Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Assessment

Course Alpha and Number: ESL 8B
Course Title: Intermediate Reading for Speakers of Other Languages
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Division: Language Arts
Date: 5/15/06

What Student Learning Outcome was assessed?

By completion of this course, at a minimum of 70% proficiency, students will be able to:

7. Find the main idea in a paragraph.

Phase 1
A. Describe the assessment tool (test, survey, rubric, etc.) used. Cut and paste your tool below if possible.

Students were given an especially-made pretest consisting of several paragraphs in which they had to select the main idea in a topic sentence. There were six paragraphs that had a topic sentence. A posttest was given after instruction a month later. The content of both tests was exactly the same. The instructor did not return the pretest to the students and did not disclose the answers.

It was expected that students, on average, would achieve 70% proficiency.

B. Who was the data collected from? How many were collected?

Data was collected from 17 students in the one section of ESL 2B in the spring 2006 semester.

C. What were the results of the assessment?

Neither test demonstrated an average of 70% proficiency. The results of both tests were nearly identical. On the pretest, students scored an average of 62.7% correct. On the posttest, the average score was 61.7%.

The present reading text does not have a sufficient number of exercises that concentrate on finding the main idea. Also, the reading passages on the test may have been much more difficult than the content in their present textbook. It is obvious that more instruction on finding main idea and better reading materials that focus on reading skill areas are needed.
D. What changes are needed based on your assessment?

In fall 2006, students will purchase an additional reading text, *More Reading Power*, a reading skills text. There are a number of exercises devoted to finding the main idea in paragraphs. More attention to teaching ways to find the main idea will be done in class and additional homework will be assigned.

It is expected that students will achieve an average of 70% proficiency on a test focusing on finding the main idea.
Read each paragraph carefully. For each paragraph you must find the sentence that has the main idea and the pattern of organization. CIRCLE ONE CORRECT ANSWER.

The main idea is the statement of the author’s main point about the paragraph’s topic.

There are five patterns of organization that authors use to develop their ideas in a paragraph:

a. a list of related ideas or examples
b. a sequence or series of events or steps in correct time order
c. a comparison/contrast of two things that is similar or different
d. cause and effect: one event or action causes another event or action
e. problem/solution: a problem and how it is solved are explained

Paragraph 1

In many of the industrialized countries, the population is aging. That is, the average age of the population is older than it was twenty years ago. This fact has encouraged many businesses to develop products and services for older customers. In the medical industry, for example, new medicines and technologies are being developed especially for the health problems of older people. The tourist industry also offers services for the elderly, including special transportation and health services, and trips organized for groups of older people. And finally, there are many different kinds of products designed for the needs of the elderly. These include everything from shoes and shampoos to magazines and furniture.

The main idea of the paragraph is in ________ sentence.

a. the first / b. the second / c. the third / d. the last

The pattern of organization in this paragraph is ________.

a. list / b. sequence / c. comparison/contrast / d. cause and effect / e. problem and solution

Paragraph 2

Pollution of the oceans can also result in the spread of disease. Chemicals from fertilizers (such as phosphates and nitrates) and human waste eventually flow into the oceans. These pollutants result in the increased growth of tiny plants called algae. These plants provide a home for cholera, a deadly disease. The infected algae can stick to ships, which then carry the cholera germs all around the world. For instance, germs of the disease recently rode on ships going from India to South America. There, thousands of people have died from the resulting epidemic of cholera.

The main idea of the paragraph is in ________ sentence.

a. the first / b. the second / c. the third / d. the last
Paragraph 3
Spike Lee, an African-American film director, is one of the most noted people in his field. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1957. Spike's middle-class family moved to Brooklyn, New York, when he was two years old. His father, jazz musician Bill Lee, and his mother, Jackie, as art teacher, had five children. The Lees provided a loving and stable home for the family. Spike's interest in movies began as a youngster. After graduating from Morehouse College in Atlanta, he studied filmmaking at New York University. Soon after that, he made his first feature film, She's Gotta Have It, with a budget of only $200,000. Since the success of that movie, Lee has written, produced, and directed more than fifteen films. All of them are extremely controversial and extraordinarily popular with both black and white audiences.

The main idea of the paragraph is in sentence.

Paragraph 4
As people get older, they usually begin to experience physical problems. They often begin to lose their eyesight, their hearing, and their memory, and they become less able to get around. Getting older is a fact of life. Of course, and there is nothing you can do to stop the years from passing. However, some scientists at Tufts University in Boston have discovered that there may be a way to prevent some of the physical problems associated with aging. In experiments with rats whose age was the same as humans at sixty-five to seventy-five, the scientists fed the animals half a cup of blueberries every day. After eight weeks, the rats showed improved physical skills. They also showed improved short-term memory, as demonstrated by the fact that they could find their way through mazes more quickly. In fact, blueberries contain antioxidants, which slow the aging process. One leading scientist says he now eats blueberries every day.

The main idea of the paragraph is in sentence.

Paragraph 5
In a recent study of 1,500 business managers in the United States, interviewers asked all kinds of questions about the managers' habits and opinions regarding their working hours. The researchers learned that only 33 percent of the managers worked 40–45 hours a week. The majority of them (57 percent) worked from 46–60 hours and 6 percent worked over 60 hours. Only 2 percent of the managers said they felt satisfied and had enough time to do everything. The rest of the managers felt they did not have enough time for their families or their hobbies. In general, the researchers found that managers in the United States are not happy with their working schedules.
Paragraph 6

Communicating by e-mail is becoming increasingly popular for many reasons. First, it is a popular way to send messages among people who do not like to use the telephone. Second, it is useful for sending suggestions or requests. The person who receives them has time to think about a response. Also, e-mail messages always look the same, no matter who sends them. This means you don’t have to worry about the quality of your letter paper or your handwriting. Furthermore, e-mail messages are uniform. They give no clues to the sender’s age, gender, race, or physical condition. In addition, they do not give away the sender’s feelings or emotional condition.

The main idea of the paragraph is in _______ sentence.

a. the first  b. the second  c. the third  d. the last

The pattern of organization in this paragraph is _______

a. list  b. sequence  c. comparison/contrast  d. cause and effect  e. problem and solution

Paragraph 7

In Russia, there has always been a strong tradition of learning foreign language. This led to the development of specialized foreign-language schools. These schools teach the same subjects as all other Russian public schools. However, unlike most public schools, many of the subjects are taught in French, German, or English at the foreign-language schools. The students are different, too. Unlike the regular Russian-language schools, students must be selected to attend specialized schools. Quite often these students come from families with higher levels of education. The greatest difference lies in the language abilities of the students. Students in specialized language schools learn to express themselves fluently in a foreign language.

The pattern of organization in this paragraph is _______

a. list  b. sequence  c. comparison/contrast  d. cause and effect  e. problem and solution