuel	C	28	M	3	3.00	USA	No	0
Andrew	E	21	M	4	3.68	USA	No	0
Tammy	E	21	F	2	3.87	USA	No	0

[a]Year refers to the level of undergraduate studies. "2" would be considered a sophomore, "3" a junior, etc.
[b]COB is country of birth.
[c]LC refers to the number of language courses taken in the past as determined by the background questionnaire.

Instruments

Five principal instruments were used in the data collection process: (1) a consent form/background questionnaire, (2) an adapted version of Kerr et al.'s (2006) TOOLS test, (3) a prompted journal, (4) a language orientation module, and (5) an exit survey. A description of each tool will follow.

Consent form and Background Questionnaire. Both the consent form and background questionnaire were combined into one electronic document (see Appendix B). All data was collected through Google Docs as students were participating in a completely online course. Each participant received an email from their instructor that contained a video recruitment message made by the researcher and a link to complete the questionnaire. They could only access the link through a secure university wide server using their associated username and password. The first page of the survey (the consent form) gave a general description of the study including all associated tasks and the

amount of time each participant would have to spend completing them. Also, it explained the risks, benefits, optionality of participation, and privacy statement for their review, while providing contact information for various research members.

Upon typing their name and clicking "Continue" on the first page, the participants agreed to the terms of the study. On the second page, the participants filled out demographic information related to age, gender, and education level. They also stated the language they were studying and the 5-digit course code the university uses to identify different courses. The third page detailed their experience with foreign languages. Each question was designed to see whether there would be an effect on participant success in the course due to previous experience learning another language. An example of that effect is the application of content or metalinguistic knowledge from prior courses to their new Spanish course allowing them to succeed at a faster rate. To complete the survey, participants answered questions about their experience taking online courses to help the research team ascertain what effect, if any, their prior knowledge of online courses and online learning had on the participants' level of proven success in the online Spanish course that was studied.

Adapted Test of Online Learning Success (TOOLS). Kerr et al. (2006) developed the TOOLS test (see Appendix C). The instrument was validated by Kerr et al. in terms of internal, criterion and predictive validity. The TOOLS test was comprised of 45 items which were subdivided into 5 subscales: (1) computer skills, or a student's ability to use technology for learning (items 1-11), (2) independent learning, or a student's ability to work on their own without help (items 12-21), (3) dependent learning, or a student's need for direction or motivation when learning (items 22-27), (4) need for

online delivery (items 28-32), and (5) academic skills, or those skills related to reading and writing (items 33-45). For each item, the test-taker selects a number from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). An option to select zero or "not applicable" was also available.

Scores are determined by reverse scoring the following items: 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 36, 37 and summing the remaining items. Scores are then categorized into four color coded groups. The top 25 percentile of scores fall in the green zone (prepared) and represent an overall prepared student. The second 50-75th percentile fall into the yellow (ready to go) zone and represent a student who is more prepared than the same percentile of their peers. Students in this zone should examine their subscales to get a clearer picture of what skills to work on. The orange zone (take some notes) represents the bottom 50th percentile and requires students to seek additional help. The final zone, the red zone (proceed with caution) represents students in the bottom 25th percentile. Students with scores in this range have deficits that must be addressed. A graphic example of the four zones can be seen in Figure 1 below.

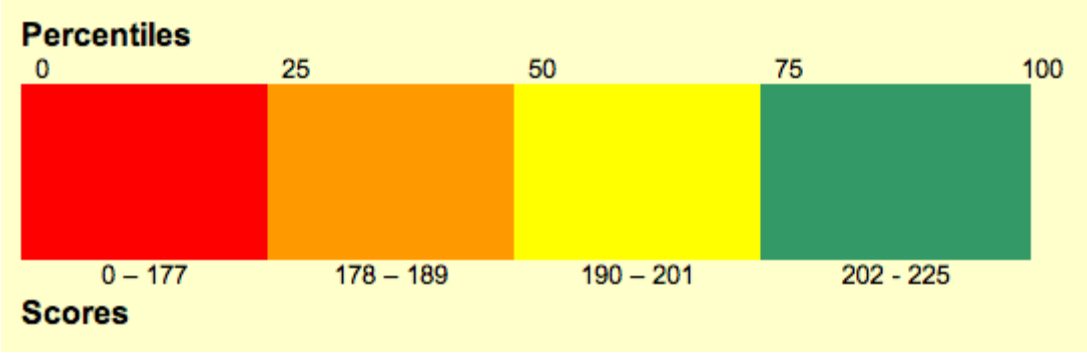

Figure 1. Total online learning success (OLS) percentiles. Adapted from CELT (2014).

The subscales follow a similar pattern with higher scores showing stronger skills and therefore less need for intervention or education in that area whereas lower scores

reflect a higher need for learning, study and growth[11]. For example, lower scores on dependent learning reflect more dependence (i.e. less independence), therefore demonstrating a greater need for assistance to be successful in an online learning environment (CELT, 2014). To calculate the subscale scores, the average of the items listed in that category is calculated. For example, to calculate "academic skills" the average of items 33-45 would be calculated. An example of subscale scores can be seen in Table 2 below.

The present study adapted the TOOLS test by including an additional subsection at the end of the original test titled "language skills." The sixth subsection included nine questions directly related to language learning and acquisition to be addressed by the experimental language orientation module. The language skills subscale was not validated and therefore does not pertain to a score range as do the other subscales.

Table 2

Subscale Percentile Ranges for the TOOLS Test

Zone	Computer Skills	Independent Learning	Dependent Learning	Academic Skills.
Green	5.00-5.00	4.57-5.00	4.32-5.00	4.14-5.00
Yellow	4.63-4.99	4.12-4.56	3.86-4.31	3.85-4.13
Orange	4.15-4.62	3.76-4.11	3.40-3.85	3.59-3.84
Red	0.00-4.14	0.00-3.75	0.00-3.39	0.00-3.58

Note. Scores are reported as averages of response ratings ranging from 0-5. Adapted from CELT (2014).

[11] Need for Online Delivery did not follow the four zone rating as the other subscales did as need was deemed to be present or not. In other words, if a test taker had an average score of 3.4 or higher, it was viewed as demonstrating need. All other scores below this threshold were considered not to demonstrate need (CELT, 2014).

Prompted Journals. Journals in this study took the form of a prompted survey filled out during the second, fourth, and sixth week of the course (see Appendix D). Each participant had to quantify their level of success during a two-week period on a Likert scale from one (very unsuccessful) to six (very successful). Questions related to explaining why they were or were not successful as well as elaborating on specific situations in which technology problems occurred were included. A section in the journal also asked participants to speak about three things they learned, two things they found difficult, and one moment that could be considered their "ah-ha" or "eureka" moment. The journals ended with a free response section allowing participants to leave additional comments related to their overall impression of online language learning experience.

Language Orientation Module (LOM). The language orientation module was developed by a working group of four individuals comprised of language educators and technology experts at Arizona State University. The module itself was developed using Brown's (1995) framework for curriculum design and materials development. Brown stated needs analysis, goals/objectives, testing, materials, teaching, and cyclic evaluation are important aspects of a sound framework as can be seen in Figure 2.

The working group carried out a needs analysis involving students and instructors at the university and drew upon the experiences of the working group itself as well as research on student orientation programs (Bozarth et al., 2004; Cho, 2012; Scagnoli, 2001). Together, goals were created based on the aforementioned needs analysis. The final version of the module was separated into 4 sections: (1) expectations in online courses at the participants' university, (2) structure of online courses, (3) technology, and

(4) learning strategies. Participants, also had to electronically sign a statement of accountability and a statement detailing the university's academic integrity policy.

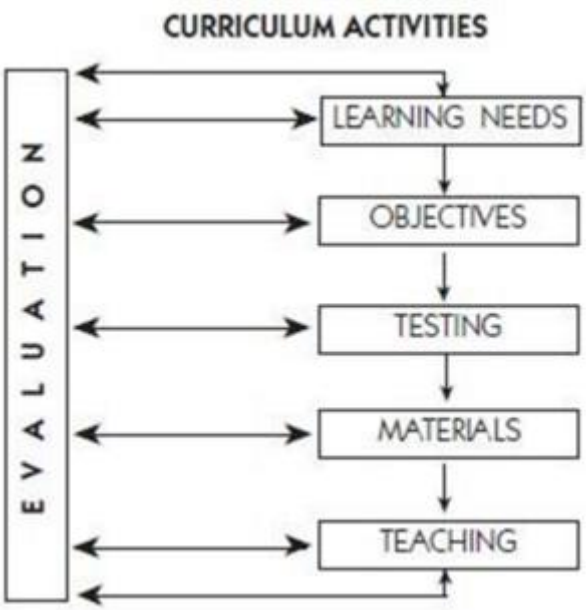

Figure 2. Systematic approach to designing and maintaining language curriculum. Adapted from Brown (1995, p. 20).

In order to complete the module, participants had to cover the material in each folder presented in a variety of formats (video and text) and complete a short 10 question quiz. Each folder of the module used an adaptive release format and a score of 70 or more was required to move on to the next section. The module was inserted into the experimental SPA 101 course through Blackboard, the university's online course management system. Upon completion of the module, the students could return to the information at any time to review it.

Exit Survey. The final survey was designed to collect data on participants' overall impression of their online experience (see Appendix E). Similar in appearance to the prompted journals, the exit survey first asked questions about the participants' cumulative success during the course. Questions were also asked regarding the factors

that contributed to their success and the number of times students had to contact their instructor for technology-related problems. Questions also asked participants for their impressions of the need for or utilization of proper orientation methods in their course. Their expected final grade was requested to compare with trends in their cumulative GPA.

Procedure

Two entirely online Spanish 101 courses, lasting approximately 7.5-weeks in duration, were identified for data collection. Although each course was taught by a different instructor, all students used the same course book and online learning platform. One class served as a control group where the module was not present at all for users while the second class served as an experimental group having unlimited access to the LOM. Furthermore, the control group formed a part of an entirely online degree program, while the experimental group took classes as an online option while attending other F2F classes on the university campus. The module used in the experimental group was presented as an obligatory assignment of the course to mask the treatment in the experimental group.

Students received a prewritten message by a member of the research team via e-mail from their instructor asking them to participate in the study. The e-mail message was sent to all students in each respective course and contained details on offered extra credit as well as an alternative assignment they could complete for equal credit should they decide not to participate in the study. The researcher's information as well as a link to a recruitment video was also provided. The recruitment video, lasting 1 minute 41 seconds was recorded using Screencast-o-matic, a free online screen and webcam recorder

(Bellard, 2009). The video contained both the script and an image of the researcher reading the terms to the participants. The contents of the message briefly elaborated the research study details including duration and its voluntary nature. At the conclusion of the video, students were asked to contact the researcher regarding questions or to express their interest in the study.

After students emailed the researcher to participate, they received a Google Docs link. Each participant needed to log into the university secure server with their associated username and password to access and complete the consent form and background questionnaire via Google forms. Because a login was required, each participant's username was recorded and, as a result, they were only allowed to complete the form once; this procedure confirmed each participant's identity and avoided duplicate data. As each participant completed the form, their information was automatically added to a Google Sheets workbook. Students were given until the end of the first official week of classes to agree to participate in the study.

Those students who agreed to participate in the study then received a link to complete the TOOLS pretest via a direct e-mail. The TOOLS test also required the same sign-in procedures as the consent form and background questionnaire, once again confirming the participants' identity and allowing only one response. Results were also automatically recorded on a Google Sheets workbook. Each participant had roughly one week to complete the TOOLS pretest, and were notified once they finished the test. It is important to note that in the experimental group, participants had to complete the LOM before the end of first week of class and after taking the TOOLS pretest. The module

itself was disguised as part of the course so as to not draw students' attention to its importance and students had unlimited access to the LOM throughout the course.

Those who completed both the consent form/background questionnaire and the pretest were added manually to a developmental Blackboard shell for easy access to research materials and to provide a uniform platform to communicate with the research team and submit data. Participants had no other contact with each other through the Blackboard shell, nor were they able to contact any participants from a different course (i.e. Student A from Spanish 101 X contacts student B from Spanish 101 Y). Participants could, however, freely interact with anyone within their own course. The Blackboard shell included only 8 tabs: (1) Announcements page containing general information about due dates, (2) How to/questions tab explaining general submission and question submission procedures, (3-5) Journals 1, 2, and 3 detailing information on journal submissions (one for each week), (6) Exit survey providing the link to submission, (7) contact information, and (8) My grades allowing students to see if they completed a section of the study.

After participants were successfully enrolled in the Blackboard shell, they received announcements once a new task was available. During the 7.5-week course, participants completed prompted journals during weeks two, four, and six. Journals were made available the Thursday of each target week and were due the following Monday. For example, Journal 1 was made available the Thursday of Week-2 and due the Monday of Week-3. The researcher marked each journal as complete upon receipt and students were able to see which assignments were submitted. During Week-7 participants completed the TOOLS posttest using the same procedures as the pretest. At the same

time, participants were able to complete and submit the Exit survey via the Blackboard shell. Upon completion of all tasks, participants received a confirmation e-mail.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of comparing module scores, time on task (TOT) in the LOM, final grades, OLS scores, journal entries and exit survey data. Information was coded by participant using a master code sheet and pseudonyms. Qualitative data was analyzed using *content analysis*, "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 24).

Results & Discussion

Each participant's data will be presented individually including their OLS pre- and posttest scores, their final earned grade in comparison to their GPA, their ToT in the LOM, as well as qualitative data from the background questionnaire, weekly journals and exit survey. First, participants in the control group will be discussed individually, then together comparing and contrasting the results of the main instruments. Second, participants in the experimental group will then follow the same pattern of individual discussion with a comparison and contrast of instrument data in addition to module scores and ToT. Once all participants' data have been described, a general discussion based on the research questions of this study will be elaborated. The presentation of the results and discussion was modeled after Kinginger (2008) and Duff (2012).

Results

Control Group. In this section data is presented from students in the control group who did not have access to the LOM representing "0" ToT. These students were

participating for the first time in online Spanish courses, and were members of a totally online degree program.

Sue. A summary of Sue´s demographic data described in the participants section can be found in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Summary of Sue's Demographic Data

Part.	Group	Age	Gender	Year[a]	GPA	COB[b]	Heritage	LC[c]
Sue	C	22	F	2	4.00	USA	No	1

[a]Year refers to the level of undergraduate studies. "2" would be considered a sophomore, "3" a junior, etc.
[b]COB is country of birth.
[c]LC refers to the number of language courses taken in the past as determined by the background questionnaire.

Based on Sue's background questionnaire, she reported having previously taken four to six online courses in the Humanities. She also identified her professors as a main factor that contributed to effective communication. Furthermore, Sue identified her needs in an online environment to be:

> [t]o move quickly through material, to avoid student interruptions and questions, to avoid professors repeating themselves in a manner that may be necessary for other students who learn differently, but which I found to be unnecessary.

Prior content courses meet Sue's needs:

> It really has, and so far it's the only thing that has. I find that face- to-face classes move far too slowly for me. I get bored and end up with an average grade because I become completely unmotivated. Online classes are really nice because they allow me to work ahead and keep my brain stimulated.

Sue also felt she participated and interacted more in the online environment, but did not feel that this environment increased her sense of community:

> Nope, but I'm okay with that. A sense of community isn't one of the reasons I'm going to college.

Sue's initial OLS score was 205 and her final score was 212, with both scores falling in the green range (prepared) for online learning representing a ceiling effect. She also demonstrated several initial subscale scores in the green zone (independent learning, dependent learning, and academic skills). Although not placed into a colored zone, her need for online delivery was also above the threshold of 3.4 as determined by Kerr et al. (2006) indicating a need for online courses. From pre- to posttest, she improved or stayed static in all categories including the adapted subscale of language skills. Sue also reported a constant level of self-perception of success with pre and post course ratings staying consistently at the highest level 6 "Very Successful" while earning an A in the course. Her qualitative and quantitative data show her to be a successful motivated student. A summary of her pre- and posttest OLS subscale scores can be seen in Figure 3 below.

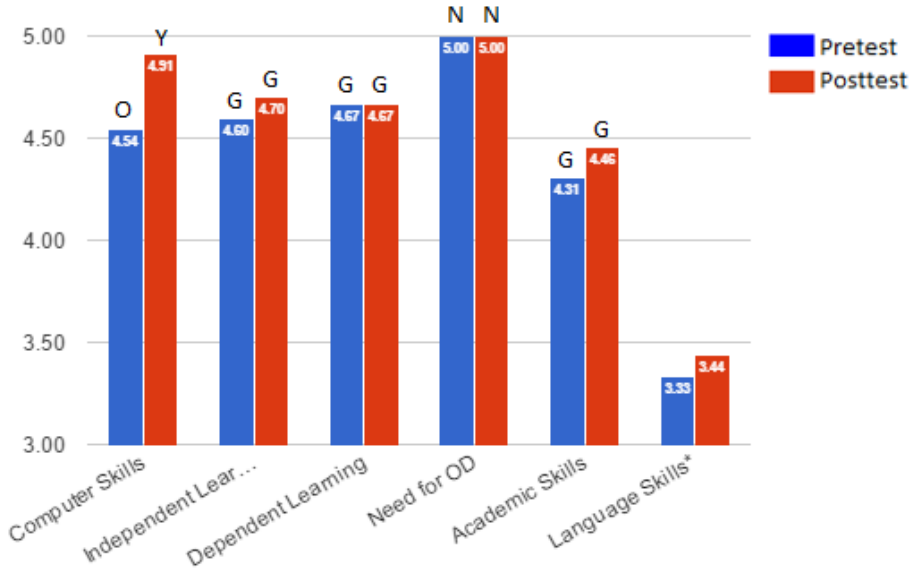

Figure 3. Pre- and posttest OLS subscale scores for control group participant Sue. The letters above each column represent the four color zones (green-G, yellow-Y, orange-O, and red-R) and a need (N) or non-need (NN) for online delivery. The final subscale "language skills" does not pertain to a validated zone.

Samuel. A summary of Samuel's demographic data described in the participants section can be found in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Summary of Samuel's Demographic Data

Part.	Group	Age	Gender	Year[a]	GPA	COB[b]	Heritage	LC[c]
Samuel	C	28	M	3	3.00	USA	No	0

[a]Year refers to the level of undergraduate studies. "2" would be considered a sophomore, "3" a junior, etc.
[b]COB is country of birth.
[c]LC refers to the number of language courses taken in the past as determined by the background questionnaire.

Samuel reported on his background questionnaire having taken six or more online courses in the Humanities category. His needs, which were met in previous courses, were described as having "a little direction and occasional support when necessary." He felt online courses promoted participation and interaction, but expressed that F2F courses were more effective in this regard. Samuel also stated he did not believe online courses increased his sense of community, but did express some effectiveness in online communication especially in comparison to another institution:

> At my previous university, not so much. First impressions at [the university studied], online communication appears more efficient at the current university.

Samuel's initial OLS score was 199 and his final score was 211. His initial OLS score was located in the upper percentile of the yellow zone, while his final score was well into the green zone. He also demonstrated several initial subscale scores in the yellow zone (computer skills, independent learning, and academic skills) with dependent learning falling in the green zone. From pre- to posttest, he improved all categories to the

green zone (except dependent learning which fell, but remained in the green zone), and improved in the adapted subscale of language skills. A summary of his pre- and posttest OLS subscale scores can be seen in Figure 4 below.

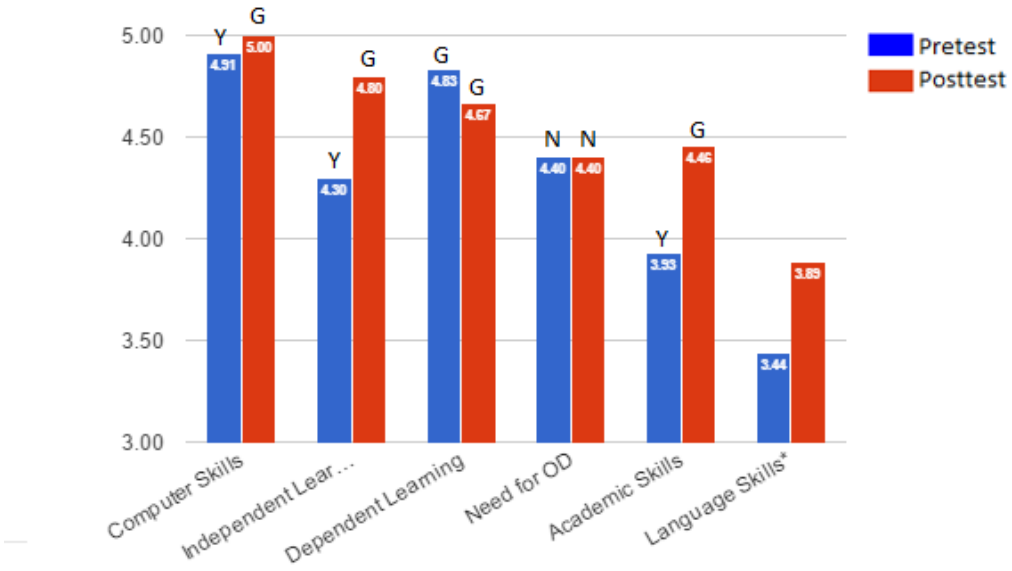

Figure 4. Pre- and posttest OLS subscale scores for control group participant Samuel. The letters above each column represent the four color zones (green-G, yellow-Y, orange-O, and red-R) and a need (N) or non-need (NN) for online delivery. The final subscale "language skills" does not pertain to a validated zone.

Samuel also reported a constant level of self-perception of success with pre and post course ratings staying constant at the second highest level 5 "Successful" while earning a B in the course.

Participant data in this section was very homogenous with final OLS scores reflecting students who were prepared for success in online learning environments, the evidence of the scores supported by their final grades, and their self-reported success. Sue performed better than Sam at the beginning with her OLS score being in the green zone (205) while Sam's OLS score was in the yellow zone (199). By the end of the course,

both Sue and Sam reported OLS scores in the green zone (212 and 211 respectively). Initially, Samuel performed slightly better than Sue in language skills (3.44 to Sue's 3.33). He also grew to 3.89 while Sue only slightly rose to 3.44. Both Sue and Sam maintained their initial self-perception success scores from program onset to completion with Sue reporting a 6 and Sam a 5. A summary of control group participant data can be found in the Table 5 below.

Table 5

Summary of Control Participant Data

Part.	Group	Pre[a]	Post	LS1[b]	LS2	ToT[c]	Grade	GPA	$SRS1_d$	SRS2
Sue	C	205	212	3.33	3.44	0.00h	A (4.0)	4.0	6	6
Samuel	C	199	211	3.44	3.89	0.00h	B (3.0)	3.0	5	5

[a]"Pre" and "Post refer to OLS scores from the pre and post TOOLS tests.
[b]"LS1" and "LS2" refer to averages on the pre and post "language skills" section of the adapted TOOLS test.
[c]"ToT" refers to time on task within the language orientation module reported in hours.
[d]"SRS1" and "SRS2" refer to self-reported success scores measured on a scale of 1-6 during week 2 and the final week of the course respectively. Higher scores correlate with positive self-perceptions of success while lower scores correlate with a negative self-perception of success.

Experimental group. In this section, data is presented from students in the experimental group who were required to complete the LOM as part of their course and had unlimited access to its contents. These students were participating for the first time in online Spanish courses, and were taking an internet course as an option to on-campus classes. As opposed to the control group, the experimental group were not restricted to taking only online courses, and mixed F2F and online courses in their curriculum.

Andrew. A summary of Andrew's demographic data described in the participants section can be found in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Summary of Andrew's Demographic Data

Part.	Group	Age	Gender	Year[a]	GPA	COB[b]	Heritage	LC[c]
Andrew	E	21	M	4	3.68	USA	No	0

[a]Year refers to the level of undergraduate studies. "2" would be considered a sophomore, "3" a junior, etc.
[b]COB is country of birth.
[c]LC refers to the number of language courses taken in the past as determined by the background questionnaire.

Andrew reported in his background questionnaire having taken four to six online courses in the "other" category and did not specify what courses he took (i.e. not languages, STEM, or Humanities). He also, did not identify online courses as contributing to effective communication:

> Not really I don't really communicate with anyone in an online environment unless I have technical problems.

Andrew identified his needs in an online environment to "get work done on my own schedule and complete it at my own pace." Andrew expressed that his needs were met in his previous online experiences. However, he did perceive a lack of sense of community, participation, and interaction:

> No, I feel like the online experience was more to yourself and your class work, not to[o] much interaction with the community.

Andrew's initial OLS score was 171 and his final score was 181. His initial OLS score was located in the red zone, while his final score rose ten points into the orange zone. He also reported several initial subscale scores in the orange zone (computer skills,

dependent learning, and academic skills) with dependent learning falling in the yellow zone. From pre- to posttest, he improved all subscale categories to the green zone except for academic skills and need for online delivery. His academic skills score statically remained in the orange zone while his need for online delivery dropped from 3.0 to 1.2 staying well beneath the threshold of 3.4 for demonstrated need as determined by Kerr et al. (2006). Furthermore, his language skills category drastically dropped from 4.44 to 3.67 (17.3% decrease). A summary of his pre- and posttest OLS subscale scores can be seen in Figure 5 below.

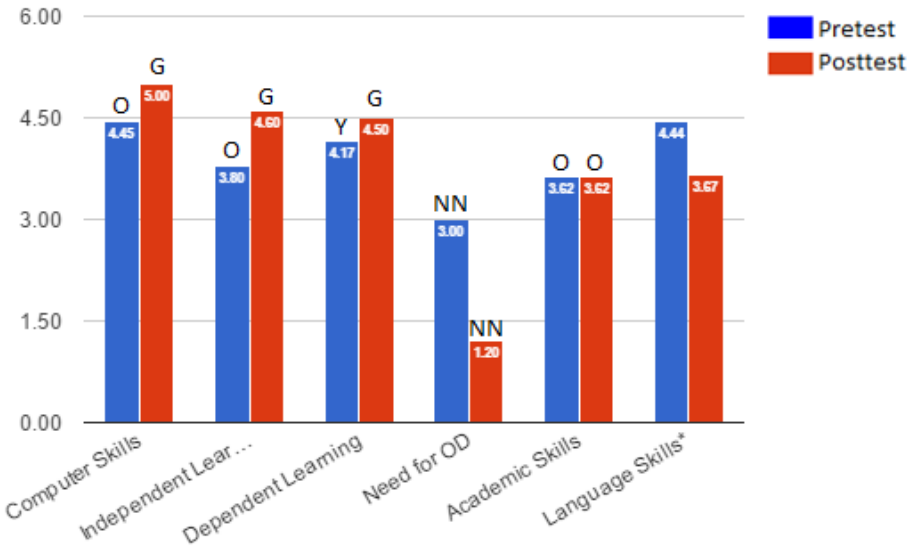

Figure 5. Pre- and posttest OLS subscale scores for experimental group participant Andrew. The letters above each column represent the four color zones (green-G, yellow-Y, orange-O, and red-R) and a need (N) or non-need (NN) for online delivery. The final subscale "language skills" does not pertain to a validated zone.

Andrew also reported a growth in level of self-perception of success from pre to post course ratings moving from 4 "Somewhat successful" to the second highest level, 5 "Successful." He spent an average ToT in the module of 1.45h while earning an A in the course.

Tammy. A summary of Tammy's demographic data described in the participants section can be found in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Summary of Tammy's Demographic Data

Part.	Group	Age	Gender	Year[a]	GPA	COB[b]	Heritage	LC[c]
Tammy	E	21	F	2	3.87	USA	No	0

[a]Year refers to the level of undergraduate studies. "2" would be considered a sophomore, "3" a junior, etc.
[b]COB is country of birth.
[c]LC refers to the number of language courses taken in the past as determined by the background questionnaire.

Tammy reported in her background questionnaire having previously taken four to six online courses in the Humanities. She also identified online courses as contributing to effective communication. Furthermore, Tammy identified her needs in an online environment to be:

> [E]asy communication between teachers. Easy navigation for the website given and given test dates and assignment dates…

Tammy reported her needs were met in prior content courses. She also felt that in her experience the online environment promoted participation and interaction through group assignments.

Tammy's initial OLS score was 196 and her final score was 180. Her initial OLS score was located in the yellow zone, while her final score dropped drastically by sixteen points into the orange zone. At the pretest she scored in the green zone in dependent learning and academic skills and in the yellow zone for computer skills and independent learning. From pre- to posttest, her computer skills subscale score stayed static in the

yellow zone while her other scores decreased in independent learning (yellow to orange), dependent learning (green to yellow) and academic skills (green to yellow). However, her need for online delivery rose from 2.60 to 3.20 but still remained below the required score of 3.4 which indicated she did not have a need for online delivery. A change in her language skills category was also observed as her score drastically dropped from 4.78 to 4.00 (16.3% decrease). A summary of her pre- and posttest OLS subscale scores can be seen in Figure 6 below.

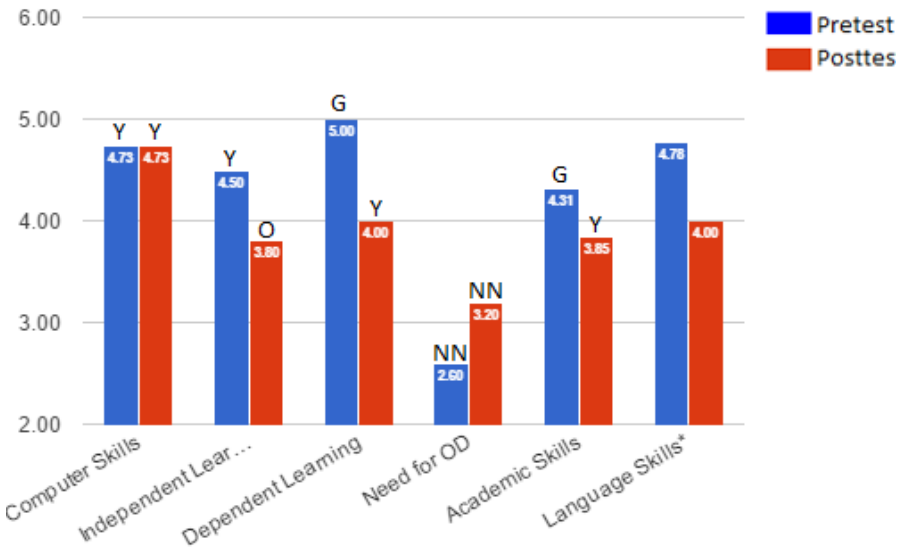

Figure 6. Pre- and posttest OLS subscale scores for experimental group participant Tammy. The letters above each column represent the four color zones (green-G, yellow-Y, orange-O, and red-R) and a need (N) or non-need (NN) for online delivery. The final subscale "language skills" does not pertain to a validated zone.

Tammy also reported a decrease in level of self-perception of success from pre to post course ratings moving from 5 "Successful," the second highest level, to 4 "Somewhat Successful." She spent an average ToT in the module of 3.91h while earning an A in the course.

A summary of Experimental group participant data can be found in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Summary of Experimental Participant Data

Part.	Group	Pre[a]	Post	LS1[b]	LS2	ToT[c]	Grade	GPA	SRS1[d]	SRS2
Andrew	E	174	181	4.44	3.66	1.45h	A (4.0)	3.68	4	5
Tammy	E	196	180	4.78	4.00	3.91h	A (4.0)	3.87	5	4

[a]"Pre" and "Post refer to OLS scores from the pre and post TOOLS tests.
[b]"LS1" and "LS2" refer to averages on the pre and post "language skills" section of the adapted TOOLS test.
[c]"ToT" refers to time on task within the language orientation module reported in hours.
[d]"SRS1" and "SRS2" refer to self-reported success scores measured on a scale of 1-6 during week 2 and the final week of the course respectively. Higher scores correlate with positive self-perceptions of success while lower scores correlate with a negative self-perception of success.

Participants' data in this section reflected very much the same trends as the control group as final grades where consistent with their cumulative GPAs and their self-perception scores remained within one point from pre- to posttest. Furthermore, Andrew's OLS score also rose from the red zone to the orange zone. However, it should be noted that both experimental group participants who had unlimited access to the LOM drastically dropped in language skills, a subscale score that related directly to the LOM, from pre- to posttest. Tammy's OLS score fell sixteen points and she indicated a less positive perception of success form week-2 to the final week of course. She noted in week-2 that she had several personal family issues that prevented her from studying as well as weak motivation in week-6, which may have been external factors affecting her success and thus explaining why her OLS dropped from pre- to posttest.

General Discussion: A Comparison of Control and Experimental Groups

The follow section will summarize the results of each participant around the research questions. The differential effect of the module and how each group did on the pre/post TOOLS test will be discussed followed by what factors affected each participant's student success and performance. Anomalies and unexpected results will also be discussed and possible explanations will be posited.

Research Question 1. The first RQ stated: Is there a differential effect of the presence of an online language orientation module on student success in online language courses? To investigate the differential effect of the LOM trends of all participant data were observed which are summarized in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Summary of All Participant Data

Part.	Group	Pre[a]	Post	LS1[b]	LS2	ToT[c]	Grade	GPA	SRS1[d]	SRS2
Sue	C	205	212	3.33	3.44	0.00h	A (4.0)	4.00	6	6
Samuel	C	199	211	3.44	3.89	0.00h	B (3.0)	3.00	5	5
Andrew	E	174	181	4.44	3.66	1.45h	A (4.0)	3.68	4	5
Tammy	E	196	180	4.78	4.00	3.91h	A (4.0)	3.87	5	4

[a]"Pre" and "Post refer to OLS scores from the pre and post TOOLS tests.
[b]"LS1" and "LS2" refer to averages on the pre and post "language skills" section of the adapted TOOLS test.
[c]"ToT" refers to time on task within the language orientation module reported in hours.
[d]"SRS1" and "SRS2" refer to self-reported success scores measured on a scale of 1-6 during week 2 and the final week of the course respectively. Higher scores correlate with positive self-perceptions of success while lower scores correlate with a negative self-perception of success.

All participants grew in OLS scores from pre- to post except for Tammy. Sue and Samuel (control group) grew in the language skills subscale while both Andrew and Tammy

(experimental group), who had unlimited access to the LOM, saw drastic decreases (17.3% for Andrew and 16.3% for Tammy) in the same category as can be seen in Figure 7 below.

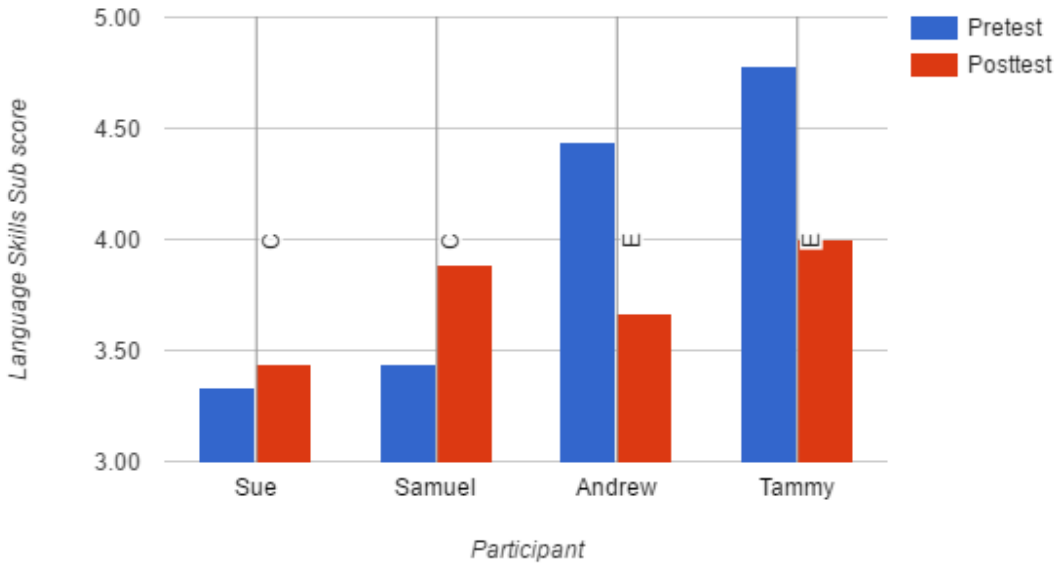

Figure 7. Pre- and posttest language skills sub scale scores for all participants.

A possible explanation of the control group's growth in language skills could be due to taking an online language course which Kerr et al. (2006) argued can act as a natural treatment effect over a fixed period of time. Similarly, it would be expected to see growth for the experimental group as well, but both participants experienced almost the same percentage of decrease in their subscale scores. This may have been due to the LOM's presence as the participants' attention was drawn directly to language learning. If participants began to think more critically about their language skills as a result of the module, they may have experienced a U-shaped learning phenomena where the new

information caused their skills to decrease causing their self-reported scores to decrease as well. However, lack of interview data makes these results difficult to interpret.

Research question 2. The second RQ stated: What variables affect student success in online language courses that do not use orientation modules? Sue did not feel that learning communities were important for language learning as mentioned in her background questionnaire, yet later she expressed in the exit survey that speaking was the most difficult part of the course, suggesting she may have underestimated the importance of community and interaction in language learning:

> Speaking was definitely the hardest part; therefore, the Media Share...and virtual meetings were most difficult.

If Sue did not feel learning communities were important, she may have not interacted as much with her classmates, especially since speaking contact time in her online course was reduced to only 20-30 minutes a week.

Sue reported early on in Journal 1 that she studied more than the recommended time and may have been highly motivated to learn the material:

> I studied more than the recommended time per credit hour because I am genuinely interested in the work. I also keep daily lists of deadlines and exactly what I need to get done that day.

Samuel, on the other hand, expressed in his exit survey that the course itself was not difficult, but rather it was difficult to get adequate practice:

> There is nothing too difficult about learning Spanish other than getting plenty of practice in. The most difficult part is processing everything fast enough when listening and speaking.

Samuel also was very self-motived to complete the work and expressed high levels of intrinsic motivation:

> The easiest thing was to motivate myself, except for one week. I plan to travel much of the world over the next ten years, and learning other languages would be greatly beneficial in accomplishing that.

Participants in the control group were highly motivated, and spent more time in the course than what was required of them. Also, even though Sue had little experience with French, she reported using some of her knowledge to make connections with her Spanish learning. It is possible that if participants had a better sense of community, their opportunities to practice could have been increased, but this data does not show it affected their success in the course. Nevertheless, without oral class and interview data it is impossible to determine their gains and performances in speaking.

Research Question 3. The third RQ stated: What variables affect student success in online language courses that use orientation modules? Andrew, like the control group, found learning communities to be unimportant in his background questionnaire:

> No, I feel like the online experience was more to yourself and your class work, not to[o] much interaction with the community.

Furthermore, he reported in his exit survey to be intrinsically and externally motivated to learn the language for himself but to pursue his career:

> I believe that internal motivation was the source of my success...In order to improve in customer service and my career I want to pursue, I used this motivation to drive my focus.

Andrew also felt he received proper orientation for learning online and specifically cited material found in the LOM:

> Yes, I received proper orientation to be able to maneuver through the online environment. For example, to be able to learn a language you must be able to do the four skills successfully to learn a language.

Tammy also felt she received proper orientation, especially in regard to course navigation:

> Yes, for the most part. The videos that explained the navigation and how and online environment...prepared me at the start of the class.

However, she expressed problems due to family issues and confessed to feeling overwhelmed with the fast pace of the course, and emphasized the importance of time-management:

> I have never taken a fast paced online course before and I feel like for a fast paced class, time management is extremely important more than a regular class. I definitely let time slip (by) me and rushed homework and tests at times.

The intensive nature of the course could have been a factor for her which when coupled with external factors affecting her time with the material in the course could have affected her motivation. She stated in Journal 3 that the motivation necessary for her to stay ahead of her work became harder to find as the course progressed.

Various factors may have led to student success (or lack thereof) in the experimental group. On the one hand, Andrew's motivation may have led to gains in overall OLS scores as well as increases in various subscale scores (computer skills, independent learning, and dependent learning). On the other hand, external factors such as family issues and anxiety related to the face-paced course may have altered Tammy's motivation, causing decreases in her scores. Like the control group, it is possible that if participants had a better sense of community, their opportunities to practice could have been increased, but this data also does not show that their lack of a sense of community directly affected their success in the course. They also commented positively regarding receiving proper orientation and specifically cited material related to the LOM.

Nonetheless, without oral class and interview data it is impossible to determine their gains in performances and speaking, nor gain a deeper understanding of the role the LOM played in achieving success.

On the one hand, all four participants in this study have commented on several factors such as motivation, and time management as possible factors that contribute to their success. On the other hand, non-linguistic factors such as social (family situations) and affective (anxiety) issues may have somewhat hindered success. In any case, the small N (4) in this study makes it difficult to generalize the results about student success factors in online learning environments. The following section will conclude with a summary of findings and their possible future theoretical and pedagogical implications in addition to analyzing the limitations of this research and suggestions for future research.

Conclusions

Initial trends in the OLS scores support Kerr et al.'s (2006) view that students' scores increase from pre- to posttest as the experience of taking an online course acts as a treatment effect. The LOM did produce a differential effect between control and experimental groups as experimental participants demonstrated a marked decrease in mean scores of the adapted TOOLS test in the language skills category. A possible explanation may be that students began to think critically about their language skills due to the module's presence; however, much more research is needed to form a clearer picture of the LOM's effect on language learners' success and to ascertain the reasons why experimental group participant's scores so drastically decreased in this category. Based on qualitative data taken from the background questionnaire, some possible factors contributing to online language learning success for both groups could be

intrinsic/internal motivation, time-management, students sense of community, and student perceptions of online learning from onset of study.

However, the results of this study must be reviewed with caution. Although not generalizable due to a small sample size, the study was intended to begin discussion on adapting orientation programs to language-specific online courses to increase student success. The trends shown can help to redefine this study's current research questions as well as to create new hypotheses about LOM effectiveness which, with more research, may have pedagogical implications that reach far beyond completely online courses through application to F2F or blended/hybrid online language programs. It is, therefore, important to discuss limitations and future avenues of research.

First, the sample population was made up of students who were participating in two different programs: one completely online program, and one campus-based program with the option of taking internet courses which was not initially taken into account. It may be that the students in one group differ, in general terms, from students in another group, meaning there may be a tendency for students in the completely online control group to display individual differences that are more conducive to online learning (i.e. higher motivation, better time management skills, more positive perception of online learning). Furthermore, the final case study participants were students who demonstrated very positive self-reported measures of student success[12] from the onset through course completion, held high cumulative GPAs, were similar ages, and earned similar grades, making for a fairly homogeneous sample size of high-achieving students. In essence, the

[12] Participant Tammy was counted as having a "successful" self-perception even though her self-reported success score fell from a "5" to a "4." Her score still remained in the successful range on the Likert Scale and only dropped by 1 point over the duration of the course.

final group of participants does not represent the majority of students and could be perceived as academic achieving outliers. This often occurs when volunteer groups are used as those that volunteers are often the best students. However, another plausible explanation could be that they represent typical completely online and occasional online users respectively.

Second, the original research design was envisioned to be quasi-experimental with pre- and posttest statistical result comparison. Although comparisons were made, and qualitative data was incorporated, conceptually a case study was not envisioned and therefore other instruments such as interviews and observations were not included which would have contributed to the richness, generalizability and validity of the results. Furthermore, existing instruments need to be expanded to incorporate more data collection items such as university major, a motivation survey, observations and more questions related to the language orientation module specifically.

Third, the sample size for this study was too small to conduct any statistical analyses. From an initial pool of 101 participants, only 21 students showed interest. Of the 21 participants, only 7 were available for comparison due to experimental mortality rates. The original pre/posttest research design envisioned a much larger participant pool to perform ANOVAs with LOM scores, OLS scores and the subcategory averages to generalize the results and empirically address the differential effect of a LOM on student success. Another side effect of the small sample size was the heightened effect individual instructors brought to the courses being taught whereas with a larger sample more trends could be seen reducing, while not eliminating the effect of instructor individual differences.

Future research should first address a replication of the study to account for the aforementioned limitations, emphasizing a larger sample size to allow for statistical analyses. Also, the individual module components' effectiveness could also be explored to help shed more light on trends observed in the case study data. This study can be used as an impetus for the evaluation of the module itself according to Brown's (1995) framework of curriculum design. Future data relating to the TOOLS test and OLS scores could contribute to the existing literature on the validation of the instrument (Kerr et al., 2006) as a reliable tool to predict online student success while also validating the adaptation related to the LOM of this study. In addition, studies could focus on the profiles of completely and occasionally online students and how their needs can be met in language orientation programs. The theoretical and pedagogical implications that come from further investigation of not only the LOM in question, but all LOMs' effectiveness could lead to course redesign in not only online, but F2F environments as well to allow students to be put in positions from the onset of study to achieve maximum success in their language learning endeavors.

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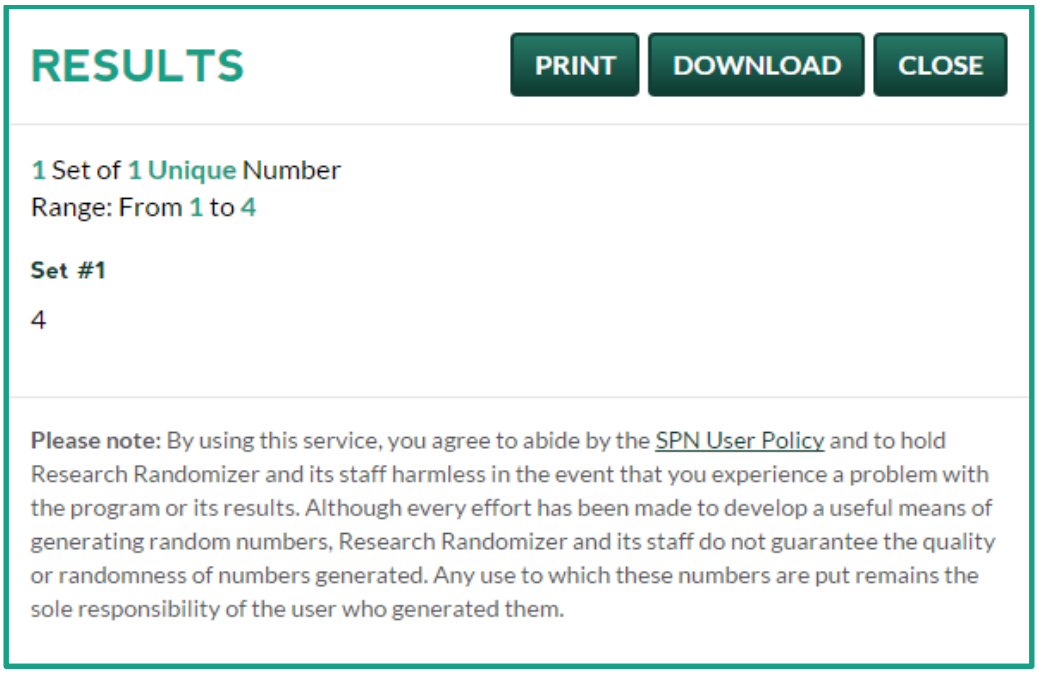
APPENDIX A

SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLING RESULTS



Results acquired using research randomizer (Urbaniak & Plous, 2013)

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM AND BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Consent Form & Background Questionnaire

Your username will be recorded when you submit this form.

Description of Study

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Steven Flanagan, a Masters student in Spanish Applied Linguistics and Dr. Andrew Ross, Head of SILC Learning Support Services at Arizona State University. The purpose of this research is to measure student success in online learning environments.

Your participation will involve completing this consent form/language background questionnaire (~20 minutes), a short pretest (~10 minutes), 3 brief journal entries throughout the course on weeks 2, 4, and 6 (~30 minutes each for a total of 1 hour, 30 minutes), a short post-test (~10 minutes) and an exit survey (~20 minutes). The entirety of your involvement would encompass approximately 2 hours 30 minutes of work over the course of a 7.5-week course.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no known risks associated with this research. However, your instructor will offer credit or extra credit (to be determined by each individual instructor) for your participation in this study. (For more information on this credit, see Voluntary Participation below). Should you choose not to participate in this study, another opportunity for credit or extra credit will be provided. This research may help us to better understand online learning environments and improve course quality for students.

Protection of confidentiality:

All measures will be taken into account to protect your identity. The basic information provided on your background survey will be stored in a secure location under password and encrypted electronic systems. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study, and a master list to which only the researcher will have access will be used to protect your identity and personal information throughout the investigation. By agreeing to participation, you are allowing the researcher to have access to your final letter grade and performance on all course/research related assignments/tasks (reported via confidential instructor-researcher communication)

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study, except that your instructor may choose to not award you credit or extra credit unless you complete all steps in the research or complete the equivalent alternative (to be determined as described by each individual instructor in the message accompanying the link to this consent form). This alternative activity will take roughly the same amount of time and effort as participation in this research. If your instructor does not provide a suitable alternative, please contact the IRB (contact details below).

Contact information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Steven Flanagan or Andrew Ross at Arizona State University by e-mail at

steven.flanagan@asu.edu or aross8@asu.edu.

Furthermore, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

1. **Consent** *

   I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I can request a copy of this consent form at any time by contacting a member of the research team at steven.flanagan@asu.edu. Upon typing my name and clicking continue, I give my consent to release my grade and participate in this study. I also agree that I am at least 18 years of age, and I have read and understood all information presented on this form.

Background Questionnaire

Instructions

The responses that you give in this questionnaire will be kept confidential. The name you provide allows the researcher to associate your responses for coding and comparison of results only. However, only the researcher will see the name. A pseudonym will be used in place of your name when referring to your responses in data analysis. Every effort will be made to protect your identity, and keep your responses confidential including the use of encrypted and password protected data storage devices.

Thank you for your cooperation as the information you provide here will help us to better understand student success in online language learning environments. Your honest and detailed responses will be both highly crucial to our investigation and greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please contact Steven Flanagan, a graduate student in the department of Spanish (linguistics) at Arizona State University. e-mail: steven.flanagan@asu.edu.

Part I: Basic Demographic Data

2. **What language course are you currently enrolled in?** *

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ SPA 101
   - ◯ ITA 101

3. **What is your 5 digit course line number?** *
   For example, you will see SPA 201 30313. The second number "30313" is your line number.

   _____

4. **What is your gender?** *
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Male
   ◯ Female
   ◯ Other: _____

5. **What is your age?** *

   _____

6. **What is your education level?** *
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ High School
   ◯ Undergraduate
   ◯ Graduate
   ◯ Post Graduate

7. **What year of school are you in?** *
   For example, if you answered "undergraduate" you would write your class or year, such as "sophomore".

   _____

8. **What is your current GPA?** *
   on a 4.0 scale

   _____

9. **Have you ever taken any other language courses? If so what grade did you receive?** *

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Part II: Language Background

10. **What is your country of birth?** *

11. **What language(s) did you speak as a child?** *
Please select all that apply.
Check all that apply.

- [ ] English
- [ ] Spanish
- [ ] Italian
- [ ] French
- [ ] Other:

12. **With whom did you speak each language** *
For example: French, mom; English, father; Italian, grandparents

13. **What languages do you speak regularly outside of your family? With whom?**
For example: English, friends; French, classmates

14. **Do you consider yourself a heritage speaker of another language?** *
A heritage speaker is a person who speaks or understands a language other than English, who either was born in another country and immigrated to the US at early age, or was born in the US and whose parents or grandparents are immigrants from another country.
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

15. **If you answered yes to the above question, what language?**

Part III: Online Learning Background

16. **Have you ever taken an online course?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

17. **If you have taken an online course, how many have you taken?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ I have not taken an online course
- ◯ One to three online courses.
- ◯ Four to six online courses.
- ◯ More than six online courses.
- ◯ Other: _____

18. **If you have taken an online course, what was the subject area of your course?** *
Check all that apply.

- ☐ I have not taken another online course
- ☐ Other Languages
- ☐ Humanities (Art, Social Sciences, etc)
- ☐ STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
- ☐ Other

If you have taken one or more online courses, please answer the following questions. If not, please respond "N/A"

19. **Do you think the online environment contributed to effective communication?** *

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

20. **Do you think the online environment increased your sense of community?** *

21. **Do you think the online environment promoted participation and interaction?** *

22. **Do you think the online environment has met your individual needs?** *

23. **What were your needs in the online environment?** *

The consent form and background questionnaire were adapted from https://www.quincy.edu/resources/faculty-resources/Sample%20consent%20form.doc and Segalowitz and Freed (2004).

☐ Send me a copy of my responses.

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APPENDIX C

ADAPTED TOOLS TEST

TOOLS - Pretest

Your username will be recorded when you submit this form.

1. **What language course are you currently enrolled in?** *
   Mark only one oval.
   - SPA 101
   - ITA 101
   - FRE 101

2. **What is your professor/instructor's last name?** *

The Test of Online Learning Success (TOOLS)

Directions: The following items measure your ability to perform different tasks. There are no right or wrong answers so your first reaction is usually best. Please do not omit any items. If an item does not relate to you, rate it as 0 (not applicable). Your efforts will help us to identify tasks that are most important for student success. Using the following scale, rate how well each item describes you, by selecting your response below each item.

0 - Not Applicable

1- Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neither - Disagree nor Agree

4 - Agree

5- Strongly Agree

The test (comprised of 54 items) should take you no more than 10 minutes to complete and must be completed in one sitting.

Section I

3. **I am capable of learning new technologies.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

4. **I am capable of sending and receiving e-mail.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

5. **I am capable of attaching files to an e-mail message.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

6. **I am a competent Internet browser.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

7. **I am capable of using standard word processing software.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

8. **I am capable of managing files on a computer.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

9. **I can download new software when necessary.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

10. **I can install new software when necessary.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

11. **I can copy and paste text using a computer.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

12. **I am capable of using discussion boards online.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

13. **I am capable of using chat rooms online.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

Section II

Using the following scale, rate how well each item describes you, by selecting your response below each item.

0 - Not Applicable

1- Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neither - Disagree nor Agree

4 - Agree

5- Strongly Agree

14. **I am capable of prioritizing my responsibilities.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

15. **I am a good time manager.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

16. **I am a procrastinator.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

17. **I am capable of making time for my coursework.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

18. **I am able to balance many tasks at one time.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

19. **I am goal-oriented.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

20. **I am self-disciplined when it comes to my studies.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

21. **I am self-motivated.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

22. **I take responsibility for my learning.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

23. **I am capable of critical thinking.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Applicable

Section III

Using the following scale, rate how well each item describes you, by selecting your response below each item.

0 - Not Applicable

1- Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neither - Disagree nor Agree

4 - Agree

5- Strongly Agree

24. **I often leave tasks unfinished.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

25. **I require help to understand written instructions.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

26. **I wait until the last minute to work on assignments.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

27. **I have trouble comprehending what I read.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

28. **I need faculty to remind me of assignment due dates.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

29. **I need incentives/rewards to motivate me to complete a task.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

Section IV

Using the following scale, rate how well each item describes you, by selecting your response below each item.

0 - Not Applicable

1- Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neither - Disagree nor Agree

4 - Agree

5- Strongly Agree

30. **Because of my personal schedule, I need online courses.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

31. **It is difficult for me to go to campus to complete course requirements.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

32. **I need online courses because of my geographical distance from universities.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

33. **I need online courses because of my work schedule.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

34. **I need the freedom of completing coursework at the time and place of my choosing.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

Section V

Using the following scale, rate how well each item describes you, by selecting your response below each item.

0 - Not Applicable

1- Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neither - Disagree nor Agree

4 - Agree

5- Strongly Agree

35. **I can learn by working independently.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

36. **I am self-directed in my learning.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

37. **I am capable of solving problems alone.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

38. **I need face to face interaction to learn.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

39. **I need faculty feedback on my completed assignments.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

40. **I am a good reader.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

41. **I need classroom discussion to learn.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

42. **I am capable of asking for help when I have a problem.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

43. **I am comfortable learning new skills.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

44. **I read carefully.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

45. **I am a good writer.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

46. **I am capable of following written instructions.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

47. **I am capable of conveying my ideas in writing.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

Section VI

Using the following scale, rate how well each item describes you, by selecting your response below each item.

0 - Not Applicable

1- Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neither - Disagree nor Agree

4 - Agree

5- Strongly Agree

48. **I am capable of using specific strategies to learn a language.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

49. **Using an online translator allows me to learn a language effectively.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

50. **Speaking opportunities are always limited in an online language classroom.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

51. **Motivation is important to learning a language.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

52. **"Good language learners" share common attributes.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

53. **I am capable of using learning communities to further my language ability.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

54. **Online language learning means I cannot practice all "four skills."** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Applicable

55. **Learning a language online is easier than "face-to-face" classes.** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

56. **Proper training and orientation are essential to the successful completion of a course** *
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Applicable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

This form was adapted from Kerr et al. (2006)

☐ Send me a copy of my responses.

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APPENDIX D

PROMPTED JOURNALS

Directions: Please reflect on your experiences thus far in your online course. Your honest answers will be of key importance for this study. Only the research team will have access to your answers.

1. Week __2 __4 __6

2. Please characterize your *success* during this latest two-week period:

1- Very Unsuccessful
2 - Unsuccessful
3 - Somewhat Unsuccessful
4 - Somewhat Successful
5 - Successful
6 - Very Successful

__1 __2 __3 __4 __5 __6

Success is defined as a combination of attending class regularly, being internally motivated, setting goals, and having certain learning styles [which] are related to *student achievement*. Student achievement relates to achieving your goals or desired results based on personal and course expectations.

3. How do you think that you were *successful* in accomplishing your work, goals, tasks, studying, and other course related material? Please elaborate on your answer.

4. What aspects of the course did you find most difficult during this two-week period? Please elaborate on your answer.

5. What aspects of the course were the easiest for you during this two-week period? Please elaborate on your answer.

6. How many times did you have to contact your instructor regarding technology issues related to the course during this two-week period? Please describe one instance, if applicable.

7. How many times did you have to contact your instructor regarding organizational issues related to the course during this two-week period? Please describe one instance, if applicable.

8. Please write about 3 things that you struggled with, 2 things that you have learned, and one moment that can be classified as an "ah-ha" moment.

Please leave some additional comments about your overall impression of your online language learning experience.

APPENDIX E

EXIT SURVEY

Directions: Thank you for your participation in this research study about online language learning! Please take a few minutes to fill out this exit survey. Your honest answers will be of key importance for this study. Only the research team will have access to your answers.

1. Rate your overall *success** during this course:

    1- Very Unsuccessful
    2- Unsuccessful
    3- Somewhat Unsuccessful
    4- Somewhat Successful
    5- Successful
    6- Very Successful

__1 __2 __3 __4 __5 __6

2. Please elaborate on your *success** in accomplishing your work, goals, tasks, studying, and other course related material now that you have completed the course.

* *Success* is defined as a combination of attending class regularly, being internally motivated, setting goals, and having certain learning styles [which] are related to *student achievement*. Student achievement relates to achieving your goals or desired results based on personal and course expectations.

What parts of the course were most helpful to you in achieving your success?

What actions did you take that led to your success?

3. What grade did you earn/do you expect to earn in this course? _____

4. What was most difficult for you during this course? Please elaborate.

5. What was the easiest thing for you to accomplish during this course? Please elaborate.

6. How many times did you have to contact your instructor regarding technology issues? Please elaborate on one instance.

7. Do you feel you received proper orientation to be able to function properly and be successful in the online environment? Please elaborate what types of orientation were most helpful.

8. Please leave some additional comments about your overall impression of your online language learning experience.

APPENDIX F

INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Andrew Ross
International Letters and Cultures, School of (SILC)
-
Andrew.Ross.2@asu.edu

Dear Andrew Ross:

On 1/5/2016 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Language Orientation and Student Success in Online Learning Environments
Investigator:	Andrew Ross
IRB ID:	STUDY00003295
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• ConsentFormBackgorundQuestionnaire (1).pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Recruitmente-mailvideo.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • JournalPromtps.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • ExitSurvey.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • HRP-503a_SocialBehavioral_revAR_120315 (2).docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • TOOLS.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings on 1/5/2016.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Steven Flanagan
Barbara Lafford
Carla Ghanem
Steven Flanagan