

University of the Assumption Graduate School

REMEDIAL ENGLISH PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE FRESHMEN



A Thesis Abstract

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ABSTRACT

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Rationale/Background

English plays an important role in the lives of college students. It is the tool which the students have to use in dealing with college work. Students who have to submit term papers or render oral reports in English classes and otherwise should be able to express themselves in English, both orally and in writing. Students who have to solve worded problems in Mathematics need to understand the problems before appropriate formulas or solutions can be applied to solve such prob-

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lems. Students who have to interpret findings of an experiment in a laboratory class have to use correct English in order to come up with a good experiment report. These are just some of the many reasons why college students need to improve their proficiency in using English.

These are also the reasons for the need to assess the difficulties of incoming freshmen so that an appropriate program may be planned to cater to their identified needs.

### Statement of the Problem

The study determined the difficulties of fourth year high school students in learning English. It likewise developed a program that can help overcome these difficulties.

The following questions were answered in this study:

1. What are the difficulties of fourth year high school students in learning English with reference to grammar and reading?
2. What program can be adopted to overcome such difficulties?

### Procedure and Research Design

The descriptive method was used in this study. The subjects were 334 fourth year high school students of three feeder schools (those that were identified by the University Registrar and Guidance Offices as the schools

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where majority of freshmen enrollees of the University of the Assumption come from). These are Jose Abad Santos High School, St. Joseph's Academy and the University of the Assumption High School.

A diagnostic test in English was the instrument used in gathering the data for the study. This multiple-choice type of test consists of 100 items: 50 items in grammar and 50 items in reading. Such test revealed the difficulties of the respondents in learning English. The results of the said test were used as basis in the planning of the remedial English program.

### Statistical Treatment

Analysis of the data of the study was done by following these steps:

1. Establishing the norm (80% of the items per skill) for considering whether a skill is a difficulty or not.
2. Computing the actual mean for every skill.
3. Comparing the actual mean with the norm to ascertain whether a skill is a difficulty or not. Mean scores below 80% indicated difficulties.
4. Ranking of the difficulties of the respondents in order to determine which area or areas need more time and emphasis in the program.

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### Major Findings

The findings of the study revealed that the respondents have difficulty in all the skills tested in the diagnostic test. This is an indication that they have not mastered the skills they were supposed to have mastered in their high school English. A program which can help college freshmen overcome their difficulties in English should be considered and implemented.

The remedial English program has the following components: general and specific objectives, content, strategies, materials, time frame and success indicators.

At the end of the program, the students are expected to manifest at least 80% mastery of all the skills in the program. The strategies applied are pre-test, review, presentation of the lesson by means of a springboard, discussion and interaction, drills, periodic examinations and appropriate follow-up measures for slow and fast learners.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. The respondents encountered difficulties in all the skills tested, both in grammar and in reading.
2. They have not mastered the skills which were supposed to have been mastered in high school English.

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3. The skills which presented the most difficulties were noting synonyms and antonyms, and using context clues.
4. A remedial-English program which aims to improve the students' skills in grammar and reading can be adopted to overcome these difficulties. A competent remedial teacher using interesting materials and appropriate teaching strategies can help achieve the desired objectives of the program.

### Recommendations

To help college freshmen cope with the demands of college work, the following recommendations are presented for consideration:

1. A remedial program should be adopted to help students overcome their difficulties in using the English language. Two options are given to make this possible:
  - a. That the remedial program be offered as a separate subject to enable the students to have more time and activities which will help them improve their grammar and reading skills. Re-teaching of lessons which are not easily learned by the students will also be made possible since the teacher knows he has enough time to do this. The remedial program should not be regarded as a burden, but rather to be considered as a tool in easing the burden of the students in using English. The time, money and effort that

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they spend in having the program can be re-paid in terms of the improvement they will have after undergoing remedial instruction. This improvement will help them in understanding academic subjects requiring English proficiency, thus, decreasing the possibility of failing in the said subjects.

b. That the remedial English program and English I be integrated as a five-unit subject - the remedial program as the starting point of freshmen English. This will make it possible for students and teachers to meet daily, giving them more time to know each other so that rapport may be established among them, thereby enhancing teaching-learning situations. It will also be easier for teachers to make follow-up in all the activities involved in the program.

2. The remedial program proposed in this study must be initially implemented on an experimental basis. This will determine the functionality and effectiveness of the program. From the trial-run, implementors of the program will be able to assess the feasibility of giving

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remedial instruction to those who need it.

3. Before the implementation of the program, the following measures must be accomplished:
  - a. Orient and train teachers of remedial English on remedial instruction.
  - b. Prepare instructional materials, this is to be done by a committee composed of English teachers assigned to render remedial instruction.
4. Administrative support must be manifested through financial assistance, scheduling of classes (size, time, classrooms), formulation of policies regarding the program, and loading and remuneration of teachers.
5. Aside from grammar subjects, literature must also be offered to all first year college students to help them develop their proficiency in reading.
6. The English program in college must be reviewed so that proper measures can be undertaken to give the students the best learning situations as far as English is concerned.
7. The need for a staff development program must be realized and satisfied by those who are concerned in order to improve teaching competencies of college English teachers.



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8. A college reading laboratory to be handled by a reading specialist (hired on full-time basis) should be established.
9. The diagnostic test used in this study should be made a part of the entrance examination given to college freshmen applicants. This is to determine those who will be in the remedial program.
10. Students should be encouraged to develop the habit of reading books and other materials in English; they should, likewise, be given the chance to talk in English in and out of the school.
11. A remedial English program in high school should also be offered to those students who are found to be weak in grammar and in reading. This will not only help students attain success in their high school subjects but will also prepare them for college work.
12. High school English programs should also be reviewed to find out if these are appropriate and relevant to the needs of the students.
13. The community, in general, should be supportive in making the students speak correct English. This will lead to the development of students' proficiency in oral communication.

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14. Mass media should show cooperation with the educational institutions' efforts in making our students use correct English. They should serve as models in writing and speaking correct English.

15. Future research is recommended on the following areas:

- a. experimental studies on language teaching strategies.
- b. studies on language testing