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Vang, Frank Chua.

The availability of adequate educational support programs for Southeast Asians as English as a second language students in Wausau East High School.

SUBMISSION OF FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

University of Wisconsin -Stout
The Graduate College

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THE AVAILABILITY OF ADEQUATE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR
SOUTHEAST ASIANS AS ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS IN WAUSAU
EAST HIGH SCHOOL.

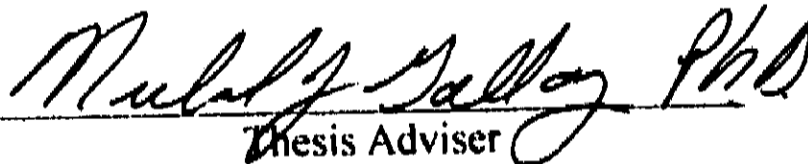
By

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ABSTRACT

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Title: The Availability of Adequate Educational Support Programs for Southeast
Asians as English as Second Language Students in Wausau East High
School.

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American Psychological Association Manual

This research examined the availability of adequate educational support programs for Southeast Asians (SEA) English as Second Language (ESL) students in Wausau East High School. There are approximately two hundred fifty Southeast Asian students enrolled in Wausau East High School. A primary concern of SEA is that in such communities the educational support should be provided on mainstream levels. Otherwise, the ESL students may not succeed with their education goals.

The questionnaire asked about class performance, language barrier, need for additional academic support, and the ability to read and write English. The same questions were asked of the faculty/staff and students. Of the two hundred fifty Southeast Asian students at Wausau East High School, some attended North-central Technical

College half time as Seniors, and thus were not available to answer the questionnaire.

There were one hundred thirteen Southeast Asian students who answered the questionnaire. Fifty-four percent were in mainstream classes and twenty-six percent were in special ESL classes, while twenty percent were in lower reading/writing levels. Student evaluations showed that thirty-nine percent "strongly agree" that ESL helps toward success, twenty-three percent "agree" that ESL brings success. If the Undecided category is included, nearly eighty percent of Southeast Asian students think ESL classes are helpful.

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I am grateful especially for my family which has given love, encouragement, and provided economic support. My extended family has sustained many predicaments brought on by the need for quiet study and financial support. First, I want to thank my wife, Ma M. Vang, for everything she has been done and suffered in the household. We are both full time students and she tried her best to support and encourage me to complete my research study. I am grateful for my brother and brother-in-law Kao Vue, my sister, Zong V. Vue, that they both expect me to continue higher education.

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Especially, I extend a sincere thank you to the Wausau East High School and the administrator, faculty, staff and ESL program coordinator for permitting me to do my research project. Without support by the school administration, I could not complete my research project.

It is my hope that this research will be helpful in improving career planning for Southeast Asian Students everywhere. Particularly, may the students at Wausau East High School benefit from additional academic support.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the Hmong people immigrated to the United States from Laos. The word "Hmong" means fortune and is used to reflect the concept of freedom or "free people." However, due to the war with the Chinese, the Hmong were called Meo or Miao (Barbarian) which is offensive to the Hmong. Originally, the Hmong moved from Southeast China to the northern part of Laos between the 16th and 18th centuries. About two centuries later, half of the Hmong population in Laos fled to America because of their close connection with the American troops during the Vietnam War.

The Hmong people have simultaneously existed in the same land with the Chinese people for generations. Their native homeland was located at the Yellow River and Blue River, and they were prosperous due to the guardianship of their spiritual ancestors, according to their cultural beliefs. The Hmong and the Chinese were related through their marriages. In the middle of the 18th century, because of wars, the Hmong were forced to the south of China and finally settled in the high mountain region of northern Laos.

They seldom lived in the lowlands because they disliked the humid weather. Many years after they arrived in Laos, they were integrated slowly into the Laotian society and the new civilization was built, but their written language had not been brought with them from China. "At that time, according to the legend, the Miao knew at least some written characters. As they stood beside the water pondering what to do, they noticed water spiders walking about on the surface. They said to themselves, "If these little things can walk on the water, why can't we!" So the Miao tried, with the result that they nearly drowned. In struggling to regain the bank they swallowed a lot of water, and along with the water they swallowed all the written characters they knew." (Wong, How-Man, 1984, pp. 283-323).

In the many years of resettlement in the United States, the Hmong have encountered many different types of prejudice or discrimination. They are disadvantaged in education, employment, and business due to language barriers, unmatched job skills, and difficulties in adjusting to a new lifestyle. Today, most of the elderly Hmong are now suffering from culture shock and are melancholy because of having experienced many disasters for many years. Currently, the Hmong elders are hopeless except in regard to their young children who are attending American schools. They hope that their teenagers will return to the

traditional Hmong cultural practices along with education. "Improve the Tools of Educators was created to advance the quality of materials and technology for students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse learning needs." (Alvarez, 1994, p. 90-91). Their chief concern was for conditions among new Hmong immigrants. These young people will very likely be overwhelmed by the new experiences they encounter in their new environment.

The Hmong have difficulty with English language, vocabulary, cultural practices, educational career planning, and social life problems. One of the most important achievements required of a good education is "achieving an integrated and personally satisfying set of attitudes and values, but a productive style of life is especially difficult under conditions of very rapid societal change." (Alvarez, 1994, p. 90-91).

The United States has a major portion of all the Southeast Asian (SEA) immigrants. There have been approximately 75,000 Southeast Asian people living in the state of Wisconsin between 1991 and 1999. The number of Hmong are 40,000, Laotian 4,879, Vietnamese 3,458, and Cambodian 801. In the city of Wausau, there is a population of 5,700 Southeast Asians. In the states of

Minnesota and California there are larger Hmong and Southeast Asian populations than in Wisconsin.

The Southeast Asian community has many teenagers presently attending Wausau East High School. Many of the Hmong students have been enrolled in the English as Second Language (ESL) classes and some are in mainstream classes. The attempt to assist SEA youth to achieve an education in the public school system may be accomplished by developing a better mainstream and ESL program to meet their needs. The ESL program seems to be working, but no one has evaluated its effectiveness. Is the program helping SEA teenagers to succeed in school? Will it provide these students with the necessary skills and knowledge to prepare them for higher educational programs in technical, community, and private colleges or state universities?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

At Wausau East High School, approximately 250 Southeast Asian students are enrolled in mainstream and English as a Second Language classes. The Southeast Asian communities in the state of Wisconsin are worried about their teenagers' future education being slow and that it may not satisfy their educational goals. The Southeast Asian communities are concerned about educational support

for Southeast Asian students, bilingual services and guidance, and these students' ability to pursue college careers after their completion of ESL in a high school program. A primary concern of the SEA communities with the ESL program is that it should provide the same skills as the mainstream level, otherwise some students may not be able to achieve their goals. Southeast Asian parents, or Hmong parents, hope Wausau East High School will develop/design a program to support, tutor, and coach their teenagers. This will provide a broader focus and increase the vocabulary and abilities of Southeast Asian students.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the Hmong and others of the Southeast Asian Wausau community are worried about the effectiveness of educational support programs for Southeast Asian English as Second Language students at Wausau East High School. It attempted to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of the special programs for Southeast Asian students such as the bilingual program, tutoring, coaching, counseling, and career planning.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The five following objectives will be investigated:

1. To determine the academic performances of the mainstream and English as a Second Language Southeast Asian students at Wausau East High School.
2. To determine if there was a correlation with the English language difficulties of the English as a Second Language Southeast Asian students and their general academic difficulties
3. To determine if there was a need for educational support and the importance of the mainstream and English as a Second Language for Southeast Asian students.
4. To determine if bilingual education was necessary for English as a Second Language Southeast Asian students who have limited use of the English language.
5. To determine if there is a need of bilingual staff to assist the above mentioned Southeast Asian ESL students.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Southeast Asian (SEA) Chinese, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese.

Hmong: A group of people calling themselves "free people" or "freedom."

Blue River in Northern China: The original location of Hmong city in China.

Laotian: A group of Thai people who lived on the shore of the Mekong River.

Laos: A landlocked country in Southeast Asia which is called "The Million
Elephant Country."

Yellow River in Northern China: See Blue River.

Vietnam War: War in Southeast Asia, occurring from 1946-1975.

Mainstream: Regular Southeast Asian students who study the same as American
students.

English as a Second Language: A program designed for non-English speaking,
second language, immigrant, and SEA. students.

Bilingual Education: Using or involving two languages.

Language Barrier: Difficulty in speaking or writing English.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature examined what has been done in a number of similar situations throughout the country. It reviewed the educational background and problems for which learning English as Second Language was not adequate, and why Southeast Asian high school students still graduate from high school with low English in oral reading, written language, math and science skills. This study has illustrated why the Southeast Asian students have critical academic problems and studied their learning disabilities. Many Southeast Asian people were moved out of their country after the Vietnam War. When they arrived in America in 1976, they were in further distress because the educational program lacked support to Southeast Asian (SEA) students.

How could education improve Southeast Asian (SEA) students knowledge pertaining to the problem of vocabulary, English grammar, and other difficulties? The literature suggested the use of a buddy system and enrollment in classes which required less language, such as physical education, art, or music. (Glakas, Barbara A. September 1993, p. 20.)

A study of immigrant students in New York City showed that

undocumented students maintained a grade point average (GPA) of 2.78. None of the undocumented students holding a foreign high school diploma was on academic probation. On the other hand, 61 percent of those on probation had graduated from a U.S. high school. This showed that other countries have better foreign language programs, or perhaps that there are a majority of American students in New York City. (Dozier, Sandra B. 1995, p. 21). States that European countries have better foreign language programs than the U.S.

Another study said that France and the United Kingdom maintained a tradition of serving as countries of higher education for those coming from former colonial countries. However, the U.S. and Canada, along with Germany, seem to draw students from Asiatic countries. (D'Arca, Renato, 1990, p.20).

A 1995 study of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students shared the techniques of four different teachers across the U.S. One recommended to recruit native-speaking volunteers. Another set up mentor pairs or a buddy system. One teacher in Princeton, New Jersey, had 43 students who spoke 21 different languages. She said, "A smile is universal," and she grouped learners according to the structure of their first language. For example, students from

Israel, Japan, and China learn the English alphabet together. One teacher recommended picture journals of students' lives with pictures from magazines and/or handdrawn pictures. The last teacher concentrated on cooperative learning with buddies. (Schall, Jane, July/August 1995, pp. 54-59). Different teachers recommend different techniques especially the buddy system.

A 1994 study by Peter Li, Inc. recommended the use of a series of six CD-ROM programs for fourth to twelfth grade students. With students reading and writing at many different levels, and in many different languages, making a transition to a mainstream classroom is difficult. This program may be ideal, but it cost over \$10,000. The video portion of the program was designed as a teacher presentation tool and introduced youngsters to folktales such as "The City Mouse and the Country Mouse," "The Magic Tortilla," "Stone Soup," and other appealing stories that are the heart of the program. The tales, which have such diverse origins as Jamaica, France, Russia, Africa, and South America, are a blend of high-quality readings, real voices, and colorful cartoons and photos portraying characters from a number of cultures in positive roles. All words, language structures, and concepts taught through folktales are reinforced by a wealth of group, individual, and cooperative activities which students can

complete with or without the computer. (Lopez, David, and Susan Melester, April 1994, p. 22-29). Folktales were gathered from different countries and presented on video. Any Southeast Asian who saw Folktale would be reminded of their former way of life and can compare it with their present lifestyle.

Professor Ray Hutchison of UW-Green Bay researched the Hmong students in six districts: Appleton, Eau Claire, Green Bay, La Crosse, Sheboygan, and Wausau. Standardized test results showed that the Hmong students surpassed the national average. "He found 68 percent of the Asian students in 10th grade in the six districts scored above the national average in math, compared with 71 percent of all the districts' students." (Hutchison, Professor Ray, December 30, 1997, p. 1A-2A). Southeast Asian students and their parents value education highly. However, in their home districts Hmong students' test results scored below the rest of the student body in reading, science, and written language skills. Nevertheless, the gap between these groups is narrowing each year. Thai Vue from Hmong La Crosse Association commented on Professor Hutchison's research and said, "Education is one of the major goals that parents really encourage children to do. Hmong parents value education very, very

highly."(Hutchison, Professor Ray, December 30, 1997, pp. 1A-2A).

The literature review confirmed many of the techniques used in our local programs. These methods should teach mainstream and ESL students more capably and efficiently.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The administrator of Wausau East High School granted permission for a survey of 70 mainstream Southeast Asian (SEA) students and 43 English as a Second Language (ESL) Southeast Asian students to discover the impact of S.E.A students on their general educational environment. Further, a faculty/staff questionnaire was completed by 43 respondents. This surveyed the competence of students in English as Second Language (ESL) for SEA groups.

Mainstream students attend regular classes as ordinary American students do. ESL students are enrolled in special classes where they are taught English as a Second Language. ESL students are allowed to share in mainstream classes in physical education, math, art, and music. The objective is to mainstream ESL students as quickly as possible.

Another factor in the survey was a comparison of the grade point average (GPA) of Southeast Asian mainstream students, which was 2.93, to the GPA of Southeast Asian ESL students which was 2.55.

The GPA is considered important in American education because it shows

mastery of subject content. In the spring semester of 1997 at Wausau East High School, Southeast Asian mainstream students' GPA average semester total was 2.93. The GPA average for ESL students was 2.55. There was not much difference between mainstream and ESL, which again confirms that these are eager students and should be given every opportunity to succeed.

Method of Study

The instrument used was a faculty/staff questionnaire. It concerned the ESL or SEA students in that person's class. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "Strongly Agree," ESL students were evaluated on language problems, need for additional academic support, benefit of bilingual help, and general academic achievement. Another part of the survey requested the grade level for each student's reading and writing. This emphasized the concern for proficient education. A student questionnaire was administered to 113 Southeast Asian (S.E.A.) students, 70 in mainstream classes and 43 in ESL classes. The questionnaire followed the same pattern as the faculty/staff survey, but called for personal evaluation. The questions asked about a language barrier, need for additional academic support, more ESL help, and general performance.

The methods and procedures used in this study of English as a Second Language (ESL) are explained in this chapter under the headings: (1) Method of Study, (2) Sample Selection, (3) Instrumentation, (4) Procedures Followed, and (5) Method of Analysis.

The researcher developed a questionnaire with similar questions that was directed toward Southeast Asian students. These were divided into two groups: those still in ESL classes and those mainstream students who participated in regular classrooms. The second questionnaire was similar, but it was directed toward the faculty/staff.

A consent form must be obtained from a person's program director and thesis advisor. Before any work can be done, a consent form must also be approved by the Board of Education together with copies of the questionnaire for the faculty/staff as well as the student's questionnaire. Approval was given within two weeks.

At Wausau East High School the administrator in charge of Southeast Asian (S.E.A) students agreed to cooperate in the study. The ESL director presented the questionnaire to the Board of Education and obtained permission

with classroom space for the administration of the questionnaire. The principal assisted by alerting the faculty/staff that a study on the use of English as a Second Language with Southeast Asian students would be conducted in their classrooms.

The administrator of the program for Southeast Asian (SEA) students agreed to give the questionnaire to all Southeast Asian (SEA) students. The English as a Second Language (ESL) director handed out the questionnaire to each student as they approached their first class of the day.

Instrumentation

The technique for data gathering was a one-page questionnaire which was to be distributed to Southeast Asian (SEA) Students at Wausau East High School and to those faculty/staff who had contact with Southeast Asian (SEA) Students.

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and it maintained approximately the same questions for each category of respondent. A copy of the questionnaire is to be found in the appendix of this paper.

These questions were graded on a five-point scale with 5 being "Strongly Agree" and 1 being "Strongly Disagree." The student procedure required only about fifteen minutes for the students to respond to the questionnaire.

The questions were intended to discover the needs of the Southeast Asian (S.E.A.) students. This accounts for the question on language barrier, additional

academic support, and success in reading/writing. The student questionnaire assessed the students' ability to perform in mainstream classes, to overcome a language barrier, to require additional academic support, and to apply reading/writing in their everyday class work. The faculty/staff questionnaire examined the language barrier, the need for additional academic support, and the level of reading/writing ability.

Procedures Followed

1. Obtain a consent form for the study from the Board of Education.
2. Obtain a consent form from the administrator of the school to do the study.
3. Confer with the faculty/staff of the upcoming survey concerning the analysis of Southeast Asian students.
4. Present the questionnaire in the classroom, while the researcher waits to gather the data.
5. Analyze the information on the questionnaire.
6. Write up the research study.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire provided a range of responses from 5 -- Strongly Agree, 4 -- Agree, 3 -- Undecided, 2 -- Disagree, 1 -- Strongly Disagree.

The researcher counted responses to determine how students reacted to the questionnaire. This told how important the different questions were for the students involved. The faculty/staff responses accented the same information.

CHAPTER IV

The purpose of the study was to determine how effective English as a Second Language (ESL) was in preparing Southeast Asian (SEA) students to participate in high school classes and to prepare them to go to college. There were special program such as the bilingual programs, tutoring, coaching, counseling, and career planning. Partly, the study was intended to discover any relationship between Southeast Asian students' difficulty with the language and their general academic problem..

The method used was to distribute similar questionnaires to 113 students at Wausau East High School and to 43 faculty/staff. All of the years of high school were represented. There were about equal numbers of male and female students.

Demographic Information

This sample consisted of 62 males and 51 females. Wausau High School teenagers were 15 to 18 years old. (See Table 1. below). The following data showed that 66 percent of all student surveyed were freshmen and sophomores, while only 40 percent were juniors and seniors. In a gender analysis 53 percent were males, while 47 percent were females. The questionnaire were collected in about 10 minutes; there were 113 questionnaire returned. The faculty/staff data

returned 43 papers.

Student Males: School Year: Females: School Year:

18	Freshmen	17	Freshmen
15	Sophomore	18	Sophomore
13	Junior	9	Junior
14	Senior	9	Senior

The main body of the questionnaire dealt with academic ability and language barriers in school. (See Table 2. below).

<u>Genders</u>	<u>Freshmen</u>	<u>Sophomore</u>	<u>Junior</u>	<u>Senior</u>
Male	N=18	N=15	N=13	N=14
Female	N=17	N=18	N=09	N=0
Total	N= 35	N=33	N=22	N=14
Male	51%	55%	60%	100%
Female	49%	45%	40%	0%

The overall number of students involved was 113 students. The school administration did not allow a pilot test. However, they did provide grade point average information for each ESL and mainstream SEA students to show their classroom ability. An analysis of the GPA for the mainstream SEA students averages 2.92, while the average GPA for ESL students averages 2.55. The GPAs are remarkable for students whose native language is so different from

English. Furthermore, these young people have lived in the States for only a brief time.

Data Analysis

The first research objective was to determine the academic performances of the mainstream and English as a Second Language (ESL) Southeast Asian (SEA) students at Wausau East High School. The data showed 30 percent of the students "Strongly Agree" that they performed well in mainstream classes in this school, 40 percent of the students "Agree," 24 percent of the students were "Undecided" 4 percent of the students claimed "Strongly Disagree," with good academic performance.

Another phase of the study includes 43 members of the faculty/staff of Wausau East High School. These professionals were asked to evaluate the performance of the Southeast Asian (SEA) students on the same basis as the students questionnaire. 16 percent claimed they had no contact with SEA Students and these have been eliminated from the study. This means that 43 professional responses are being analyzed 91 percent of the responses indicated that SEA students "Generally do well in my classes" No one mark "Strongly Disagree."

The second research objective was to determine if there is a correlation

with the English language difficulty of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Southeast Asian (SEA) students and their general academic difficulties. The data showed 39 percent "Strongly Agree" that ESL helps toward success. 23 percent "Agree" that ESL helps success. 17 percent were "Undecided" that there would be success. 18 percent "Disagree" about ESL success. 3 percent "Strongly Disagree" about ESL success. The students believe that ESL does help them, the SEA students, to be successful. If one includes the "Undecided," this showed that nearly 82 percent of the students found ESL helpful.

With regard to whether ESL students have a language barrier, faculty/staff responded 72 percent "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" and "Undecided" while 28 percent "Strongly Disagree" or "Disagree."

The third research objective was to determine if there was a need for educational support and the importance of the mainstream and ESL for SEA students. The data showed 22 percent of the students "Strongly Agree" that they need additional academic support. 22.2 percent of the students were "Undecided" about academic support. 26.6 percent of the students "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree with their need for additional academic support.

Extra ESL support was considered helpful by 88 percent of faculty/staff. These professionals recommended additional academic support for SEA students, because they are not accomplished in reading/writing in English.

The fourth research objective was to determine if bilingual education is necessary for ESL Southeast Asian students who have limited use of the English language. The data showed 62 percent of the students "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that the bilingual staff helped them to be successful.

88 percent of the faculty/staff agree that having bilingual aides benefits SEA students. Bilingual assistance should not allow student to avoid learning English.

The fifth research objective was to determine if there was a need of bilingual staff to assist the above mentioned SEA English as a Second Language students. The data showed that among students 44 percent "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" about the need for additional academic support which can best be given by bilingual personnel. Tutoring, coaching, counseling, and career planning could best be served by bilingual staff.

Among the academic personnel, 88 percent "Strongly Agree," or "Agree" or are "Undecided," about bilingual assistance. No one indicated "Strongly Disagree" with bilingual support. It is important to have professional counselors and assistants as bilingual personnel.

Another objective of the study was to discover the benefit of ESL classes.

Among faculty/staff 88 percent gave high approval to ESL classes. Among the students, 62 percent marked "Agree" or "Strongly Agree."

Besides high school success and college preparation to discover how successful Southeast Asian students were at reading/writing in their mainstream classes, faculty/staff claimed that only 28 percent of these students could read/write up to grade level. At the same time 28 percent of students claimed that they had a problem with reading/writing the textbooks in their mainstream classes. The data showed that faculty/staff and students agree. However, this percentage could be much higher, so the ESL program must be quite effective.

The questionnaire provided a range of responses from 5 -- Strongly Agree, 4 -- Agree, 3 -- Undecided, 2 -- Disagree, 1 -- Strongly Disagree.

The researcher counted responses to determine how students reacted to the questionnaire. This told how important the different questions were for the students involved. The faculty/staff responses accented the same information.

The data showed that there indeed was a language barrier with 58 percent of students marking "Agree" or "Strongly Agree." The faculty/staff were 72 percent for "Agree" or "Strongly Agree." Additional academic support was requested by 44.2 percent of students.

Extra ESL support was considered helpful by 83 percent of faculty/staff

and by 62 percent of the student of the students.

The students responses to "I perform well in mainstream classes in this school" showed that 66 percent of them felt good enough to mark "Agree" or "Strongly Agree." This result in itself confirms the value of the research.

As to the benefit of English as Second Language (ESL) classes, 88 percent of faculty/staff agree that having bilingual help benefit students. At the same time the student responses showed 62 percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that English as Second Language (ESL) classes help them to be successful.

To summarize the results, it is obvious that Southeast Asian students at Wausau East High School had a problem with reading and writing English. Although a college education is a strong goal for Southeast Asian students, they will need additional academic support to succeed. One factor which will help is the presence of bilingual assistants in the classroom. Another aid would be an opportunity for career planning. Perhaps these will give some refugees a possibility for a successful American life.

This chapter presents the research at Wausau East High School among Southeast Asian students. It showed the following results.

English as a Second Language(ESL) Level

N=60 Students level 6 or advanced 54 percent.

N=30 Students level 5 between advanced 26 percent.

Eighty percent of all Southeast Asian students at Wausau East High School were at levels 5 or 6, meaning advanced or upgraded.

The lower levels showed: N= 4 or 7 percent, N=3 or 8 percent, N= 2 or 2 percent, N=1 or .1 percent.

This research showed that most Southeast Asian (SEA) students at Wausau East High School function on an advanced or upgraded level even considering their disabilities. Higher levels have more difficult vocabulary and require more analysis of material.

Student rating of their performance in their mainstream classes showed 30 percent of level 5 which means that the students "Strongly Agree" that they performed well in mainstream classes in this school, 40 percent of level 4 which means "Agree," 24 percent of level 3 which means "Undecided," 2 percent of level 2 which means they "Disagree" with good performance, 4 percent of level 1 claimed "Strongly Disagree" with good academic performance.

This data showed that a large majority consider themselves to be doing well in mainstream classes at Wausau East High School.

Language Barrier

The statement "I have a language barrier" showed the following result from 113 Southeast Asian students at Wausau East High School:

25 percent "Strongly Agree" that they have a language barrier. 33 percent "Agree" that they have a language barrier. 16 percent "Undecided" about a language barrier. 5 percent "Disagree" that they have a language barrier. 21 percent "Strongly Disagree" that they have a language barrier.

It is possible that the last category are students who were born in the United States and feel that they have learned English from early childhood, so they cannot agree that they have a language barrier, because the student has the educational support by their American friends, teachers, and the educational programs. If a refugee has a sponsor who can help him/her, this would be a first step in learning English.

Academic Support

The question of additional academic support showed varied needs. 22 percent "Strongly Agree" that they need additional academic support. 22.2 percent "Agree" with additional academic support. 29.2 percent "Undecided" about academic support. 13.3 percent "Disagree" with their need for academic support. 13.3 percent "Strongly Disagree" with academic support. A total of 73.4

percent saw that building vocabulary with Southeast Asian students could be a major problem and more coaching would be helpful. The 26.6 percent who "Disagree" must feel that they have enough support from present personnel.

ESL Successful

Does English as a Second Language (ESL) help a student to be successful? 39 percent "Strongly Agree" that ESL helps toward success. 23 percent "Agree" that ESL brings success. 17 percent "Undecided" that there would be success. 18 percent "Disagree" about ESL success. 3 percent "Strongly Disagree" that ESL bring success.

The students believe that ESL does help them, the Southeast Asian students, to be successful. If one includes the "Undecided," this shows that nearly 80 percent of the students found ESL helpful.

Read and Write

The last question asks whether the student thinks he/she can read and write adequately: 9 percent "Strongly Agree" that they read/write well 19 percent "Agree" that they can read/write well. 15 percent "Undecided" about read/write. 17 percent "Disagree" that they can read/write. 40 percent "Strongly Disagree" that they can read/write well. The data shows that more than half of the Southeast Asian groups are not sure of their ability to read English material and write English grammar.

Another phase of the study includes 43 members of the faculty/staff of Wausau East High School. These professionals were asked to evaluate the performance of the Southeast Asian students on the same basis as the student questionnaire. The following will be an analysis of faculty/staff responses. This was given on April 30, 1997.

Of the 43 responses, 84 percent said that they have Southeast Asians under their care. The 16 percent who claimed they have no contact with Southeast Asian students have been eliminated from this study. This means that 36 professional responses are being analyzed.

The first question asked about class performance. Ninety-one percent of the responses indicated that SEA students "Generally do well in my classes on a basis of 'Strongly Agree,' 'Agree,' or 'Undecided'." No one responded "Strongly Disagree." This data supports the general public's view that Southeast Asian young people are diligent and intelligent students who value education highly.

The second question asked whether ESL students have a language barrier in class. Faculty/staff responded 72 percent "Strongly Agree," "Agree," and "Undecided," while 28 percent "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree." In the same groupings, the student perceptions were almost equal in that 79 percent agreed that there is a language barrier, while 21 percent think there is no barrier.

The third question deals with the need for additional academic support. Faculty/staff showed a surprising 35 percent "Undecided" as to whether or not additional academic support would help, while 56 percent "Strongly Agree" that additional academic aid would provide support. In the student survey 29 percent were "Undecided" (the highest percentage) and 44 percent "Strongly Agree" and "Agree." about the need for additional academic support.

The next question inquires about the benefit of bilingual aid to support the Southeast Asian students. Among the academic personnel, 88 percent "Strongly Agree," "Agree," or are "Undecided," about bilingual assistance. No one indicated "Strongly Disagree" with bilingual support. It is important to have professional counselors and assistants as bilingual personnel.

The faculty/staff survey next inquired about the level of reading and writing for Southeast Asian (SEA) students. The survey showed that 28 percent of Southeast Asian (SEA) students read English at grade levels 10, 11, and 12, while 72 percent are below grade level. Further, 14 percent or 12 students read at grade 3, 4, and 5. Writing levels are even more difficult to attain. Twenty-five percent of Southeast Asian (SEA) students maintain grade levels 10, 11, and 12; 34 percent keep up to grade levels 7, 8, and 9; while 40 percent reach only grade levels 3, 4, 5, and 6. Perhaps some of this last group are new refugees, since new people are being admitted until the end of 1997.

Another factor in this research is the GPA attained by the Southeast Asian (SEA) students at Wausau East High School. Some Southeast Asian (SEA) students join in the mainstream classes, while others have special English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. At Wausau East High School, the median GPA for Southeast Asian (SEA) mainstream student is 2.93. The median GPA for Southeast Asian (SEA) students in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes is 2.55. To improve the standing of these students so that they will be able to continue in higher education, more professional assistance will need to be provided.

This study is supported by Professor Hutchison's recent research which stresses Hmong concern for a strong education. Many families are held back by poverty at home and lack of education among the elders. But their experience is another example of "people pulling themselves up by their bootstraps."

Chapter V

Conclusion and Recommendation

The purpose of this research was to discover the value of English as a Second Language (ESL) among Southeast Asian (SEA) students. Questionnaires were distributed to 113 SEA students and faculty/staff. There was general agreement that SEA students could use academic assistance, particularly bilingual personnel who would be present in the classroom and available for consultation.

This research was done at Wausau East High School and included Wausau East High School administrators, faculty/staff, and students from grades 9 through 12. The questions on the survey inquired about language ability, academic support, and ESL effectiveness. Students in the survey included only Southeast Asian students who are Chinese, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese.

The research done for this study showed that additional academic support is necessary for SEA students. It is recommended that the school district provide bilingual professionals to assist the students to improve their opportunity for higher education. Tutoring, coaching, counseling and career planning would supply intensive personal support in individual areas of need.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The first research objective was to determine the academic performance of the mainstream and English as a Second Language (ESL) Southeast Asian (SEA) students at Wausau East High School. The data showed that 66 percent of students responses mark "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to the statement "I perform well in mainstream classes in the school." As to the benefit of ESL classes, 88 percent of faculty/staff agree that having bilingual help benefit students. At the same time, 62 percent of students "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that ESL classes help them to be successful.

A college education is a strong goal for SEA students. However, they will need additional academic support to succeed. One recommendation is the presence of bilingual assistants in the classroom. Another recommendation would be help in career planning.

The second research objective was to determine if there was a correlation with the English language difficulties of ESL Southeast Asian students and their general academic difficulties. The data showed 30 percent of the students "Strongly Agree" that they perform well in mainstream classes and 40 percent "Agree" that they do the same.

A recommendation would supply additional academic support to the other

30 percent, especially by bilingual instructions.

A third research objective was to determine if there is a need for educational support and the importance of the mainstream and ESL Southeast Asian students. The data showed that 91 percent of faculty/staff responses indicated that SEA students "general do well in my classes." This supports the public view that SEA students work very hard to get good education, especially a college education.

Recommendation: bilingual counseling toward career planning search for a suitable college, job placement, job training, and/or join the service.

The fourth research objective was to determine if bilingual education is necessary for ESL Southeast Asian students who have the limited use of the English language. The data showed that bilingual education is recommended, but not absolutely necessary and can possibly be abused.

Recommendation: Each facility in school district employ various personnel such as counseling and coaching.

The fifth research objective was to determine if there was a need of bilingual staff to assist the above mentioned ESL Southeast Asian students. The data showed that bilingual personnel are valuable as role models and as counselors, teachers, coaches and assistants in counseling students.

Recommendation: To provide bilingual staff in the area needed by the

population of the various school facilities. To require that the personnel be updated in their expertise.

Rating of their performance in their mainstream classes showed 30 percent of level 5 which means that the students "Strongly Agree" that they perform well in mainstream classes in Wausau East High School. Forty percent of level 4 which means "Agree." Twenty - four percent of level 3 which means "Undecided." Two percent of level 2 which means they "Disagree" with good performance. Four percent of level 1 who "Strongly Disagree" with good academic performance. The GPA average for ESL students was 2.55. There was not much difference between mainstream and ESL Southeast Asian students. Whose average semester GPA was 2.93.

Result: The GPA for mainstream Southeast Asian students was 2.93, while the GPA for English as a Second Language (ESL) students was 2.55.

The student responses to the questionnaire showed that students agreed that having bilingual help is useful to them. Responses showed that 54 percent of the Southeast Asian students received help from ESL advanced classes.

Result: Of the faculty/staff responses 88 percent agreed that bilingual help benefits students.

The returned questionnaires showed 91 percent of faculty/staff responded

that generally Southeast Asian students do well on a daily basis. No one marked the response "Strongly Disagree." In analyzing the students' responses to the questionnaire, sometimes the faculty/staff and the students agree, and sometimes they disagree. The question of a need for additional academic support showed 44.2 percent of students "Strongly Agree." Faculty/staff showed 56 percent urged additional academic support. On the question of a language barrier, 58 percent of students "Strongly Agree," while the faculty/staff showed 72 percent "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that Southeast Asian students have a language barrier.

Result: Additional academic support was recognized as a need by 75.4 percent Of Southeast Asian (S.E.A.) students.

Professional responses were gathered from 43 persons in contact with Southeast Asian students. Nevertheless, 88 percent would support additional academic assistance, particularly bilingual personnel, who would be present in the classroom and available for consultation. The questionnaire showed that 88 percent of faculty/staff agreed that having bilingual help benefits students. Some persons suggest that parents could be helpful as bilingual personnel. This would show parents what their students are doing at the same time.

Professional responses were gathered from 43 persons in contact with Southeast Asian students. Nevertheless, 88 percent would support additional academic assistance, particularly bilingual personnel, who would be present in the

classroom and available for consultation. The questionnaire showed that 88 percent of faculty/staff agreed that having bilingual help benefits students. Some persons suggest that parents could be helpful as bilingual personnel. This would show parents what their students are doing at the same time.

Result: Among academic personnel, 88 percent "strongly agree," "agree," or were "undecided" about bilingual assistance. No one "Strongly Disagree" with bilingual support.

There were only 24 percent of students who claimed reading and writing skills up to grade level. Faculty/staff agreed that 24 percent of Southeast students could read and write up to grade level. This should underwrite extra expenses for additional bilingual assistants in these essential academic subjects.

Result: ESL students in Southeast Asian families have very little perspective on the possible career choices open to them. They hope to go to college, but they need bilingual counselors to advise them. Counseling and career planning are essential. Bilingual personnel was advocated by 88 percent of faculty/staff responses and 62 percent of student responses. It is to be hoped that grant funding can be made available to assist these brave young refugees to qualify for a dignified life in America, their new home.

The research by Professor Hutchison of UW-Green Bay studied standardized

test results and confirmed the academic ability of Southeast Asians in six Wisconsin districts. He found that 68 percent of his S.E.A. students in grade 10 scored above the national average in math, but not above the scores in their own school districts. This means that additional academic support would be valued.

In the Wausau study, some Southeast Asian students showed particularly low academic ability in reading and writing skills. Seventy - two percent were below grade level in reading skills, many from grades 6 to 9. Even lower were 14 percent who scored at grades 3 to 5. This underlines why the professionals favor additional academic support.

Recommendation

The results of this study showed that Southeast Asian students are eager to learn and that their parents support the school district in many ways. Parents can help by attending conferences, by encouraging their children, by getting involved in activities. This can mean fund-raising, volunteering to supervise sports activities, escorting school trips, accompanying the school group on an excursion.

Professional bilingual support by a qualified candidate with background experience is the most essential recommendation. Higher education of personnel will improve the effectiveness of learning among the students. Social psychology will provide support to SEA students and bilingual counseling will promote the self-esteem of struggling students. Additional academic support will promote

career planning and goals toward higher education.

Conclusion

The Southeast Asian people have struggled over the years to improve their living conditions. However, living in America they are working toward a better life by promoting education. The quality of high school education is a strong factor in achieving a technical, community college or university education.

The research done for this study shows that additional academic support is necessary if these hard-working people are to succeed. The school district needs to provide bilingual professionals to assist the students to improve their opportunity for higher education to match their national goals. Bilingual counselors and teacher aides must be certified as professionals and make their standards visible. With their help, Asian students will build self-esteem and become self-sufficient. These strong young people will provide role models whom the younger generation will follow. The school district must evaluate the students' progress by semesters and supply additional academic support where needed. A very important prerequisite in high school is a requirement for career planning. Southeast Asian students have little knowledge of the possibilities available for their careers. Tutoring, coaching, counseling, and career planning would supply intensive personal support in individual areas of need, especially English, reading,

writing, and science skills. If the Hmong, Laotian, Chinese, Cambodian, and Vietnamese people are to succeed in America, they must have more doctors, more lawyers, more engineers, more professional people. Some minority men and women of ability will be able to create new inventions and ideas.

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Appendix: I

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please identify your school _____.

2. What is your gender? Male Female

3. Please identify what year you are in school.

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

4. Are you an ESL student?

Yes No

5. Are you a mainstream student or are most of your classes mainstream classes?

Yes No

Please rank the following questions by putting an (X) in the box
1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

6. I perform well in mainstream classes in school?

1 2 3 4 5

7. I have a language barrier. Yes No

1 2 3 4 5

8. I need additional academic support to become successful.

1 2 3 4 5

9. Do you think the ESL classes and extra ESL support will help you to be successful? Yes No

If yes, 1 2 3 4 5

10. I have a problem reading/writing the textbooks in my mainstream classes.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix: II

Faculty/Staff Questionnaire

1. School Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____

2. What is your position in the school district?

Administrator Counselor Teacher Bilingual Aide Other

3. Do you have any Southeast Asian students in your class? Yes No

Please rank the following questions by putting an (X) in the box.

1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

4. ESL students generally do well in my class.

1 2 3 4 5

5. ESL students have a language barrier in my class.

1 2 3 4 5

6. ESL students need additional academic support.

1 2 3 4 5

7. ESL students benefit by having extra bilingual help to support them.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Most SEA students read at grade level. Please circle one of the grade levels.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

9. Most S.E.A. students write at grade level.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

10. At What grade reading level do your students perform in the class?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

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