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實施補救教學之行動研究
Implementing a Remedial Class: An Action Research

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國立政治大學英國英文學系碩士在職專班

碩士論文提要

論文名稱：實施補救教學之行動研究

指導教授：招靜琪 博士

研究生：方苡蓁

論文題要內容：

本研究採行動研究，旨在探討如何設計出一套符合低成就學生需求的補救教學課程。實施對象為九年級六位體育班學生並選取其中兩位做深入的紀錄。地點為南部一所特偏國中，經歷十五週。研究結果如下：

第一，對低成就學生有幫助的教學設計應考量到：

1. 教材應就低成就學生程度而做適宜的改編。
2. 診斷學生學習困難之處並對症下藥，以提升學生學習信心。
3. 根據學生偏好的學習模式，課程應減少老師講課，多讓學生做活動。

第二，補救教學課程確實能幫助低成就學生學習，基於以下五點：

1. 師生互動頻繁。
2. 不必趕進度，學生做中學。
3. 學生告訴老師自己想學的東西，落實學習者中心的理念。
4. 友善環境下，學生逐漸培養出讀書習慣。
5. 活動多元，從各面向訓練學生英語能力。

第三，如何提供一套有效的補救教學課程，有以下三點發現：

1. 將課堂學習與學生的生活經驗相連結。
2. 學生主導自己的學習。

3. 提供支持的學習環境。

實施過程中面臨到最大的挑戰為學生時輟時學，搖擺不定的態度。

因應方式為冷靜處理，堅持到底。

最後，根據研究結果，對教學與未來研究提出相關建議。

關鍵字：補救教學、低成就學生、有效教學。



Abstract

This study adopted action research to explore how to design an effective remedial instruction based on the low-level students' varied needs. This remedial English program was implemented to six ninth PE specialty graders, lasting for fifteen weeks in junior high school locating in the extremely rural area. The findings of this study are as follows:

As the aspects of offering a helpful remedial instruction, first, the contents must be adapted to meet the low-level readiness levels. Second, the class can focus on students' difficulties to enhance students' confidence. Third, the teachers can reduce lectures to allow for activities based on the students' leaning styles.

The low-level students were proved to benefit from the remedial English class because first, there was lots of interaction between the students and the teacher. Second, the remedial class did not have to follow the fixed schedule, and the students could learn through participating in activities. Third, the students told their needs to the teacher. The learner-centered concept was carried out in this way. Fourth, the low-level students were provided with constant support and help, and they gradually cultivate study habits. Fifth, the remedial class offered diverse activities to develop students' proficiency.

After implementation, the researcher concluded three points to design an effective remedial instruction. First, connect the learning to students' personal experience. Second, let the students take the active role. Third, create a support environment.

In the process, the challenge was the students' lax attitudes and inconsistency. The teacher solved the dilemma with reason and persistence.

Finally, based on the findings, suggestions for teaching and future studies were

discussed.

Keywords: Remedial instruction, Low-level students, An effective instruction



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Motivation

The Twelve-year Compulsory Education implemented from 2011 has had great impact on high school education. The Minister of Education (MOE) hoped to alleviate the students' learning stress through calling off the junior high school entrance exam step by step. Parents and experts are worried that without the examination as a filter, the basic competence of high school students would decline. Remedial instruction is the critical measure meant to enable each student to gain basic knowledge. The Minister of Education (MOE) has put in a great deal of effort to implement remedial instruction in elementary and junior high schools. In 2014, the MOE was estimated to infuse one billion and five thousand million dollars to launch remedial courses even under the tight budget (Central News Agency, 2013).

However, the effectiveness of remedial English instruction is questionable albeit it has been implemented since 2006. The twin-peak distribution of English scores of the Basic Competence Test and the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students has been a long-existing phenomenon and has never been solved. According to the data provided by the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students (2015), the students who got C on English in 2015 accounted for 33.2% of the total student body, which indicated that about one out of three students have an English score that did not meet the national standard and needed to be improved.

While many researchers have discussed which teaching strategies work better as remedial English instruction (Chen, 2014; Hsu, 2013; Kao, 2013; Wu, 2011), some investigated what has caused students' underachievement and considered the cause as

the key to solution (Bonnery, 2007; Perrenoud, 1989; Xu, 2007). Perrenoud (1989) stated that the class did not match the students' learning styles and levels is the main contributor to students' underachievement. Bonnery (2007) further explained if the teacher does not design the courses based on students' levels and needs, students' underachievement can be expected. The report *Basic skills instruction in community colleges: The dominance of remedial pedagogy* (Grubb, et al., 2011) also criticized that that remedial instruction does not take underachievers really needs into consideration and failed to understand underachievers' difficulties.

Though experts argue for the importance of understanding underachievers' needs, levels, and their difficulties, research about what difficulties Taiwanese junior high school underachievers encounter when learning English, how teachers may effectively design the course based on underachievers' levels and interests, and how teachers adapt the contents to meet underachievers' needs is still insufficient. Hence, the present study is an attempt to fill the gap.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the process of implementing a remedial English instruction which aims to probe into the participants' learning difficulties based on what aspects of English they want to improve. The researcher designed the course to help them solve learning problems. By analyzing the data including the students' learning logs, the teacher's field notes, formal interviews, informal talks, and small talks among the participants, the researcher investigated the benefits and challenges remedial English instruction brought to the participants and how the participants thought of it. Also, the study also attempted to document how

and why the teacher constantly fixes the contents of the remedial English class to meet the participants' various demands.

This study does not intend to provide a generalizable account but to depict the process of a remedial course as a whole. The results of the study can bring insightful suggestions to the teachers who implement remedial instruction.

Research Questions

This study focuses on the following research questions:

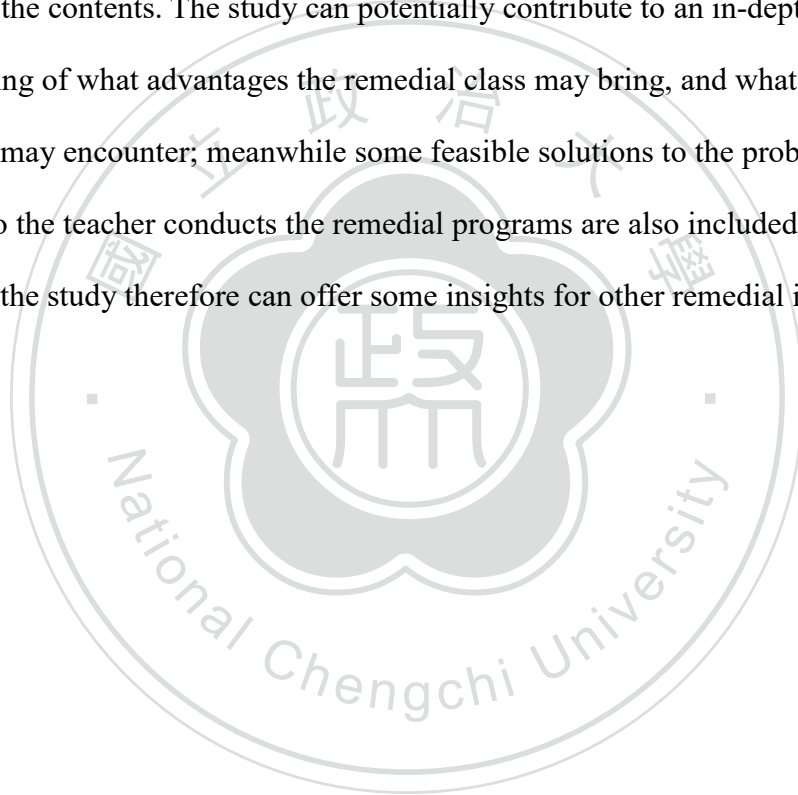
1. In the process of implementing the design, what advantages and challenges are there based on the students' experiences?
2. What problems did the researcher encounter? How should the design be planned and revised for the remedial class to meet low-level student's needs?

Significance of the Study

Most remedial instruction studies focus on applying a certain tool (e.g. picture books, online programs, and Interactive Whiteboard) or implementing an approach (e.g., communicative language teaching and task-based approach) to conduct remedial programs and assess outcomes through summative evaluations. However, few addressed the issue how to design remedial courses taking the students' needs and their points of view into consideration. This study aims to probe into the reasons that have caused the students to fall behind and then to design a remedial class according to their weaknesses and what they really need (Bonnery, 2007; Perrenoud, 1989; Xu, 2007).

Unlike most previous studies employing quantitative methods to collect data, this study adopts the qualitative case study and action research perspective to explore the students' thinking, feelings, and feedback.

Also, different from the previous studies that addressed outcomes through summative evaluations or questionnaires, this study follows the action research method to document the overall experience of the students, interaction in class, and the processes of how the teacher revised her teaching to make the students really understand the contents. The study can potentially contribute to an in-depth understanding of what advantages the remedial class may bring, and what challenges the teacher may encounter; meanwhile some feasible solutions to the problems happened to the teacher conducts the remedial programs are also included. The findings of the study therefore can offer some insights for other remedial instruction studies.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Three major themes are presented in this review of literature. The first is international studies related to remedial instruction. The second is the implementation of remedial instruction in Taiwan. The third part discusses the factors that contribute to underachievement and why it is necessary to solve this problem.

Remedial Instruction in General

The Urgent Need for Remedial Instruction

For further education and entry into the workforce, basic skills are critical. However, increasing number of the students lack basic competence. (Albertson, 2004; Greene, 2000) Take reading, one of the basic skill, for example. “Longitudinal studies show that many first graders in the U.S. who experience reading difficulties never recover.” Albertson (2004, p. 4) If these students do not receive proper training, they tend to dislike reading and cause the inability. Thus, remedial instruction is very important for those students.

When students left high school, however, some do not have basic skills. Greene (2000) argued that the Michigan State government and businesses would need to spend about \$311 million dollars per year making up their deficiencies. A company which owned thousands of employees said, “we rejected seventy percent of applicants due to not having basic skills of math and reading at the eighth grade level.” (Greene, 2000, p. 15)

Charles (2012) also pointed out that enabling high school students to develop basic skills, they not only have more access to better jobs but improve their college completion rates.

Ensure the quality of high school students' basic skills so that students own required competence to choose either further education or entry into the workforce. Therefore, implementation of the remedial education is a pivotal measurement.

The Effectiveness of Remedial Education

Many researchers have conducted study on remedial instruction. To increase college completion rate and enhance the quality of human resources, implementing “remedial education is regarded as an essential component.

However, the result of implementing remedial instruction has not been positive. Half of the students in postsecondary education take one or more remedial education courses, but their college completion rates are below state and national standards (Charles., et al., 2012). Remedial education does not aid students as expected. Charles (2012) claimed that the effectiveness of the remedial courses in the U.S.A. was discouraging.

The Shared Problems among Most of the Remedial Education

To find out factors causing the failure of remedial programs, Donovan and Bransford (2005) have devoted themselves to remedial education reform and have observed the remedial courses. They made the following conclusions.

First, the instructors of remedial programs usually stressed on sub-skills without explaining them in contexts. Learning sub-skills without contexts resulted in students' being unable to apply what they learned in the remedial courses to other situations. Second, when instructors only adopted a single method --- presentation and practice, the teacher-centered approach --- for the entire class, without integrating other interactive activities, the class became tedious and the students were bored. In that

situation, the students did not have motivation to learn and their attention decreased. Third, when facing the students' inquiry, the instructors only provided the right answer, without diagnosing the difficulties of the students through their questions.

Researchers (Charles, et al., 2012, Grubb, et al., 2011, Roberts, 2004.) also claimed remedial pedagogy violates the principles of effective instruction and pointed out the weaknesses, including no demands, too much emphasis on decontextualized subskills, lack of diagnosis of students' difficulties, no concern for students' needs, and not enough nonacademic support being provided. The following section presents details on those flaws.

No Demands

There is a common practice among the remedial classrooms: Instructors place few demands on the students. For example, the reading material consists only a few paragraphs and the remedial writing classes only confine students to simple writings. Apparently, such remedial courses neither prepare students for college-level work nor enhance their ability to get better jobs.

An Emphasis on Sub-Skills in Decontextualized Ways

Another common practice is that remedial instruction only stresses on sub-skills: full of drill and practice (Grubb, et al., 2011). Grubb, et al. (2011) noticed that competencies are rarely practiced. Albertson (2004) also found that remedial programs focus on the lower-level skills. The worst of all, these sub-skills are practiced in decontextualized way. Focusing sub-skills without any contexts is tedious, meaningless and lopsided.

Instructors Did Not Make Diagnosis of Students' Difficulties

When faced students' mistakes, the instructors in most remedial programs often

give the right answers rather than engaging in any diagnosis of why the students get the wrong answers. Grubb, et al. (2011) commented that most instructors never use students' questions to examine their misconceptions.

Remedial Instruction Did Not Offer What Students Really Needs

Remedial courses are usually the one-size-fits-all curriculum. It fails to provide students with specific knowledge or skills required for their individual education choices.

Designing curriculum which meets students' needs aids them to succeed in sequence courses or occupational fields.

Remedial Instruction Did Not Offer Underachievers Nonacademic Support

Charles. et al. (2012) remarked that students benefit a lot from nonacademic support such as guiding them to explore and clarify their goals, and useful tips of taking notes in class and taking tests. Grubb et al (2011) also suggested students benefit from nonacademic support, also called managing study strategies such as time management, study skills, test-taking skills, ways to manage anxiety, and other dimension of "how to be a student."

However, remedial instruction does not offer underachievers nonacademic support, the managing study strategies. Underachievers often get into remedial instruction without clear goals and lack successful experience.

Remedial Instruction in Taiwan

The goal of the remedial programs is to ensure each junior high school student has gained basic academic knowledge so that s/he is well prepared to study further in senior high schools, vocational schools or five-year junior colleges under the Twelve-year Compulsory Education system (Zhang, 2012). Remedial instruction is such a critical complementary measure that makes the Twelve -year Compulsory Education policy complete (Minister of Education, 2015; Tang, 2013; Zhang, 2012). The Minister of Education (MOE) has infused a large amount of capital to implement remedial instruction. For example, the MOE decided to fund \$1.5 billion to launch remedial programs in 2014 (Central News Agency, 2013) to develop their basic competence. The issue of remedial instruction has drawn a wide attention among teachers and researchers recently. The following are the studies on the trend about remedial English instruction in Taiwan: pursuing the best teaching methods for remedial instruction.

Pursuing the Best Teaching Methods for Remedial Instruction

Since the remedial instruction is a critical measurement to save the English low achievers from struggling, researchers in Taiwan tried to pursue the best teaching methods or practices to implement remedial programs. They were ambitious to help the low achievers have fun learning English.

Kao (2013) adopted the communicative language teaching to design the remedial program for four eighth graders lasting for twelve classes. In the remedial English class, the students were offered authentic materials such as popular English songs, and online clips and engaged in communicative activities such as writing postcards and looking for information via CNN news. Through analyzing, students' worksheets and

work, the researcher who was also the teacher investigated the effects of the communicative language teaching on the remedial class. The finding showed that the four students progressed in oral ability such as pronouncing vocabulary and reading complete sentences. They had been unwilling to speak English, but after the remedial English class, they could give replies in English. They also made progress in spelling; however, the performance in writing sentences and postcards was still not as good. Although limited progress in writing was made, the four students' learning interest sparkled. They became engaged in the English class than before the remedial course. For example, they were willing to raise hands to answer the questions and they even prepared for English tests after school.

In the process of implementation, Kao also observed that most of the low achievers preferred visual and kinesthetic learning. As visual learners, the low achievers needed a big picture in minds to help them understand the contexts. They were not good at engaging in abstract thinking. As kinesthetic learners, low achievers become more interested in experiencing English through activities than sitting quietly to listen to teachers' lecture. Therefore, Kao suggested offering low achievers visual aids such as clips, films and photos and designing scenarios for them to experience English would be more effective than traditional lectures.

Besides Kao's adoption of the communicative language teaching, Wu (2011) integrated chants instruction on eight seventh graders. Six instruments were employed to investigate the effects of the chant instruction in the remedial program, consisting of the English achievement test, four quizzes, a questionnaire of attitudes toward English learning, a questionnaire of attitudes toward the remedial program and class observation. Wu found that the effects of chant instruction significant. These eight English low achievers made obvious progress on oral fluency, vocabulary and grammatical structures. Wu pointed out two reasons to explain why chant instruction

worked well on the eight low achievers. First, chants combined music and the language. The rhythm and melody of the chants were helpful to these low achievers' pronunciation and speaking. When these low achievers had fun reading the chants, they also stimulated to listen and speak English. The second explanation was the repeated practice in chants. The low achievers stated that they found it easier to memorize vocabulary after repeating the chants. The repeated practice in chants also made grammatical structures easier to understand. Wu (2011) concluded through the chant instruction, the English low achievers enjoyed learning English by reading the chants aloud and practiced repeatedly in the meaningful contexts.

Hus (2011) implemented three routine activities based on the picture books in the remedial English class where ten seventh graders who had low motivation read the English texts. The three routine activities were pre-reading, the story map, and summary. Hus employed the three routine activities step by step.

First was pre-reading. Before reading the picture book, the students observed the cover and title and they were encouraged to predict the topic. Then, the students opened the book and scanned the pictures to guess what happened in the story. The first routine activity was called pre-reading.

The second routine activity was to guide the students to finish the story map consisting of the questions about characters (who are the main characters?), setting (Where and when the story happened?), problems (What was the problem?), events (Was the problem solved? Explain.), and the end.

The third routine activity was summary. The students summarized the story in a language of their choice (English or Chinese) according to the story map they drew. The three routine activities underwent through all the learning phases, lasting for sixteen weeks. Under the repeated three routine activities, the English low achievers improved.

At first, these students could not recall the significant events in the picture books. Gradually, some could identify the key story elements and some could use the transition words such as “Madeleine lived in a pant house, *but* she wasn’t happy.” Undergoing the repeated three routine activities based on the picture books, some could elaborate the story with vivid examples.

From the interviews, the students confirmed the aids of the routine activities. Hsu (2011) also concluded that by repeating the three routine activities, the students could comprehend a story systematically.

In the above studies, first, the remedial instruction was implemented either on the seventh or eighth graders who had no urgent need to face the Comprehensive Assessment. Second, the students in the remedial class read outside readings such as chants, and story books instead of the textbooks.

However, in this study, first, the students were all ninth graders who were quite who had an urgent need to take the Comprehensive Assessment several months later and would face the critical point in their life—graduating from the junior high school and choosing their future. Apparently, the challenges that these students needed to face were different from the students who were seventh or eighth graders in the previous studies. Second, the students in this action research expressed that they preferred studying the textbooks. They said, “If I could not understand the textbook which referred to the basic concepts of English, doing outside reading is only a burden and very useless for me.” Unlike previous studies, the students in this study had clear ideas of what they really need. Thus, this study adopted the action research method to solve the problems that both the students and the teacher encountered in reality. Though many studies stressed the importance of diagnosis students’ difficulty, and understanding the students’ needs and interest, there was insufficient information of the real practice of how the teacher designed and implemented the whole remedial

instruction based on the students' difficulty, need, and interest. Thus, the present study was needed.

In sum, remedial instruction needs reform to be effective. To solve the problems and raise the effectiveness of remedial instruction, finding out what causes students' underachievement is the first step. In the following section, the factors causing underachievement, and the long-lasting effects on underachievers are discussed.

The Efficiency in Remedial English Class in Taiwan

Though the MOE infused great efforts in remedial instruction, yet, according to Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students (2015), the students who got C on English in 2015 is thirty-three point two percent (33.2%). This indicates that about one out of three students do not obtain the basic competence in English. It proves that efficiency of remedial English in Taiwan still needs to be enhanced.

Investigating What Low Achievers Really Need

To enhance the efficiency of remedial English programs, while many studies have been pursuing the best teaching methods or practices for remedial English instruction, some experts argue that investigating what causes underachievement, finding out what low achievers' difficulties are and offering them help they really need are the main solution to the low efficiency of remedial class. Xu (2010) stated that the first step to enhance the efficiency of remedial instruction is that teachers understand the factors contributing to students' underachievement. Bonnery (2007) proposed two types of the class leading to students' underachievement. One is when teachers are totally unaware of students' different levels and needs so that teachers fail to design instruction based on students' prior knowledge. The other is that teachers

overstate students' differences so that the content is too easy to prepare students with the essence knowledge and skills. Grubb, Boner, Frankel, Parker, Patterson, Gabriner, Hope, Schiorring, Smith, Taylor, Walton, Wilson.(2011) also further illustrated that finding out the students' learning difficulties and designing the class based on their levels and needs are critical that could determine whether the remedial program will be successful or not.

Combining the experts' opinions from various aspects, key to enhance remedial English instruction efficiency include finding out underachievers' obstacles, knowing what they really need, and designing the courses that live up to their expectation. However, there is insufficient research concerning underachievers' needs and designing a remedial English class before implementation of remedial English instruction in junior high schools in Taiwan. Therefore, this study aims to design a remedial English program based on low achievers' levels, interests and needs rather than the teacher adopts a fixed teaching method to employ on a class.

Underachievers

Underachievers are defined as that an individual does not performance which measures up to his/her level of cognitive ability (Roberts, 2004, p. 4). Roberts (2004) demonstrates the underachievers' characteristics including "a feeling of failure, a dislike of school work and book learning, poor study habits, inadequate relationships with peers, a high occurrence of emotional problems" (Montgomery, 1998, p. 30).

These characteristics are inter-connected. Heacox (1991), Mandel and Marcus (1988), Thurman and Wolfe (1999), Rathvon (2009) worked on what caused underachievement. Based on their observations and analysis, their finding is discussed in the following section.

Underachievers' Tendencies Result in Their Bad Experience at Schools

Thurman and Wolfe (1999) characterized underachievers as learners who lack personal goals and are disorganized. They do not ask themselves questions about the assignments or material presented to them. Therefore, the prevalent problems among underachievers are that they keep the worksheets untouched on the desks and do not hand in assignments. The more teachers urge them to hand in assignments or asks them to finish the worksheets, the more excuses they make. Once underachievers are caught lying, it drives teachers furious. This action could worsen the problem: the underachievers become more resistant to schoolwork and resentful at teachers. It is no surprised teachers comment that underachievers have a high occurrence of emotional problems.

According to Rathvon's analysis (2009), the underachievers do not complete assignments or tasks because they have no idea of how to do them. Once when teachers fail to understand that the students need helps at this moment, underachievers are unable to feel positively about the teachers and believe that they themselves do not have the capability to complete the task. Gradually, when the students encounter difficulties, they give up instead of asking for the teachers' help or trying another way; they are also reluctant to participate in learning tasks or activities. Underachievers are trapped in a cycle of continuing failure (Heacox, 1991).

Departmentalized nature of instruction

The salient difference of elementary and junior high school lies in the departmentalized nature of instruction. This means that the underachiever cannot rely on the homeroom teacher as her/his secure base (Rathvon, 2009). S/ He must cope with diversified subjects with several teachers.

Demands for independent study in various subjects increase dramatically at

junior high school. Underachievers who do not have a good foundation in reading would have trouble understanding the contents of the textbooks. They feel defeated. Therefore, they would become distracted easily when teachers give instruction. When being blamed, they could display temper outbursts easily. Feeling being misinterpreted causes their misbehaviors.

Underachievers' Problem to be Solved

Underachievement untreated in the elementary school could lead to the problems when underachievers get into the junior high school. Mandel and Marcus (1988) stated that underachievement can cause long-lasting trauma in a person's life situation. The long-term effects of underachievement are discussed in the following sections.

Underachievement Makes Subsequent Learning Much More Difficult

Rathvon (2009) pointed out gaps in important skills and concepts make subsequent learning much more difficult. If teachers do not support them with appropriate intervention, these gaps may never be fully remedied. The junior high school underachiever who does not receive appropriate assistance develops into a senior high school underachiever whose maladaptive habits and attitudes are even more firmly entrenched.

Underachievers Display Inappropriate Behaviors

Underachievement not only interferes later academic tasks, it has a negative effect on the underachievers. They think of themselves as “dumb, slow and bad” if they are unable to make satisfactory progress in school. At this moment, they tend to shrug off school work by sorting out their antisocial peers. (Rathvon, 2009) It really not uncommon for the students to start displaying inappropriate behaviors such as fighting, committing crime, and drug using.

If the underachievers receive effective remedial instruction, their academic achievement can improve over time (Mandel & Marcus, 1988). Then, the rate that they display their misbehaviors decreases.

From the above discussion, remedial instruction is proved to have positive influence on low achievers. Many studies have focused on how to enhance the effectiveness of remedial instruction and solve the problem of underachievement. Although much research has pointed out that remedial instruction should take into concern what low achievers' difficulties are and what they really need, there is still insufficient information on designing remedial instruction in accordance to the low achievers' difficulties and needs. This present study is an attempt to fill the gap.

Action Research

Action research combines the action and study, and aims to bridge the gap between theory and reality. Action research focuses that practitioners apply theories and experiences to solve the problems in reality (Atweh, B., Kemmis, S. & Weeks, P., 1998). Through a series of intentional actions, the researcher also the practitioner constantly refines her/ his acts, reflects on these processes, and finally solves the problems (Griffiths, 1990).

As for action research in education context, James (1995) argued that curriculum development ought to be based upon the actual study of classrooms. Curriculum knowledge must be based on the work of practitioners. James stressed that curriculum needed to be studied by practitioners, teachers. James advocated teachers engaging in action research and solving the problems encountered in reality. James (1996, p. 31) quoted Elliott's viewpoints and listed the characteristics of the action research.

1. It examines problems which are deemed problematic by practitioners.
2. These problem are deemed solvable.
3. These problems require a practical response.
4. The goal is to deepen the researcher's understanding of the problem.
5. Action research uses case study methodology in an attempt to "tell a story" about what is going on and how events hang together.
6. The case study is reported in terms of the perceptions and beliefs of those in the setting—teachers, children, etc.
7. Action research uses the language of everyday discourse employed by the participants.
8. Action research can only be validated in unconstrained dialogue by the participants.

Elliott also encouraged teachers to embark on action research and improve education.

Nunan (2007) proposed the five steps of action research. The five steps were stated as follows: "First, the research is initiated by the practitioner and is derived from a real problem in the classroom which needs to be confronted. Second, the research is collaborative. Third, the teacher collects objective data in the form of classroom interactions and learner language. Fourth, the results are disseminated. Fifth, the project takes the form of an ongoing cycle in which the teacher reflects on, returns to, and extends the initial inquiry" (p. 14).

Action research is an ongoing process of reflection and action to produce the most effective learning environment. Dyke (unknown year) points out action research is an essential process for education to evolve to meet the needs of the students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter consists of four parts: context and participants, procedures, data collection, and data analysis.

This study adopted an action research method to explore the advantages and challenges of a remedial class as were when the two underachievers experienced it and how the course design would be revised to meet their needs. An action research is chosen for this study because the five steps in the action research cycle were useful addressing the research questions. The five steps proposed by Nunan (2007) are stated as follows: “First, the research is initiated by the practitioner and is derived from a real problem in the classroom which needs to be confronted. Second, the research is collaborative. Third, the teacher collects objective data in the form of classroom interactions and learner language. Fourth, the results are disseminated. Fifth, the project takes the form of an ongoing cycle in which the teacher reflects on, returns to, and extends the initial inquiry” (p. 14). Four instruments were used to collect data: interviews, field notes, students’ learning logs, and video recording. By analyzing the data, the researcher tried to probe into the affordances and challenges of remedial English instruction to the two participants, Phoebe and Gina.

This study adopted the action research for the following reasons. First, according to Dyke’s definition of action research, the researcher used data to back up the concepts she proposed which meant the process of study was scientific in nature instead of relying on preferences or hunches. Second, conducting the action research helped the researcher reflect on what she had done in the classroom. It became easy for the researcher to see the problems. Third, since the teacher was aware of the problems, the use of Action Research led the researcher to take action directly to

improve pedagogical practices. Fourth, implementing the action research not only enhanced the professional growth of the teacher but also improved the quality of students' education. In short, Action Research is a useful method to increase the level of education in the classroom and beneficial for both the teacher and the students. Thus, this study adopted Action Research in the hope of improving the quality of the remedial English instruction.

Context and Participants

The study was conducted at the southern tip of Taiwan, defined as the extreme rural by the Minister of Education. The area around the school owns spectacular landscape and marvelous beaches so that hundreds of thousands of tourists visit this small town every year. Tourism brings business to the local community. Yet, it also has the dark side: The relaxing holiday atmosphere causes many students to develop a laid-back style of living. The participants of this study are no exception.

There were about six students in class. The small-size class was ideal for remedial instruction because it allowed for a lot of interaction between the students and the teacher. The students in this remedial English class were in the ninth grade and they belong to the PE-specialty class. As the students in PE specialty class, they spent three afternoons out of five school days receiving trainings in their specialized sports. However, most of them were fooling around during the sports training because there were insufficient specialized sports coaches except one track-and-field coach. When in the ninth grade, four months before the graduation, the students found that they neither achieved their sports dreams, nor laid a good foundation in academic study. They regretted over the past three years. Facing the upcoming Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students, they tried to catch up. However, without a good foundation for schoolwork, these students found that the

contents of the textbooks overwhelming and that the scores they received from each test made them discouraged. They were vulnerable and struggling. Hence, the remedial English instruction was designed to give them support.

Criteria for Choosing the Two Participant

This study aimed to explore how to design a remedial course that could really offer helps to above mentioned English underachievers. This remedial course lasted for twelve weeks, two times a week. The remedial English class was conducted from eight o' clock to nine- thirty at night. The researcher, also the teacher, planned the course based on underachievers' past learning experience, revised the contents according to their levels, and switched the topics flexibly to meet their interests. For the purpose of the study, the two participants out of six students, Phoebe and Gina were selected (pseudonym is used here to be the focus). This decision was based on the following reasons. First, Phoebe and Gina possessed underachievers' typical characteristics such as having shorter concentration span in class, struggling to finish assignments, developing senses of failure, lacking study habits, and disliking school work. Their dilemma and problems were issues worthy of further understanding and searching for solutions. Second, Phoebe and Gina were articulate. In the process of the whole study, they constantly conveyed their thoughts on the contents and activities and did not hide their inner voices to the researchers. Their remarks, criticism, and feedback offered the researcher a critical access to understand underachievers' true feelings and to figure out the contributors to their underachievement. Third, Gina and Phoebe were good friends and partners. They often had small talks, and the delicate interaction between them was expected to generate interesting findings to this study.

The Participants

This section provides background information about Phoebe and Gina. Phoebe was bubbling, warmhearted and dedicated to the class. However, when it comes to school work, Phoebe would frown and say, "I am just not into study." Phoebe's

concentration span was shorter than average students and tended to talk to other students in class, or she would fall asleep or veg out. She knew she should study, but she just could not regulate herself. She always scrabbled in her homework or copied her classmates' assignment on the due day. She envied the top students and thought they got high scores because they were very intelligent.

Phoebe had a complex about the remedial English class. She hoped that the teacher would offer more grammatical practices; yet, while the teacher was doing so, she complained that the course was too tedious and needed more activities. The teacher revised the class and integrated the tasks and activities to offer her grammatical instruction. When Phoebe was required to pay efforts to finish the activities, she replied, "I am tired and do not feel like moving around." She wanted to practice English speaking. When the teacher started the "speaking one sentence" activity, she remarked that it did not enhance her English speaking. When the teacher let Phoebe and her partner engage in real communication, she kept silent and shunned away. She criticized the classmates for being too noisy and disturbing her learning. Actually, it was Phoebe who gossiped all the time and annoyed the class. No wonder some of her classmates shouted at her, "Phoebe you are the noisiest student in class!" Phoebe's high occurrences of emotional ups and downs gave the remedial instruction constant challenges.

The second participant Gina had quick wit; she was good at reading others' minds and replied appropriately, whereas in the regular class, she dozed off all the time. Many of her classmates mocked her, "What happened in the class doesn't affect you since you fall asleep all day long!" Such a cynical remark made Gina pissed off, and she retorted. But what the classmates said was definitely true.

To the teacher's surprised, Gina devoted herself to the remedial English class. Though she could only spell four words a time, she would try again and make

improvements. She had problems identifying word meanings, but she still challenged the grammatical multiple choice questions; when her partner Phoebe was distracted, she led Phoebe to the tasks with her quick wit. Gina lacked good foundation of English, but she still hoped to make her English better: she wanted to study in Korean and English is a requirement to fulfill her dream. Gina's totally different demeanor in the regular and remedial English class provoked the research to explore.

Procedures

The data collection for this study lasted from February to June 2014. As indicated in Table 1 and Table 2, before the remedial English instruction, the first interview was conducted. The interview questions are attached as Appendix A. The focus of the first interview was to understand Phoebe and Gina's past learning experience, including the history of language learning, what it was like to learn English as a child, why they liked or dislike English, what problems they had, and how they viewed themselves as language learners. After the first interview, the 12-week remedial English instruction was implemented. In Week 1, the first class focused on grammar, which was the knowledge the students wanted to review the most. The second interview was conducted afterwards targeting why they took the remedial English class, what aspects of language competence they wanted to improve, and what difficulties they encountered. The interview questions are attached as Appendix B. In Week 2-3, the Step One of grammar instruction and speaking practice were conducted focusing on understanding and writing sentences with the support of cue cards and speaking one sentence. In Week 4-6, the Step Two of grammar instruction and speaking practice followed aiming at challenging multiple-choice

grammar questions and creating mini-dialogues. Because of the coming of the first native English teacher, Carlo, in Week 9, students prepared for their oral presentations to Carlo, in week 7-8. Step Four, the students' performance on Carlo's visit was their oral presentation. After Step Four, the third interview was conducted to probe into the students' thought on the native English teacher's course.

The interview questions are attached as Appendix C. In Week 10-12, in order to help the students develop basic competence for the coming Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students, the remedial English instruction focused on exercise and practicing. The fourth interview was implemented after the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students aiming for understanding the students' thought about the test and the remedial English course. The interview questions are attached as Appendix D. The formal class ended in Week 12, but the fifth and sixth interview were continued to probe into what the students thought before and after the second native English teacher's course. The interview questions are attached as Appendix E and F.

The students were asked to keep learning logs throughout the twelve weeks. They were given ten minutes in every two or three classes to write in the logs so that the researcher would have a clean record of their progress and changes. The field notes were kept by the researcher during and after the remedial English instruction. Video recording was collected on the interviews and the native speakers' instruction.

Table 1 below is the timeline of the study, while Table 2 shows the objective of the instruction. More description on the instruments is presented later in this section.

Table 1.

Timeline of the Study

Week	Instructional Activities	Research Activities
Before the Remedial Class		First interview (Appendix A)
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Vocabulary Quizzes ✧ Grammar: Step One → Understanding and writing sentences as practice with the supports of the cue cards. 	Second Interview (Appendix B)
Weeks 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ <u>Vocabulary</u> Quizzes ✧ <u>Grammar</u>: Step One → Understanding and writing sentences as practice with the supports of the cue cards. ✧ <u>Speaking</u>: Step One → Speaking one sentence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take field notes 2. Collect the students' learning logs
Weeks 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ <u>Vocabulary</u> Quizzes ✧ <u>Grammar</u>: Step Two → Students doing the grammatical multiple choice questions ✧ <u>Speaking</u>: Step Two → Students creating mini dialogues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take field notes 2. Collect the students' learning logs

Week 7-8	✧ <u>Vocabulary</u> Quizzes ✧ <u>Speaking</u> : Step Three→ The teacher having the students prepare for an oral presentation for the native English teacher on the issues related to the topics in the textbook	1. Take field notes 2. Collect the students' learning logs
Week 9	✧ <u>Speaking</u> : Step Four→ The students' performance	1. Video recoding 2. Take field notes 3. Third Interview (Appendix C)
Week 10-12	✧ <u>Vocabulary</u> Quizzes ✧ <u>Grammar</u> : Step Three → Students practicing the multiple choice questions of the Basic Competence Tests	1. Fourth interview (Appendix D) 2. Take field notes 3. Collect the students' learning logs
Week 14		Fifth interview (Appendix E)
Week 15	✧ <u>Speaking</u> : Step Four→ The students' performance	1. Sixth interview (Appendix F) 2. Video recoding 3. Take Field notes

Table 2.

The Objectives of the Remedial English Instruction Based on the Students' Past Learning Experience and Needs

Aspects		
Vocabulary	✧	The students building up their word power

Grammar	✧	Step One	→ The students understanding sentences and writing sentences as practice with the support of the cue cards.
	✧	Step Two	→ The students doing the grammatical multiple choice questions
	✧	Step Three	→ The students practicing the grammatical multiple choice questions of the Basic Competence Tests
Speaking	✧	Step One	→ The students speaking one sentence
	✧	Step Two	→ The students creating mini- dialogues
	✧	Step Three	→ The teacher having students communicate directly with native English Teachers.
	✧	Step Four	→ The students' performance

Data Collection

Four types of data were collected in this study: interviews, field notes, learning logs and video clips; all of the data were used to follow and sketch the benefits and challenges the two participants, Phoebe and Gina, encountered. The process of data collection was divided into four stages: before, during and after the remedial English instruction. Prior to the remedial English instruction, the first interview was conducted

to reconstruct Phoebe and Gina's English learning experience. In the process of remedial English instruction, field notes, learning logs, the interviews and video recording were collected and analyzed to identify critical events. After the 12-week remedial English instruction, the final three interviews were administrated. After the data collection and analysis, the researcher addressed the research questions.

Interviews

In this study, questions for the six interviews were open-ended and allowed Phoebe and Gina to say their inner voices. During the interviews, the researcher was a reflective listener -- reflecting back on what was heard to make sure that what Phoebe and Gina said were understood in order to produce meaningful interpretation (Ebrahim & Sullivan, 1995). The first interview, before the remedial English instruction interview, was conducted in January. In order not to get the vague and reluctant replies such as "I forgot." or "I don't know.", the researcher used yes-no questions to initiate the conversation and gradually engaged Phoebe and Gina in the context of the question. To avoid making Phoebe and Gina felt bad or refused to answer questions about their past English learning experience, the researcher shared her own learning experiences with them to ease the tension. After Phoebe and Gina felt comfortable, Wh- questions followed. The questions used at the first interview are listed in Appendix A. The second and the third interview were administered after Phoebe and Gina's first remedial English course and their oral presentations to the native English teacher, respectively. The interviews aimed to understand why they took the remedial English class, what they wanted to learn most, how they commented on their oral presentations and the first native English teacher's course. The questions of the second interview are attached as Appendix B and Appendix C.

The fourth interview were carried out after the Comprehensive Assessment for Junior High School Students. The interview recorded Phoebe and Gina's thoughts about

the affordances and challenges of remedial English instruction. The questions of the fourth interview are concluded in Appendix D.

The remedial English instruction ended in Week 12, but the fifth and sixth interview continued investigating Phoebe and Gina's opinions before and after the second native English teacher's course. The questions of the fifth and sixth interview are attached as Appendix E and Appendix F.

Besides the six interviews with Phoebe and Gina, informal conversations with Phoebe and Gina's classmates in the remedial class were arranged to gather information from their classmates' viewpoints for later data-triangulation. This is to ensure trustworthiness of this study.

Field notes

Field notes were kept by the researcher while observing the participants Phoebe and Gina in the remedial class. These field notes took the form of detailed descriptions. The researcher developed a framework. With a framework bearing in the researcher's mind, the field notes were carried out in a systematic way from which the researcher could draw out the meanings and understand the events being studied.

Students' learning log

A learning log was adopted to record students' learning experience. A typical learning log is in the form of a journal. In the journal, students can write down what they have learned today, their responses to the readings or any questions may need to clarify.

From the learning logs, the researcher may know what difficulties Phoebe and Gina encountered, see how they progressed in learning and their perspectives toward the lessons.

Video recording

Video recording was a critical tool to record the six interviews, students' oral presentations, and their interaction between the two native English teachers in the

remedial classroom. It could capture Phoebe and Gina's facial expression and body languages that may be ignored by the researcher.

Data Analysis

The data in the study was analyzed based on "classic ethnographic style." It relied heavily on "the identification and categorization of key themes, perspectives and events, working towards an account that embraces adequate description and interpretation, which may include amongst other things extracts from field notes, narrative vignettes and samples of talk" (Richard, 2003, p. 14-15).

The data analysis procedure is presented as follow. First, the six interviews were analyzed from which a summary was made. Second, according to the interview data, learning logs, field notes, and video recording, the participants' experiences were reconstructed. Third, the researcher categorized the two participants' perception based on emerging themes related to the research questions. The collected data such as interviews, field notes and documents were triangulated to confirm the findings.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

There are two sections to this chapter: the first section reports what happened to the class when the instruction was designed and implemented, while the second section focuses on the two focused students, Phoebe and Gina.

Design of the Remedial Class

The Goals of the Remedial Class

Through interviews and informal talks to the whole students in the remedial class, that were Phoebe, Gina, Sean and Nick, Linda and Allen's past learning English experiences, the teacher noticed that these students had learned English at least for five years. However, it seemed that they had gained little from the previous English classes. The researcher found out that the students were offered with lectures that they could not understand or handouts they could not figure out. Also, being pushed without realizing their struggles also contributed to their resentment toward English learning. Perceiving these factors that led to their failures in English learning, while designing the remedial curriculum, the researcher took the students' differences in levels and needs as the top consideration for designing the remedial instruction.

Analyzing their comments adopted from learning logs, small talks, and interview, the researcher derived three sets of understanding. First, to these students, knowing words and memorizing vocabulary meant much more than the researcher' anticipated. In a regular class, when the schedule was too tight, the teacher usually omitted the vocabulary instruction and quizzes and taught the dialogues directly. However, to these students, this practice caused them great troubles understanding because they could not recognize the words, which blocked their comprehension.

Second, they kept saying that grammar played a critical role in English learning

but learning grammar rules really upset them. Grammar also contributed to their lack of confidence in English. Yet, solving their problems was still feasible. If they were offered more clarification, assistance and time to practice, they could figure out the grammar rules. Once they understood the grammar, it would not only bring them a sense of fulfillment but also boost their confidence.

Third, speaking English to foreigners was their dream. They envied people who could talk English freely to the foreigners. But when they had the chance to talk with foreign tourists in English, their lack of confidence and training caused them to shun.

To solve their problems and make their dreams come true, the researcher set up three goals for the remedial class: building up their vocabulary bank (the students' need), making obscure grammar rules understandable (the students' learning difficulty), and designing contexts for the students to practice speaking (the students' interest).

The First Goal: The teacher encouraging the students to build up their vocabulary power (the students' need)

The purpose of the remedial class lied in laying a foundation for the students who left behind. The remedial English class in the junior high schools usually started from identifying KK transcription symbols and practicing phonics. Considering the fact that the ninth-grade students who attended this remedial class had pressing need to vocabulary, and that most of them could spell the words by sounds, the teacher did not set up the goal on phonics or KK transcription symbols. Instead, the first goal she set was build up students' vocabulary bank.

When it came to "English", the most comments these students gave was "I don't understand English!" or "English words are just like mysterious symbols that I never could decode them." The researcher then probed into the reasons and found that the

biggest hurdle came from vocabulary-- they did not know the meanings of words. Therefore, building up their word bank was the first task she had to achieve.

She planned to start each class with vocabulary quizzes. With quizzes, the students could calm down and get into a learning mode. Before the quiz, she gave them ten minutes to memorize ten words. When the time was up, instead of writing on a piece of paper, they wrote their answers on the blackboard. The reason why she asked them to do so was that she found that some of them loved to draw and write on the blackboard. Writing answers on the blackboard made them feel special and honored. Another reason was that this was an effective method to make them alert after a long day at school.

When they were ready, she would read aloud each word, and they wrote down the answers on the blackboard. Passing the first round of the vocabulary quiz, they could move on to the second and usually the last round of the vocabulary quiz was another ten new words. The students who failed on the first round of the quiz had to retake the quiz.

The Second Goal: The teacher making obscure grammar rules comprehensible (the students' learning difficulty)

Combining all the formal and informal talks with the students, the most shared issue they came up with was "grammar." Allen and Nick said that

Teacher Alice, I really did memorize vocabulary. I know the meanings of words. However, when the words are put in a string, they somehow become obscure! I have totally no idea what they mean. Whenever I take English tests, the multiple-choice questions are confusing because I do not know what the sentences say, let alone choosing the correct answers.

Phoebe faced the same obstacle and said,

And that's why we idled and fall asleep in class. Teacher Alice, you always

require us to sit straight and keep our head up; however, staring at the multiple-choice grammar questions on English tests, I can't get the meanings of the sentences in each question. It makes me defeated! How could I sit straight and keep my head up? That's why you see I crawl over the desk in the regular class. (Informal talk with Phoebe, February, 2014)

The painful learning experience they suffered was taken as the top concern while the teacher was planning the remedial curriculum. Knowing grammar caused their learning difficulties, she hoped that these students could be helped. Therefore, the second goal she set for them was to make obscure grammar rules comprehensible.

The first step of making obscure grammar rules comprehensible was to make the students know the meanings of the sentences in each grammatical exercise. The teacher planned to make them write the grammatical sentences with the hints from the cue cards. She expected that through the training, they could both understand the meanings of the sentences and practice the grammatical exercises at the same time.

The second step she planned was to do the multiple-choice grammar questions. Considering their levels and ability, the teacher made the multiple-choice questions leveled from the basic level from the workbook to the higher level from the test papers. She planned to let them practice the basic level of the multiple-choice questions first. When they got familiar with the rules, she gave them the higher level ones. She hoped that through proper leveling, the students would not be overwhelmed as soon as they started practicing multiple-choice grammar questions.

The third step of making obscure grammar rules comprehensible was to take the challenge of the multiple-choice grammar questions of the Basic Competence Tests. The multiple-choice questions in the Basic Competence Tests integrated various grammatical concepts and covered words. It would be the toughest challenge for the

students in the remedial class.

Step one: the students understanding and writing sentences as practice with the supports of cue cards.

First, the teacher would demonstrate how to write the grammatical sentences with the prompts of the cue cards. To make the abstract grammar rules tangible, she would ask them to pay attention and identify any “different marker” for today’s grammatical rule. When they identified the markers, she started to explain the rule. She hoped that they would learn the grammar rules by discovering rather than receiving information passively.

Next, she would stick the cue cards of the grammatical exercises on the blackboard. With the prompts provided by the cue cards, the students were expected to write their answers on the blackboard. She would assist them to finish the exercises and help them translate the meanings of sentences.

Step two: the students doing the multiple-choice grammar questions.

According to the teacher’s previous teaching experiences, if she kept lecturing the grammar rules, the students would feel drowsy and become distracted. Therefore, she would spend only ten to fifteen minutes illuminating the grammatical rule. Then, she would pick some students to answer the questions. The questions would include circling the key words or grammatical markers, translating the sentences and applying the rules to choose the best answer.

In case they were stunned and could not say anything when they were picked to answer the questions, they were allowed to copy the questions on the blackboard before answering the questions. This allowed them time to think for a while, discuss with classmates, and ask for the teacher’s help.

Step three: the students doing the multiple-choice grammar questions from the Basic Competence Tests.

When it was getting close to the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students, the teacher would engage in the third step of the instruction making the obscure grammar rules understandable and having the students take the challenge of the multiple-choice grammar questions from the previous Basic Competence Tests. Practicing through the questions from the Basic Competence Test was considered an efficient way to help students develop skills for the Comprehensive Assessment Program. These students belonged to the first cohort of nation-wide test takers for the Comprehensive Assessment Program, and there were no previous multiple-choice grammar questions from the Comprehensive Assessment Program. Therefore, the teacher had them practice the grammatical multiple-choice questions from the previous Basic Competence Test as mocked test items for the Comprehensive Assessment Program.

The unique aspect of the third step of the grammatical instruction lied in the contents of multiple-choice grammar questions. Compared to the second step of the grammatical instruction, grammatical questions in the third step had longer descriptions of question items and covered the words and grammar rules from Book one to Book six. How to get the students involved in learning when facing such a broad range of the test items was a challenge for the teacher herself.

If the teacher just passed out the test paper and had the students finish it, the students might scratch their heads, have difficulty reading the test items, gradually lose attention, and finally take out their smart phones to slide. She had to do some changes.

She decided to reverse the convention: That is, the students finished the test paper and then the teacher explained the questions to them. In the remedial class, she would

explain the grammatical rule first. Then, the students would pick out the questions from the test papers that conformed to the rule. Circling the key words, translating the sentences, and choosing the best answers would be their job. She expected them to say what they knew about the grammar rules instead of listening to the lectures again and again but did not learn anything.

The Third Goal: The teacher designing contexts for the students to practice English Speaking (the students' interest)

The speaking lessons in the remedial class were divided into three steps. The first step was having students express their interests or experiences in only one sentence. The second step was to have them create a mini-dialogue related to their daily life using a serial of sentence patterns. Step Three was for students to make oral presentations and communicate with the native English speakers.

Step one: the students speaking one sentence

Step One of English speaking was based on the grammar rules. On the one hand, integrating the grammar rules into the English speaking lesson made grammar become practical with which students could apply in their conversations; on the other hand, having the students follow the grammar rules would make the contents of English speaking less massive and more focused. Moreover, the time of the remedial class was so limited that it was better to combine the grammar rules and the speaking lesson.

At the beginning of English speaking lesson, the teacher introduced a grammatical rule. Next, she applied the grammar rules to make sentences related to the students' campus life. The purpose was to catch the students' attention and to relate the grammar rules to their real life. For example, the sentence patterns for today's lesson are "either...or" and "both...and," the teacher would make sentences

such as “Either green tea or bubble tea is your favorite drink.”, and “Most of you choose both omelets and milk tea for breakfast.”

After the teacher’s demonstration, it was the students’ turn to follow the grammatical rule to make only one sentence by themselves. She hoped that in the process of making sentences, they would connect what they called “absurd grammar rules” to their life and that the grammar rules would be meaningful, not scary anymore.

Once when the students became familiar with the grammatical rule, the teacher designed a scenario which the students used as a context to practice speaking and applied the grammar rules they had just learned. When answering the questions related to the scenarios, the students practiced speaking.

Actually, giving the answer in only one sentence was not an easy job for the students. To avoid the situation when they had no ideas how to start, the teacher would guide them to make or fix the sentences individually.

After several classes, when the students got accustomed to giving answers in English. The teacher would plan to get into another stage-- Step Two: Creating a mini-dialogue.

Step two: the students creating mini-dialogues

In the Step Two: creating a mini-dialogue, the speaking topics were derived from the dialogues in the textbooks. The students read the simplified version of dialogues first, and used several useful sentences from the dialogues in the textbook to create their own. The reason that she did so was that the students aimed to recap the lessons which they did not catch in the regular class. They wanted to make good use of the textbook instead of doing outside readings or learning something new. In short, their goals were clear: focus on the textbook, figure it out and gain the rudimentary concepts so that they could lay a foundation which they failed to achieve for the past

two years. They chose not to do outside readings which they regarded as distracting from their learning.

Though the students considered the textbook critical and crucial for their learning, they thought it was extremely boring, too, especially when learning the dialogues, they all languished. Therefore, it was a challenge for the teacher to adopt the dialogues from the textbook and make them interested.

To trigger the students' motivation, before reviewing the dialogue that they had learned in the regular class, she asked them some questions related to the dialogue. She tried to connect the dialogue to the students' campus life.

Once the students' interests were aroused, the teacher showed them the simplified version of the dialogue. The original dialogues overwhelmed the students because they were filled with long and complex sentences and seemed to be full of endless paragraphs. She rewrote the dialogue to meet their levels. She would also play the animations of the dialogues, provided by the textbook publisher and only emphasized several useful phrases and key sentences to lighten their load.

After they got the gist of the dialogue, she would draw several useful phrases and sentences from the dialogue and make them in sequence form a framework which would facilitate the students in creating their dialogues. Following the framework, the students would come up with new dialogues with their partners and practice speaking. In this way, the students would develop their English speaking ability.

From arousing the students' interests by asking questions, recap the simplified version of the dialogues to having students follow the framework to create their dialogues, the teacher strived for improving the students' English speaking ability and recapping the main points they failed to catch in the regular class at the same time working within a tight schedule.

Step three: the teacher having the students communicate with the native English teachers

The objective of Step Three was that the teacher trained the students to communicate directly to the native English speakers.

Before the remedial class, the teacher interviewed all of the students, focusing on their past English learning experiences and thoughts about their English learning. When talking about “speaking,” some of the students said they really envied people who could speak fluent English. Living in this small town and a well-known sight-seeing spot, they should have a lot of opportunities to talk to international visitors. However, this was not the truth. The teacher could tell from the students’ facial expressions that they had no confidence in talking to international visitors in English. The expressions that they had when they envied people who spoke fluent English and how they were eager to talk to the international visitors impressed the teacher. Their wishes and fears inspired the teacher to do a revolutionary change to the speaking lesson: having them communicate directly with the native English teachers.

The English speaking lesson moved on to Step Three: having them communicate directly to the native English teachers. In Step Three, the students would be provided with the opportunities to engage in real conversations with native English teachers. Considering the students’ proficiency levels, the teacher arranged two native English speakers who had taught EFL students in Taiwan at least for three years to help out in this step. These teachers were aware of the widening gap of English levels among the junior high school students in Taiwan. Their participation was scheduled in April, in the middle of the semester, and in June after the Comprehensive Assessment Program. Because the experience of talking with native English teachers was so unique, the teacher expected that it would benefit not only the students in the remedial class but

other students in the regular class. So, these two native English teachers' participation was arranged in the regular class rather than in the remedial class only.

The process of training

The teacher planned to have the students in the remedial class to do oral presentations at the first native English teacher's visit in April. The teacher used three to five class periods to train them, from writing scripts to giving formal oral presentations.

The topics the students were going to present were their points of view on the textbook. In the oral presentations, the students talked about which parts were their favorite or which ones were meaningless to them. Because the topics the students chose were related to the textbook, it would arouse the native English teacher's interest since these teachers were members of the textbook review committee. On the other hand, since the topics were based on the textbook, preparing for the oral presentations was also a kind of review lesson which they hoped to do in the remedial class.

After the students' oral presentation, the native English teacher would ask them questions about the presentations. The students would be expected to answer in English, creating real conversations with the native English teacher.

Besides the training of making oral presentations, the teacher would also teach the students communicative strategies because she often heard them say, "I am afraid of making mistakes when talking to foreigners." or "The foreigners talk so fast that I may not catch up on their speed. So I had better not talk to them even though I want to." (The informal talks with the students in the remedial class, in March, 2014.) Therefore, she decided to integrate the communicative strategies into the Step Three speaking lesson so that the students would feel easy and comfortable when making oral presentations instead of feeling nervous and lacking of confidence.

*The process of guiding the students to do the oral presentation:
filling out the format*

All of the students in the remedial class would make oral presentations except for the two students who would attend the National High School Athletic Games. As for the students in the regular class, they would be encouraged to join.

Considering the levels of the students in the remedial class, the teacher designed the presentation format below so that the students would have had a clear and tangible direction to follow:

- I Self-Introduction:
 - A. Name and the school
 - B. How long have you learned English?
 - C. Difficulty in learning English
- II Your points of view about the textbook (choose one or answer both)
 - A. Which part of the textbook is your favorite?
 - B. Which part of the textbook is the least interesting to you?

Step four: the students' performance

In Step Four, the students demonstrate their performance and ability when the two native English teachers' visits.

Carlo's visit

In Step Four, the students would do the oral presentation as their performance at Carlo's visit. The students' performance was followed a fixed format because they still needed the clear direction to follow.

Jim's visit to the class

Jim's visit would fall in June after the Comprehensive Assessment Program. Since it was after the Comprehensive Assessment, the test burden would be lifted. The

teacher expected that the class would have a pleasant talk with the second native English teacher. So at Jim's visit, the students would not have to follow a fixed format, and they could talk to Jim freely as real communication.

This time, the teacher expected the class to further discuss some cultural issues. She hoped the second native English teacher would share her/his living experience in his/her country. Through the sharing, she expected that the students could get a glance of native English speakers' culture and could delve even into their thoughts rooted in the western culture.

The teacher would also interview some students after Carlo's visit. She would inform Jim of the students' opinions to ensure the meeting would meet the students' essential needs.

Instructional Implementation

The remedial class began in the late February to the middle of May, lasting for twelve weeks. The class aimed to help the ninth grade students lay a foundation for English so that they could have basic English ability before graduating from the junior high school. The goals of the remedial class were divided into three aspects: The teacher building up the students' word power, making obscure grammar rules comprehensible, and designing contexts for the students to practice speaking English. The following section presents the process of implementation.

The First Goal: Building up the students' word power (the students' need)

In the remedial class, the teacher started the class with a focus on vocabulary. At first, the teacher led the whole class to recite the first ten words in the lesson to get

every student familiar with sounds and pronunciations. Then, the teacher set up a stop watch for ten minutes, and in such a limited time, the students had to memorize ten words. When the time was up, the teacher read aloud each English words which they had to write down on the blackboard. Most of them required the teacher to provide both English pronunciations and Chinese translations. The teacher thus provided them with both Chinese translations and English sounds to facilitate the process.

Passing the first round of the vocabulary quiz, some of the students could move on to the second and usually the last quiz. The students who failed on the first phase of the vocabulary quiz had to retake the quiz. Usually, only one student named Sean would have problems passing the quiz because he did not know much about phonics or the KK transcription symbols. When others students were preparing for the second round of the quiz, the teacher would take time to develop Sean's understanding of phonics and KK transcription symbols. The expectation for Sean are set to be answering to five words correctly for a quiz, which was lower than the teacher's expectation for other students'.

The class' responses

The students who joined the remedial class had a shared feature: it was hard for them to concentrate on learning. Through vocabulary quizzes, it would be easier for them to settle down and focus on learning than any other ways.

Also, the implementation of vocabulary quizzes on the blackboard was an efficiency way to urge them to memorize words. When preparing for the quizzes, they focused so intensively, and one could clearly see their attempts to memorize all the words. They did not want to idle in front of the blackboard and stared at other classmates writing each word smoothly, which would be too embarrassing for them.

Second, the students in the remedial class admitted that if the teacher did not give them any vocabulary quizzes, they lacked motivation to memorize any words.

Without memorizing words, no matter how many times the teacher taught them and stressed the main points in the dialogues and readings, they still had no idea of what she talked about. On the contrary, if they had taken vocabulary quizzes and became familiar with the words, they felt that they had a better control of the lesson they were learning and they also understood better.

Third, the students who took the remedial class all had setbacks on this thorny road to learn English. Memorizing words, enlarging their word bank, and passing the vocabulary quizzes gave them a sense of achievement. Besides, when they wrote their answers on the blackboard, they felt honored.

The students in the remedial class were in favor of the vocabulary quizzes and regarded them as a must. They even reminded the teacher to give them the quizzes: “Teacher Alice, should we memorize the words in Lesson Two for the later vocabulary quiz?” or “Teacher Alice, when are we going to have the vocabulary quiz?” Fooling around for so long and suffering ceaseless blows, they finally developed a study habit: memorizing words regularly through the implementation of vocabulary quizzes

The Second Goal: Making obscure grammar rules comprehensible (the students' learning difficulty)

The teacher tried to dispel the students' stereotypical thinking of grammar: that it is obscure and incomprehensible. She gave them many grammatical examples based on their campus life, induced them to discover the various grammatical markers themselves and explained the grammar rules with reasoning.

The teacher also shortened the instructional time to make room for the students' discussion and expressions. In the process of expression, they took the active roles to tell their understanding of the grammar exercises. She found that this was an efficient way to maintain their attention.

After several classes, some students told the teacher their further need toward grammatical instruction: they wanted to take the challenge of multiple-choice grammar questions. She provided them with leveled questions: from the workbook, test papers, and to Step Three; challenging the Basic Competence Tests. Even facing great challenges, the teacher insisted that the students took the active roles to pick up the test questions that conformed to the grammar rules they just learned in the remedial class, circled the key words, translated the meanings of the sentences and chose the best answers. Although they had trouble translating the sentences, and could not choose the best answers at the first, second, or even third times, she found that it was a suitable way for them to learn grammar rules. One of the benefits the remedial class could offer was to fulfill the student-center spirit: The students had more chances to voice their needs and thoughts, gained more individual help. It was a precious opportunity for those whose needs had been neglected and who were left behind in the regular class.

Step One: The students understanding and writing sentences with the support of the cue cards

First, the teacher tried to dispel the students' misconception that grammar was incomprehensible. She induced them to discover the grammatical markers themselves instead of requiring them to memorize the formula by rote. For example, the teacher showed the students the sentence such as *Gina runs faster than Fred*. The students had to circle the marker "er" in the word faster. She also explained the reasons why they needed such markers.

The teacher also shortened the lecture to make room for the students' practice, measuring their understanding and having more interaction. For example, she stuck the cue cards of each grammatical exercise on the blackboard. In the process of

writing sentences with the hints of the cue cards, they had tons of questions to ask the teacher such as what the meanings were and how to pronounce the words in the cue cards. After they knew most of the words in the sentence, she required them to say the meanings of the complete sentences and read them aloud. Therefore, it created a lot of interaction between the students and the teacher.

After the students got the gist of the meanings, the teacher induced them to combine the two discrete sentences with conjunctions they had just learned. For example, when the cue card showed, “Jimmy speaks English well. / Jimmy listens to the English program every day.” they had to write the answer “Jimmy speaks English well *because* he listens to the English program every day.” Though the cue cards offered a clear hint, it was still a tough job for them. The reason why it caused great trouble is that they could not understand the two sentences, and therefore they failed to combine the two sentences.

The class’ responses

The teacher thought these students would make progress in grammar after receiving Step One’s training. On the one hand, this method trained them to understand the meanings of the sentences. On the other hand, they could practice applying the grammar rules to answer questions. However, after several classes, one student said,

I don’t think writing sentences based on the cue cards improves my grammar a lot because I still cannot figure out the multiple-choice grammar questions on the test papers. I got poor grades! (One student’s remark, March, 2014)

Having received such feedback, the teacher inquired the whole class, “Do you want to practice the multiple-choice grammar questions?” They all nodded.

Apparently, only writing the sentences with the hints of the cue cards could not meet their needs. Although they suffered a lot of setbacks from multiple-choice grammar questions, they still wanted to take the challenge of multiple-choice questions. Inspired by the students' need to further their learning with the multiple-choice questions, the teacher implemented Step Two: doing the multiple-choice grammar questions instruction earlier than her schedule.

Step Two: The students do the multiple-choice grammar questions

To meet the students' urgent needs, the teacher moved on to Step two of the grammatical instruction sooner than planned. She leveled the multiple-choice grammar questions from the workbook to the test papers, so that the students would not overwhelmed at the sight of multiple-choice grammar questions.

To prevent the students from being distracted, she shortened the lectures and allowed more time for them to practice, discuss, receive individual instruction and express their understanding.

At the beginning, the teacher told the students "We are going to practice the multiple-choice grammar questions in the workbook of Lesson Four." She wanted them to set a clear goal in mind, not fooling around and having no aim like before.

After ten to fifteen minutes of reviewing of the grammatical rule in Lesson Four, the teacher asked them to come out of their seats and copy the first multiple-choice question in the workbook on the blackboard. These multiple-choice questions were already taught in the regular class, so they should have basic ideas about these questions.

While copying the questions on the blackboard, the students took time to discuss with their partners. The teacher then overheard one of their talks "Don't you know the meanings of this question? Alice taught these questions in the regular class this

morning. I guessed you fell asleep again!” The teacher found that the schedule in the regular class was so tight that some of them could not catch up. As ninth graders, they had to review what they have learned before while learned the new contents at the same time.

After they got the gist of the meaning of the sentence, the teacher asked them individually, “Would you like to read aloud the sentence and say its meanings?”

Even though the questions were picked up from the workbook leveled as the basic, yet these questions were still great obstacles for the students. When reading these questions, the students read a word after a word, paused and got stuck. Their voices became weaker as time went by. Perceiving their losing of heart, the teacher helped them to read and encouraged them to link the words together to form a sentence.

When it comes to deciding which item was correct, the students’ correction rate was extremely low. Take a multiple-choice grammar question from the workbook for example: *Mrs. Williams did not notice _____ her dog was out late at night.* (A) *what* (B) *where* (C) *that* (D) *which* The students answered (A), (B), and (D), but the answer turned out to be (C). They became silent and discouraged. Noticing their setback, the teacher comforted them, “It is okay. Anyone who starts to do exercise encounters such problems. Hang in there, and you will be able to overcome the difficulties.” Although they had motivation to take the challenge of the multiple-choice grammar questions, yet they still had to face ceaseless blows on this thorny road. How to inspire them to keep moving even facing incessant failure was the teacher’s great challenge.

To make sure that they really understood the grammar rules and made good use of the questions that they took efforts to copy on the blackboard, after about three to five questions, she gave them about five minutes to review. When time was due, they

had to read the sentences aloud, circle certain key words, explain the questions, and choose the best answers.

In the second round of reading, circling key words, explaining and choosing the answers, the students could not only read the whole sentences fluently but also analyzed the questions clearly. Although there were only three to five questions in total, yet the teacher was so glad to witness their progress. Though they had struggled in learning at first, through practicing and encouragement, they accounted for the grammar rules with great confidence.

When the exercise moved on to the higher level, that is answering the multiple-choice questions from the test papers, the teacher took their levels and feelings into consideration and picked up only several questions that focused on the phrases and grammar rules they had learned recently. The types of multiple-choice questions could be divided into two categories: the phrases and grammar rules. Both types of questions had been taught and practiced in the remedial English class. In this way, the students should have been able to take the challenge with better preparation. It also prevented them from losing directions when doing multiple-choice questions that covered too many concepts.

The class' responses

Though in the process of practicing multiple-choice questions, the students still made mistakes, yet sifting and grouping the multiple-choice questions made them have better control of phrases and grammar points, resulting in further comprehension and therefore increased their correctness.

Moreover, the students could apply what they had learned instantly when doing the explaining job themselves. Once they were stuck, both they and the teacher could become aware of where the problem was and could receive personal instruction they really needed right away.

In the students' journals, they wrote,

I have learned so much from today's lesson. I have not only memorized all of the words in Lesson Two but also done seven multiple-choice grammar questions! I benefitted much more than the previous classes. (Fred's reflection journal, March, 2014)

In today's lesson, I have gained much more compared to the previous classes. Through practicing the multiple-choice questions on the test paper, I have better understanding of what the teacher taught in the regular class. (Gina's journal, March, 2014)

Step Three: Having the students answer the multiple-choice grammar questions from the Basic Competence Tests.

When it was getting closed to the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students, the teacher decided to move on to Step Three: having the students do the multiple-choice grammar questions from the previous Basic Competence Tests. Practicing the questions of the Basic Competence Test was regarded as an efficient way to help students prepare for the Comprehensive Assessment Program. These students were the first to have the Comprehensive Assessment Program, so there were no the previous multiple-choice grammar questions of the Comprehensive Assessment Program. Therefore, the teacher had the students practice the multiple-choice grammar questions of the previous Basic Competence Test to mock the test items in the Comprehensive Assessment Program.

The unique aspect of the third step of the grammatical instruction lied in the multiple-choice grammar questions. Compared to the second step of the grammatical instruction, grammatical questions in the third step had longer descriptions of question

item and covered all the words and grammar rules from Book one to Book six. How to get the students involved in learning when facing the broad range of the test items was a challenge for the teacher.

The teacher reversed the convention mode, that is having the students finished the test paper and the teacher explained the questions that they had made mistakes on. In the remedial class, the teacher explained the grammatical rule first. Then, the students picked out the question that conformed to the rule from the test paper. For example, the teacher induced them to notice the question from the Basic Competence Test such as *Jenny plays the piano very well. His mother makes her _____ two hours every day. (A) practice (B) practiced (C) practicing (D) to practice*. The teacher asked the students whether or not there was any key word in the sentences. One of them answered, “Teacher Alice, I know it. The key word is ‘make’.” “Bingo! The key word is make so the answer would be ...?” Most of them gave the teacher correct answer, (A) *practice*. When the students had confidence, the teacher tried another multiple- choice questions from the Basic Competence Tests such as *My mother _____ me send a letter yesterday. (A) asked (B) had (C) told (D) wanted*. Though their answers were sometimes wrong, yet this method worked well to guide them to prepare for the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students.

The teacher then briefly explained the “Causative Verbs” such as “make / let/ have + Vr” and “help + (to) Vr.” The teacher illuminated why it was necessary to use the root verb, not the infinitives or gerunds, as the object of the causative verbs so that the students understood the rule with reasoning, not by rote. She hoped the grammar rules were comprehensible for them, not obscure and arcane. After that, she showed them the example multiple choice questions using causative verbs. The purpose to do

so was to set a model. The students in the remedial class especially needed a clear direction and a model to follow.

The class' responses

When it was the students' turns, they had to pick out the questions that conformed to the rule from the Basic Competence Tests, circle key words and explain the questions. When the students to get stuck, the teacher offered help patiently. Because the low-level students could be very sensitive at this moment, and the teacher's support was critical. Though letting the students do the explanation job was extremely time consuming, the students' attitude became quite different. For example, when listening to lecture in the regular class, Fred always frowned and then fell asleep. In the remedial class, Fred explained the questions himself, so he had a clear idea of how to imply the grammatical rules, and was involved in class. Fred said

Step Three helped me a lot because I had a clear direction of preparing for the Comprehensive Assessment. (Fred's response in class, May, 2014)

As for Sean, he made excuse avoid learning English. In Step Three, Sean found that he could not escape because he had to explain the questions himself. Sean started to search for help from other classmates. Step Three kept Sean busy.

The Third Goal: The teacher designing contexts for the students to practice speaking (the students' need)

Step One: the teacher having the students speak one sentence

The teacher started the English conversation activity with an explanation of the grammatical rule. At the beginning of the class, the teacher usually listed the grammatical points the students were going to learn for today's lesson, induced them to discover grammatical markers or the key word, and gave brief explanations. Then it came to the most important part: to make abstract grammatical points connect to the

real life so that the students knew how to apply the grammar rules to foster their English speaking.

For example, in Lesson Two, teacher listed out the grammatical rule, six phrasal verbs on the blackboard which were *wake up*, *turn on/off*, *find out*, *write down*, *pick up* and *put on*, and explained their usages. After that, the teacher made sentences with the students' names and campus life in hope of connecting six phrasal verbs to their real life. It worked. The students' faces soon lit up.

After they started to figure out these phrasal verbs, the teacher threw a ball to the students and anyone who caught the ball had to answer the questions based on the six phrasal verbs. At the first round, she asked them questions. In the second round, they threw the ball and asked questions to each other. Through throwing the ball to each other, they got familiar with the sounds and pronunciations of the phrasal verbs. The goal of this activity was to let them have courage to speak English, even though it was only a phrase. The students in the remedial class often made the following remarks,

I do not dare to speak English because I always get stuck. One day, I saw a foreign tourist in the convenience store. He needed some help and I wanted to help him. Somehow, I forgot all the English words that I had learned. I did not know how to speak English, not even a word.

I know these words I want to say. However, whenever I meet the international tourists, I get stuck..... (The small talk with the student, Fred, in the remedial class, March, 2014.)

The teacher probed the reason what caused Fred getting stuck when he tried to speak English. One reason was that he was used to “reading” English rather than “speaking” English. Second, he lacked the contexts to practice his English speaking.

Perceiving Fred's embarrassing experience, the teacher expected the students could say the phrasal verbs without any words as prompts. She also created other chances to let them practice speaking.

After practicing these six verb phrases, a student gave the teacher a suggestion,

Teacher Alice, when you walk into the classroom next time, you can say "Turn on the light." During the class, you can say, "Write down the points", and when the student is sleeping in class, you can say, "Wake up." (The student's feedback at the remedial class, March, 2014.)

Since the students had courage to speak phrases in the remedial class, they were expected to move on to Step Two: letting the students say a whole sentence.

In the next class, the teacher wrote the grammatical rule the students were going to learn on the blackboard such as *both/ and, not only/ but also, either/or, neither/ nor* and used their campus life as examples to show them how to use the rule. After they had acquired the basic ideas of the grammatical rule, she told them a scenario:

Did you notice that many students have their breakfast at school?

There are all kinds of foods such as bacon omelets, jumbo rice dumplings, dumplings, tuna fish sandwiches, oyster brown noodles, pastry with oil sticks, steam buns with sunny side-up eggs and cheese burgers etc. Delicious food is not alone; they come with drinks such as chocolate milk, soybean milk, black tea, milk tea, and even bubble tea, etc. You seldom drink coffee, and I think it is a good thing! The way you devour and swallow breakfast makes me think of a sentence: You can eat a horse!

Now, would you like to share your favorite breakfast stores with your partner?

And tell him/ her the food and drink you prefer. Remember to express your

thought by using the sentence patterns, *both/ and, not only/ but also, either/or, neither/ nor*. (The teacher's talk in the remedial class, April, 2014)

The teacher thought the scenario she illustrated was fun and related to their everyday life. However, the fact was that she only got a deafening silence. From the students' responses, they seemed to say, "The grammatical rule was too overwhelming. Use it to express my idea and share it with the partner in English? No way!"

Being aware of their reactions, the teacher did not insist that they spoke English without any drafts in hand. She told them they could work with partners and write their ideas on the blackboard. One of the students had ideas of how to set up the work and asked, "Teacher Alice, how can I say "A corn omelet in English?" (A student's question in the remedial class, in March, 2014) The rest of them kept asking how to spell the words such as "steam bun", "milk tea", "spaghetti", "sandwiches", and "soybean milk." The teacher finally realized why their responses to the task were so indifferent was that she had pushed them too hard. After all speaking was a kind of production ability: it really took time to cultivate and develop. It could not be achieved in a short time. The other reason for their silence was their lack of the words for the topic of breakfast.

The teacher soon listed a series of breakfast- related words on the blackboard. Although the students were asked not to read words from the blackboard, yet these words were new to them so the teacher had to assist them with pronunciations.

Having words to follow, assistances from the teacher, and with partners' accompany, they finally achieved the task. The following was the sentences they made.

Both *Morning Kitchen* and *Laya* are my favorite breakfast stores.

I chose either a vegetable omelet or a corn omelet at *Morning Kitchen*.

I choose either spaghetti or the hamburger at *Laya*.

Though they had the word list to follow, after all they were not familiar with the words and had difficulty saying some of the words such as “vegetable omelet” and “steam bun with sunny-side up egg.” The whole process of making sentences did not go smoothly as the teacher had anticipated.

Right at the embarrassing moment, one student, Gina switched the focus to her partner. She joked around with her partner and amazingly lifted up the atmosphere. The teacher took this good chance to induce them to make the following sentences and encouraged them to practice speaking with their partners.

Phoebe plays not only badminton but also basketball.

Gina can not only play computer games but also download the clips from YouTube.

Phoebe will choose neither Chung Cheng Armed Forces Preparatory School nor Meiho Nurse School as further study.

Gina’s quick wit of changing the topic from the “breakfast” to “my partner” switched the dead silence to a lively atmosphere and initiated her partner to write down the ideas on the blackboard. The teacher thus witnessed the positive influence of peers on English learning.

After this experience, the teacher realized that to construct for any kind of practice, she had to consider not only the topic related to the students’ daily life, but also their word power. To inspire the students to talk in English naturally could not be achieved in a short period of time. Even though the activity required only one sentence from the student, it still took time for them to practice and develop.

The class' responses

Some students did not think that Step One was helpful to improve English speaking. The students thought speaking should be conversation between at least two people instead of speaking one sentence alone. Some students even told the teacher that “Step One was boring.” Being aware of the class' responses, the teacher decided to move to Step Two.

Step Two: The teacher having students create mini-dialogues

In Step Two, the teacher had to make good use of the dialogues from the textbook to encourage the students to speak. However, she needed to arise their interests first. Before reviewing the dialogue, she asked them the following questions:

If you have the chance to do shopping in a foreign city, can you tell the clerk the items you need, and your favorite styles in English? Conversely, if you work part-time at a clothing store, a foreign tourist walks in and said s/he wants to pick up some T-shirts as souvenirs, can you pick up the T-shirts that s/he want? (The teacher's talk in the remedial class, March, 2014)

This activity is to help the students to connect English to their daily life. Once the students became interested in the topic, the teacher showed them the simplified version of the dialogue “Try on the New Jeans” from the textbook, and drew four useful sentences in a sequence to form a framework. The teacher soon listed the four sentence patterns:

1. How do you like the T-shirt / skirt / jeans / pants?
2. It/ They look(s) good on you.
3. I like the loose/ tight look.
4. go well with: The white T-shirt goes well with your blue jeans.

She told them that,

Do you remember the questions I asked you at the beginning of the class?

Making good use of these four sentences may help you express the style of the outfits you look for in English and understand international tourists' needs. So let's practice these useful sentences and create a dialogue with your partner. (The teacher's talk in the remedial class, March, 2014)

Before they created a dialogue and engaged in the real interaction with their partners, she demonstrated how to create a dialogue first or they would not know how to get started.

She started by asking them, "How do you like my skirt?" The girls in the class gave the prompt replies: "The skirt is too long.", and that "Your T-shirts do not go well with your skirt." The question inspired their great interest, and the students talked to each other so enthusiastically that the teacher could hardly stop them. However, all of their critiques were in Chinese. She soon reminded them they could use the four sentence patterns to express their thoughts. The following was how the teacher induced them to make use of the four useful sentences.

For example, if I want to ask your opinions of my skirt, I can say "How do you like my skirt?" (The teacher tried to generate students' ideas.) I wonder which color of the clothes would go well with this stripe skirt? You can express your idea in such a sentence pattern, "The blue blouse goes well with your skirt."
(The teacher's talk in the remedial class, March, 2014)

Through the interaction, the students gained the basic idea of what the teacher wanted them to do. The teacher then asked one student to offer her thoughts on another student's outfit. The sentence patterns were not as easy as the teacher had

expected for the students to apply in speaking. So she offered her aids while the students were starting to create their dialogues with the four sentence patterns. For example, one student started the conversation “How do you like my black jeans?” The other student replied “Very good”, but this was done not in English but in Chinese. The student seemed to refuse to speak English. The teacher took the chance to remind the student:

The teacher: You can use the sentence patterns on the blackboard. So, in this case you can say, “They look good on you.”

The teacher hoped to integrate grammar into speaking. So she asked a confusing grammatical question.

The teacher: (asking the class) Why don't we say “It looks good on you?”

The class: Because the black jeans have two tubes, we say “they.” (The class answered in Chinese.)

The teacher felt comforted that the students still remember what they had taught in the previous class that the jeans were plural.

The teacher: (Ask Student A) What color of the clothes go well with your partner's black jeans?

Student A: (hesitated for a while.)

The teacher: (giving Student hint) You could use the sentence pattern “go well with.”

After Student A and Student B wrote the English conversation on the blackboard. The teacher asked them to practice again, and the time the role changed. The following was their mini-dialogue,

Student B: How do you like my black jeans?

Student A: They look great on you.

Student B: I like the loose look.

Student A: Yes. And your yellow T-shirt goes well with your black jeans.

This was a good performance. However, when the teacher wanted to have the students do advanced practice, some of them yawned and felt drowsy. The speaking instruction started at eight forty p.m., and it was natural for the students to feel tired. After finishing this challenging task: creating a mini-dialogue, it was around nine fifteen; some of them were indeed tired. The teacher could not offer the students higher- level practices.

The class' responses

The students' feedback toward Step Two of speaking lesson was as follows, The course for today was very practical for our daily life. Visiting the tourist sites and buying clothes are fun parts of my life. I hope there is going to be some other activities to add to the joyful atmosphere. (Phoebe's journal in the remedial class, March, 2014)

However, Fred, said he got confused,

In today's lesson, I got confused. We needed to ask questions to the partner, but I did not know how to say these questions in English. I hope the teacher could write useful sentences on the blackboard. (Fred's journal in the remedial class, March, 2014)

Fred got confused because he came to the class very late at nine p.m. (The class would be dismissed at nine thirty.) The teacher had erased the four useful sentences from the blackboard, and the class was moving on to the next phase of creating mini-dialogues. Being late caused him to miss the teacher's instruction so that he did not know how to create a dialogue.

As for further practice, one student, Gina, wrote that,

What I learned today is very useful, and the words are very practical, too.

However, the sentences are a little tough; I do not know the meanings of some words in the sentences. I hope the teacher could write the meanings of the words on the blackboard. Today's lesson could have been better if the teacher could offer us more new words related to the topic. (Gina's journal in the remedial class, March, 2014)

From Gina's journal, the teacher discovered that though some students got tired of further learning, some said nothing but actually they wanted her to advance their learning with more clarification and supplements by the teacher.

Besides offering more supplements, some of them wanted the teacher to have a breakthrough in speaking lesson. She used to set the goals such as Step One: speaking one sentence and Step Two: creating a mini-dialogue within the textbook framework, considering their lack of solid foundation. However, the students did not regard these "conservative" practices as the real communication. Therefore, it was about time for the students move on to Step Three: having the students communicate directly with native English teachers.

Step Three: The teacher having the students to communicate directly with Native English Teachers

At the end of March, the students had already gone through speaking one sentence in the different scenarios and creating mini dialogues following certain frameworks. Combining the interviews in February and the informal talks with the students in March, the teacher received the following comments,

"I don't really think "speaking one sentence" can improve my English speaking ability."

“English speaking ability is so important even if when you take a trip to a non-English country like Korea. I plan to visit Korea when I turn eighteen years old. English speaking ability is a must for me to master now because I hope I can speak English fluently with Korean people.”

“People who speak fluent English with foreigners look so smart and competent!”

Their comments in the speaking lesson of the remedial class stimulated the teacher to ponder, “Should I let them experience real English communication without concerning grammar rules?”, “Is it about time to give them some brand new experience?”, “Should I think beyond the boundary of the textbook and do something creative?” and “Should I forget about laying a good foundation from A to Z and let them immerse themselves in an English- only environment?”

She decided to innovate the speaking lesson—invite native English teachers to interact with the students directly, and let the students experience real communication without the boundary of grammar rules.

The process of training

The teacher announced to the students in the remedial class:

Class, we are going to have a brand new experience—talk to a native English teacher. The teacher will come to see you in April. He is a committee member of the textbook editors so s/he is curious about how you like the textbook. Each of you will make a presentation to the native English teacher, and after your oral presentations, he will ask you some questions. Of course, your answers will be given in English. (The teacher’s talk in the remedial class, in March, 2014.)

The process of training: taking out the students’ worries with communicative strategies

When the students heard the news, they had mixed responses. They felt excited

and were also a little worried. They got excited about the native English teacher's visit because some of them said:

I had only talked to a foreigner once when I was in the third grade. Since then, I had never talked to a foreigner. (Sean's response in the remedial class, March, 2014)

When I was in the fifth and sixth grade, native English teachers visited us each year. They taught us how to play "Bingo." I had so much fun! They also brought us joyful festival activities. However, I have never had the chance to interact with foreigners since graduating from the elementary school. (The student, Fred's response in the remedial class, March, 2014)

Despite of excitement, the students also worried that they could not understand what the English teacher says and it would be so embarrassing. They were afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. Hearing that the English teacher would ask them questions, they became terrified. They kept asking, "What kind of questions will the teacher ask?" and one of them even said,

"Teacher Alice, can you tell me what types of questions the native English teacher will ask? Can you teach us how to answer these questions so that we can practice in advance?" (Gina's response in the remedial class, March, 2014)

The teacher made use of this opportunity to ease their worries with the communicative strategies:

Express your ideas clearly and don't worry about making mistakes. Making mistakes when you answer the teacher's questions is a natural process that everyone has to go through. Even the teachers themselves make mistakes, too. The native English teacher will be considerate since you are only junior high school students. Even if you make so many mistakes that the native English

teachers can't understand what you talk about, s/he may say, "I am sorry. I didn't catch what you said before. Could you repeat it?" "Could you say it again?" This means you will have another chance to fix your speaking. It is a good opportunity. Embrace the chance! Take a deep breath and calm your mind. Speak slowly and clearly.

If you don't understand the native English teacher's questions, it is okay to say, "Could you speak slowly?" or "Sorry, could you say it again?" If you cannot make sure whether you get the gist of her/his words, just ask, "Do you mean...? Am I right?"

(The teacher's reply in the remedial class, March, 2014)

After the teacher's comments, the students eased, and the teacher started to lead them to the next part of the course: selecting their topics from the textbook.

The process of training: selecting topics from the textbook

When turning the textbook pages by pages, the students looked aimless and gradually became dull; some of them were curling their hair with fingers, and one of them even took out the mirror to pop his pimples.

The process of training: filling out the formats giving the students a clear direction

The teacher decided to give them the format. The format was divided two sections: the first section was about the students' self-introduction, including their English names, how long they learned English and what kind of the difficulty they encountered on the road of learning English. The second section was about their viewpoints on the textbooks: which parts was their favorite, or which part was the most boring or meaningless.

the class' responses

While the students followed a certain format, yet they did not need to integrate the grammar rules into their presentations. So they owned much freedom to voice their opinions and got rid of the sentence patterns' limitations.

The teacher led the students to fill out the format. They were busy filling out the forms, asking the teacher tons of the questions about how to express themselves clearly in English. With the tangible format to follow, the students finally knew how to express themselves in English, and devoted to practicing.

the form of oral presentations

There was a total of seven students to make the oral presentations. Four were the students of the remedial class, and three were from the regular class, who volunteered to join in. The students in the remedial class followed the format that the teacher had designed so that they had a clear direction to express their ideas. The three volunteers from the regular class did not follow any format and talked about their favorite parts of the textbook.

Step Four: The students' performance on the first native English teacher, Carlo's visit

On April 20, 2014, the native English teacher, Carlo, came to the school. The whole class got excited. Some girls even formed a welcome team to greet him at the school gate. When they found Carlo was handsome, they became curious about his personal life. They turned to the homeroom teacher and asked, 'Teacher Alice, how can I say "Are you single?" in English?'

When Carlo entered the classroom and started to do a self-introduction, "My name is JiantCarlo. Just call me Carlo.", the students heard Carlo's appealing voices and they were enthusiastic to listen to what he talked about. Some said, "Carlo has a

unique charisma that you could not move your eye away from him.” The whole class was enthralled by Carlo.

the students’ oral presentations

The students of the remedial class did the oral presentations first, and then the three volunteers from the regular class. The students of the remedial class seldom had the opportunity to do a formal representation on her/himself in front of the class, let alone in English. They were so nervous and did not get used to the presentation so that their voices were very weak. Carlo took their scripts from their hands in the middle of the presentations to make sure he understood what they were talking about.

The three volunteers from the regular class did the oral presentations with great confidence; they talked clearly and naturally. One of them read aloud a poem from Lesson Four and explained why she enjoyed it. Both of the other two chose “the movies” from Lesson Five as their topics. One of them even told the class the plot of his favorite movie. Carlo appreciated his presentation very much.

Though the three volunteers from the regular class outperformed those from the remedial class, yet for the students in the remedial class, getting the chances to deliver English presentations, especially in front of a native English teacher was an uplifting learning experience! Take Fred for example. He selected “The Jeans” from Lesson Two as the topic because he was so surprised that jeans were originally designed for gold miners in the United States. In the process of writing the script in the remedial class, the teacher suggested him integrate his interest, B-Box, a kind of Hip Hop oral stunt, into his presentation.

On the day of Carlo’s visit, Fred integrated the B-Box show into his oral presentation well. Carlo was so amazed at Fred’s B-Box performance and asked,

In your report, you said you like to B-Box in the jeans. Wow, it’s really cool. The jeans and the Hip-Hop stunt (means B-Box) were both original American

cultures. Do you practice B-Box after school? How long does it take you to practice? (Carlo's talk in class, April, 2014)

Fred nodded merrily. Though he did not quite understand Carlo's questions, with the hints and helps from the classmates, he gave his replies in a clear voice. Gaining the positive feedback from Carlo was really a confidence boost for Fred.

Carlo encouraged Fred to listen to other Hip Hop songs on YouTube after school. "Hum and try to sing with them. It only takes you five minutes every day and you'll have fun and learn English," he suggested. Carlo also recommended some pop singers such as Bruno, Taylor Swift and Justine Bieber. Some of the girls became thrilled just by hearing these pop singers' names. They had sprinklings in their eyes. They loved Carlo more because he had the interest in common with them.

Carlo's thoughts of the students' responses

After the volunteers' presentations, Carlo found that many students in class enjoyed seeing movies. Carlo encouraged the students to click on short clips on YouTube when they go back home. He also suggested the teacher to play short clips for the class. He stressed that clips were usually less than five minutes, but were very amusing and authentic. They were very useful when the student were learning English.

As for the students of the remedial class, Carlo noticed that when he asked them questions, they got nervous and the atmosphere was freezing cold. They had difficulty understanding his questions. However, in the break time, many students surrounded Carlo, and some students asked Carlo, "Are you married? or "Do you have girlfriends?" They spoke English without any stress! Carlo chatted with them in English and enjoyed the cheerful vibes.

Carlo also pointed out that when he mentioned some pop singers such as McFly, Bruno Mars, Busted, Taylor Swift, and Avril Lavigne, the students became excited and even hummed the tune. He encouraged them to listen to English pop songs, and see if they would sing songs some time. He said

Clicking on the clips and listening to the English pop songs could be done after school. Since short clips and music are students' favorite recreation, why not make good use of them to inspire them to learn English. (Carlo's comments, April, 2014)

the class' responses

Although Carlo's visit was a big success, the presentations by the students from the remedial class had much to improve. First, their voices were too weak, and some of them did not deliver the presentations clearly so that Carlo had to read their scripts to know what they mean. Besides, their oral presentations were surpassed by the other three students from the regular class. Yet, it did not mean they failed. They gained a brand new learning experience distinct from the past painful one and developed a broader view toward English learning that they could not obtain from the textbook. Take Sean, one of the students in the remedial class for example. He was a trouble maker since he entered the junior high school. He came from the single-parent family, and had been fooling around with gangster members since in the elementary school. During the class, he often dozed off. When being reminded, he talked back rudely and shouted at the teachers. Sometimes, he irritated the classmates first. When they became inflamed, he threatened them with gangster members. Sean's mom shared her worries with the homeroom teacher, (The homeroom teacher was also the teacher of the remedial class) who suggested taking the remedial class at night so that the teacher

could have extra time to listen and talk to him. She could guide him to do homework and memorize some English words in the remedial class as well.

In the remedial class, Sean escaped from making the oral presentation with various excuses; the teacher still insisted on leading him to finish his scripts.

After Sean's oral presentation, she asked him, "Taking efforts doing the oral presentation is much better than sitting there or fooling around, isn't it?" He nodded, and his facial expression became soft and tender instead of filling with rage or a frown in the regular class. Through Step Three: talking to the native English teacher, Sean grabbed a different English learning experience. He said

Carlo is friendly, and he seemed quite interested in my oral presentation. I talked about the movie *Invictus* based on Lesson Five. He asked whether or not I had watched the movies *Invictus*. Though I answered, "No.", he still shared his viewer experience with me and highly recommended the film. I told Carlo the reason I picked Lesson Five as my topic was that I was a member of track-and-field school team, I appreciate the athletic spirits which the movie *Invictus* demonstrated. (The Third Interview, April, 2014)

Fred can be another example. Talking to the native English teacher gave Fred, another student in the remedial class, not only the chance to communicate with a native speaker, but also a delightful English experience that inspired him to learn and use English.

Carlo's visit inspires me to learn English, especially his idea of listening to English songs online. After watching my B-box show, Carlo told me the B-box was originated from America and recommended me to watch clips of Hip Hop artists on YouTube. In that way, I can advance my Hip Hop techniques and improve English at the same time. I never thought that learning English can be

enjoyable! Carlo changed my attitude toward English totally. Now, I become interested in English. (The Third Interview, April, 2014)

Making oral presentations to interact with the native English teacher offered the students insightful suggestions, inspired them to use English, and increased their wiliness to learn more.

However, some students suggested calling off the oral presentations because they thought canceling the oral presentations would allow for more students in class to interact with the native English teacher. Furthermore, they did not regard making oral presentations as “the real communication.” They thought,

The native English teacher said one sentence, but the student(s) said another sentence to reply. Speaking sentences after sentences, and this kind of back and forth is not called a real communication. (The Fifth Interview, May, 2014)

Their thought stroke against the teacher’s mind. Yet, she still took their opinions as the top concern when planning the next native English teacher’s visit.

Step Four: The students’ performance on Jim’s visit

the students’ expectation toward the second native English teacher, Jim’s visit

Before the second native English teacher Jim’s visit, the teacher interviewed or had informal talks with the students from both the regular and remedial classes, to inquire about their expectations toward the second native teacher’s visit.

Carlo’s visit was appealing to me. However, sometimes, I didn’t fully understand what he talked about. I missed some fun parts, I guess! So, if there is another native English teacher, I hope the homeroom teacher (She was also the remedial class teacher.) can help translate so that I can enjoy the native English

teacher's visit more." (Informal talk with Carol, the student in the regular class, April, 2014)

Teacher Alice, you should have translated what Carlo said into Chinese. Although I really liked Carlo, yet I could not catch the points he said. After all, not all the students are like Molly and Tommy (the outstanding students in class). Translate what Carlo said for us when the second native English teacher comes. (Informal talk with Sally, the student in the regular class, April, 2014)

Making oral presentations is okay as long as we omit the first part of self-introduction. In this way, we can allow more time for more students to talk to the native English teacher. (Interview with Fred, the student in the remedial class, April, 2014)

Get rid of oral presentations. Let the native English teacher design fun activities and have a free talk with the class. I would like to know some interesting cultural customs different from Taiwan's as well. (Interview with Phoebe, the student in the remedial class, May, 2014)

I hope to know the interests of the native English teacher. I wonder whether he is interested in Korean pop music. If he does, I can play some songs when he comes. It is crucial for us to know what he likes and decide which topic we can chat with him. For example, if he is interested in sports, I believe our class can talk a lot with him; after all, we are the PE specialty class.

As for what I want to know, I am really curious about what the life in the United States is like. (Interview with Gina, the student in the remedial class, May, 2014)

After listening to the students' thoughts and needs, the teacher decided to call off the oral presentations to allow for more students to engage in the so called "real communication". Second, she was considering the possibility to do some translation in the second native English teacher's visit if necessary but not so much to hamper the English-only situation. Third, the teacher asked the second native English teacher whether or not it is feasible for him to bring some fun activities and share his life from the U.S.A.

the visit of the second native English teacher, Jim

Jim's visit was in June, after the stressful Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students.

Jim started the class with a series of guessing games about himself. First, he let the students guess where he came from. He showed the flags of four countries, including Australia, the UK, the U.S.A. and Canada, as the choices through the power point which accompanied with sounds and flashy effects, which was very eye-catching indeed. Several students guessed, "America." and Bingo, Jim supplemented that when he saw the American's flag, he put his hands on his heart, meaning pledging to his hearts. He asked students whether they raised five fingers at the flag ceremony. He kept asking them of which state he lived in. He then displayed the map of the U.S.A. and offered some choices for them to choose from. He also gave them three hints: First, it had a lot of water. Second, it was very cold which meant it was in the north, and the third, it looked like a hand. The students all looked puzzled, and the teacher gave the class a hint. Finally, Jim claimed the correct answer, "Michigan." At

this time, some students said, “Oh, I know it is Mexico.” Jim soon clarified by pointing where Michigan and Mexico were on the map. Then, Jim introduced his hometown, Michigan.

It is only fifteen minutes to Canada by driving. I mean it is only fifteen minutes to drive the car there. I was planning to visit Canada last summer, but my brother forgot to bring his passport, so that we went to Boston. Do you know the meaning of “passport?” (At this time, a student said the Chinese translation of the passport. Jim knew a little Chinese, so he said, “Yes.”) It took thirty dollars to go to the Canada and go back to America. Thirty dollars! That’s a lot of money. (The remedial class teacher asked, “Is that U.S.A. dollars?” The native English teacher said, “Yes.”) (Jim’s talk in class, June, 2014.)

Next, Jim encouraged the students to learn English:

Be happy and have fun learning English. You talk to people, have fun, and you learn. For example, watch TV show and talk about TV show. (Jim’s talk in class June, 2014.)

Then, Jim said a riddle to let the students guess, “Walk on four, walk on two, walk on three and then none at all. Guess what?” (Jim’s talk in class, June, 2014.)

Jim offered some hints and tried hard to explain and so did the homeroom teacher. The students eventually got the answer, “Human.”

When the whole class seemed lifeless and dull, Jim told them a useful tip to learn difficult words. That was to remember the difficult words with similar sounds of the easier words. Here was his experience.

For example, when learning the word, “adventure” in Chinese, the word was so hard for me, so I used a tip to remember it. “Adventure” sounds like “cat salty”

in Chinese. Whenever I want to say “adventure” in Chinese, I associate it with another similar sounds “cat salty.”

Beside “sounds to sounds” you can also use “word to word” to remember the word. For example, do you know what the “high bear” mean? “High bear.”

(One student answered, “Kaohsiung” and got the correct answer.) (Jim’s talk in class, June, 2014.)

After introducing the technique to memorize tough words, Jim divided the class into several groups, three to four in a group. The students had to come up with the similar ideas and let the other students guess.

At the end of the class, Jim said,

You guy love sports, right? Do you watch the NBA basketball game? For example, Detroit Pistons, Golden State Warriors, Los Angeles Lakers, Chicago Bulls, Cleveland Cavaliers. (The students kept silent.) My brother is a basketball couch in the university. He knows a lot about how to train the players and win the game.....

Do you watch the baseball game? I love watching the baseball game. There are many teams in Major League Baseball such as The Oakland Athletics, Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, the Detroit Tigers, the Cleveland Indians, the New York Yankees, and the Boston Red Sox. (The talk of Jim in class, June, 2014.)

The homeroom teacher encouraged the students to give Jim some responses. Some students reacted that they did not know the teams of America. Then, the teacher said, “You can say any player you know regardless where he comes from.” The students said, “Jeremy Lin” in Chinese.

“Oh, Jeremy Lin. He is a nice player,” Jim responded.

“I tried to watch the baseball game on Taiwan, but I can’t get accustomed to it. Unlike the reporters in America, the reporters in Taiwan just told the audience the current scores of the teams. They didn’t tell us the history, the records, the personal anecdotes of the players and the team. (Jim’s talk in class, June, 2014.)

At the end of the class, Jim played the clip: an Asian girl did various facial expressions to represent different English words such anxious, confused, glad, and sad.

Jim’s thoughts on the students’ responses

When Jim was asked about his opinions of the students, he just said, “It’s okay.”

the class’ responses

Compared to the first native English teacher, Carlo’s visit, the students’ responses to Jim’s visit were as silent as the grave. The teacher asked them, “What happened?” Most of them acknowledged that they did not give responses, not because they did not want to but they could not! They could not understand what Jim said.

Jim was well prepared for this lesson: he introduced his hometown, Michigan, talked about the issue that the class was interested in: sports embedded in American culture, shared his tip to learn Chinese and led the students to do the activity, and played the clip to appeal to the students’ attention at the end of the class. However, the culture introduction about his hometown was very tough for the students; some student even mistaken “Michigan” as “Mexico”, let alone other topics.

When Jim gave examples of the baseball and basketball teams in the U.S.A. such as the Detroit Tigers, the Cleveland Indians, Golden State Warriors, the students became confused, the students might have heard of the titles of the teams in Chinese, yet once when the titles of the teams were said in English, they totally had no idea of

what Jim was talking about. The American cultures that Jim brought with him was far beyond the students' levels.

Although Jim's visit did not trigger too much heated discussion among the students, when asked about whether this visit was worthwhile or how they thought about Jim's visit, the students still viewed it as a precious opportunity to have a close contact with the English native speaker. "It was an English-only environment and increased chances for the students to listen to English. After all, learning a language requires a lot of listening input," a student said.

Through these two native English teachers' visits, the students realized that while they were listening to Bruno Mars's *Just the Way You Are*, they were "learning English." Learning English became amusing and was not overwhelming as they had thought before.

They used to regard English as tests which required them to memorize vocabulary, grammar, and read obscure long paragraphs. After these two English native teachers' visits, they discovered that English could be part of their life. One student said,

As soon as I saw English messages from other fans on the Korean pop singers' Facebook, I skipped. But now (after Carlo's visit), I would take a look at what they said. I know what they were talking about! I now regard this a good way to learn English. (Interview with Phoebe, May, 2014)

Furthermore, interacting with the native English teachers face to face made the students believe that they could communicate directly with many international visitors one day.

In the whole process of remedial English class, the students experienced the activities they had never experienced before, such as interacting with the native

English teachers directly and doing English oral presentations in front of the whole class. They also encountered many challenges. For example, the students had difficulties starting the conversation in English. Doing the multiple-choice questions was a tremendous obstacle that made them frustrated. In the following section, the critical events experienced by two students, Phoebe and Gina presented. Phoebe and Gina are discussed in detail. Their experience render a deeper look into the students' views.



Student Case A: Phoebe

Before the Remedial Class

Phoebe was an active, bubbling and humorous student. She got involved in the class activities and was helpful when the classmates needed her. She was a devoted student. However, Phoebe's concentration span was shorter than average students. She was hyper- active and tended to talk to other students in class. If not, she may fall asleep or veg out. She had quick-wit, but did not do well in study. She knew studying hard was important, but she just could not regular herself to study after school. She watched TV, and lingered on the Facebook. She did not have a habit of doing homework, let alone reading or studying on her own. She always scrabbled in her homework or copied her classmates' assignments on the due day. She envied the top students and thought they received high scores because they were very intelligent.

Phoebe's First Time to Learn English

Phoebe's first time to learn English was in the kindergarten in Taichung City, but she had no idea what English was since she was little. Yet, when festivals came and the foreign teacher held fun activities filled with joy for the children in the kindergarten, even though Phoebe could not understand what the foreign teacher said, she enjoyed the joyful atmosphere and the interesting activities.

In the Elementary School

When Phoebe entered elementary school, her family moved back to the rural area in Taiwan. Phoebe' mom expected a lot of Phoebe's scores so that Phoebe was sent to the cram school since she was in the first grade. Phoebe said her mom did not care about what she learned in the cram school; she only cared about scores. As long as

Phoebe did not do well on her tests, Phoebe's mom enrolled her to different the cram schools.

Phoebe started to cram for English in the third grade. The cram school pushed Phoebe very hard. Phoebe spent two hours each day there doing her homework. On Tuesday and Thursday, the cram school focused on the textbook. The English teacher of the cram school also put emphasis on outside readings. When teaching outside readings, first, the teacher demanded the whole class to read aloud. Next, the teacher demanded each student to circle the most important paragraph. The teacher asked the students questions about the paragraphs that they had circled. If the students could not answer the teacher's questions, they would be punished.

The cram school stressed students' reading, and believed that once students could understand the readings, they would have no problems with the new words. However, Phoebe's grades did not improve under such high pressure of the learning environment. She thought it was because when getting into the cram school what she wanted was only play the computer games available in the cram school.

Without any improvement on grades, Phoebe's mother changed her to another cram school, the most well-known in the small town for its high-pressure teaching techniques. The owner of this cram school was very confident of herself and would criticize the textbooks taught in Phoebe's elementary school as being too discrete and without systems. So the owner made the handouts herself. Whenever Phoebe got into the cram school, she got a stack of handouts filled with words, which annoyed her very much. Phoebe hated the handouts; she could figure out neither the contents nor what the teacher had taught. When she could not understand, she felt upset.

What happened at the elementary graduation ceremony deepened Phoebe's hatred for the cram schools. On the day of the graduation ceremony, she could not

hang out with her classmates to celebrate their graduation because she had to go to the cram school!

In the cram school, English was a subject for the tests. I had tons of English papers to finish. Taking endless tests all day long upset me. I hated English. Even though the teacher in the cram school pushed me so hard, I did not improve my English!

You see! I got over seventy as my scores on other subjects at the elementary graduation exam. I studied these subjects by myself, not through the help of the cram schools. I had a great sense of achievement! Going to the English cram schools is useless. It is more efficient to improve my scores if Mom could just monitor my schoolwork.

(First Interview with Phoebe, January, 2014)

When it comes to any impressing way to learn English, Phoebe thought it was ‘similar sounds mnemonics.’

‘Similar sounds mnemonics’ was a strategy students used to memorize English words by similar Chinese sounds. For example, “July” was related to Chinese sound, “Jiu Lai Le” (就來了). The mnemonics phrase is that the summer vacation “Jiu Lai Le” in July. (七月，暑假就來了!) Another example was “October.” The word “October” sounded similar to Chinese appellation “阿土伯.” These ideas came from a ‘Similar- Sound Mnemonics’ instructional CD that her mother purchased for Phoebe. Phoebe said

‘Similar-Sound Mnemonics’ was a little bit silly. Yet, it is a funny and useful way to memorize the new words, particular when the new words in the elementary school were fewer and simpler compared with those in the junior high school. (First Interview with Phoebe, January, 2014)

In the interview, Phoebe kept stressing her painful cram schools experience.

It is useless to force me to study. Those cram schools pushed me so hard, but they did not work for me. I did not improve my scores in the English tests. It only works for me when I really want to learn English.” (First Interview with Phoebe, January, 2014)

After strong protection against the cram school and quarrels with her mother, her mother decided to let Phoebe go. “If you don’t go to cram school, I can save a lot of cold hard cash.” Thus, Phoebe’s mom quit all the cram schools when Phoebe entered the junior high school.

The teacher asked Phoebe her favorite way to learn. Phoebe said, I do not like to sit still, study, and keep writing. I prefer English activities. The most impressive English activities I have done is ‘tournament activity’, not only fun but challenging. In the tournament activity, the teacher prepared the delicious snacks and fruit. If the students wanted to eat a certain food, they had to roughly describe how it looked like, say the features, and identify where the place where it grew. The students had only thirty seconds to get a correct answer so that the activity would not take too much time. (Second Interview, February, 2014)

Phoebe loved this tournament activity because it was exciting and challenging enough. Phoebe stressed that

The students had to win the food they wanted by passing all the challenges instead of the teacher giving food to the students without requiring them to do anything. (First Interview, January, 2014)

In the Junior High School

Phoebe admitted that when getting into the junior high school, she only wanted to play so that she could get rid of her painful cram schools memory in the elementary school. In the junior high school, the grammar rules became complex compared to those in the elementary school. So it was necessary for students to study or do some exercises after school. However, Phoebe tended to hook on the Internet and did not develop the habit of studying or reading after school. In the class, she could spell some English words, yet when it came to the grammar points, the dialogue or the readings, Phoebe had difficulty understanding them. Therefore, she would idle, talk to or play with the other students around her in class. Phoebe thought it was because she had hyper active tendency and had difficulty concentrating.

Memorizing new words is okay for me. As long as I could say the words, I could spell the words. However, when the teacher taught the reading paragraph, I didn't know what the sentences mean and could not get the gist of the whole paragraph. I felt distressed. When it comes to grammar, I could not understand the teacher's explanations. Grammar is so hard and it seems that I can never figure it out!"

(Second Interview with Phoebe, February, 2014)

the reason why Phoebe wanted to take the remedial English class

Phoebe said when she went back home, she was used to fooling around: watching TV or lingering on the Facebook. She knew she should study but she just could not discipline herself. Taking the remedial class at least allow her to memorize the words. She said,

In the remedial class, Alice, you led us to read the words aloud so that I got familiar with their pronunciations. As long as I can say the words, I can spell them out. I don't have to memorize the new words by rote. (Second Interview, February, 2014)

In the regular class, Phoebe often idled or played with classmates around her. She often became confused while the teacher was explaining grammar rules.

I hope I can get the main points which I missed in the regular class, and this is why I chose to take the remedial class. It helps me a lot because I have more chances to interact with the teacher and ask about grammar rules. I want to review the main points I missed in the regular class. I don't want to learn something new in the remedial class.” (Second Interview, February, 2014)

Phoebe also enjoyed discussing with classmates in the remedial class. Phoebe pointed out that

In the regular class, if I discuss with classmates, I may be mistaken as “chatting” and interfering the class, and the teacher would warn me to be quiet. In the remedial class, there are only six students, so I can discuss with my classmates without being scolded. The remedial class starts at night time, and I find that I can calm down sooner and focus on learning more easily. (Second Interview, February, 2014)

what other aspects of English that Phoebe wanted to improve

When asked besides reviewing vocabulary and the grammar rules what other aspects of English Phoebe wants to improve? She responded, “English conversation!”

In fact, I told Mom I wanted to go to the cram school to improve my English speaking ability. Mom promised that as long as I can get into the Tourism department of National Hengchun Vocational High School, she would pay for my English conversation class.” (Second Interview, February, 2014)

Phoebe's attitude toward English cram schools had great shifts. She used to resent English cram schools, but as a ninth grader, especially in the second semester, she found the regular English class in junior high school focused mainly on the multiple-choice questions and reading comprehension. Phoebe was bored with them. To her, the English class was no fun, and she did not like the regular English class in the second semester of the ninth grad, either. She wanted to own another choice to improve English speaking.

Phoebe's Performance on the First Goal: The teacher encouraging the students to build up vocabulary power (the students' need)

When Phoebe walked into the classroom, she always asked, "Teacher Alice, do we have a vocabulary quiz today?" or "Does the vocabulary quiz cover the whole Lesson Two or just the twenty new words?"

When taking the vocabulary quizzes, Phoebe always showed her bright smiles and great confidence. Phoebe wrote the words quickly on the blackboard. She always reminded the teacher "Teacher Alice, I have finished the Question Two. Please tell me the next word is..." Although Phoebe often missed one letter or mix up with the order of the letters, she looked confident. In the remedial class, Phoebe was often the first student to finish the vocabulary quiz and was also the first one to say, "Teacher Alice, could I continue the second round of the vocabulary quiz? I have already memorized all of the words." Phoebe's confidence and the active attitude inspired other students such as Gina and Fred. Perceiving Phoebe's positive attitude, Gina and other students changed their playful attitudes and concentrated on preparing for the second round of the new words.

Phoebe's Performance on the Second Goal: The teacher making the obscure grammar rules comprehensible (the students' learning difficulty)

At the beginning of the remedial class, the teacher had a small talk with the students. In the small talk, Phoebe said,

The grammar is so tough but it is so important. English is a little bit difficult for me because I do not understand the grammar. (Informal talk with the students, February, 2014)

For this reason, the teacher decided to make the obscure grammar rules comprehensible as the second goal of the remedial class. She started from the basic Sentence Patterns, the grammar rules of each lesson from the textbook. Step one was writing sentences with the supports of the cue cards.

When Phoebe was required to write the sentences with the supports of the cue cards on the blackboard, unlike then other students, she complained that she did not like to write on the blackboard because the powder of the chalk would scatter all over her T-shirt and jeans. The teacher said nothing but encouraged Phoebe to write. Different from the other students in the class who would ask questions like “Teacher Alice, what does this words mean?”, Phoebe usually guessed the meanings of the words first by saying “Teacher Alice, does this word mean fast?” or “Teacher Alice, I know this words: It means having a lot of money.” Phoebe showed her great confidence among the classmates in the remedial class.

Phoebe told the teacher that

Even though I had practiced the exercises of writing sentences with the cue cards, I still do not understand the meanings of the sentences on the test papers. I mean the questions items on the test. When taking the tests in the regular class,

I fail to get the meanings of the multiple-choice questions. (Phoebe's opinions on the course, February, 2014)

One day, the teacher overheard Phoebe tell Gina that

I get familiar with the new words these days but I have difficulty on reading the sentences, let alone understanding the whole paragraph. Although I know individual words, yet I could not figure out the meanings of sentences. (The small talk between Phoebe and Gina in class, March, 2014)

Phoebe further indicated that "Teacher Alice, can you explain the multiple-choice grammar questions on the test in the remedial class?" (Phoebe's opinions on the class, March, 2014)

It was apparent that Phoebe was not satisfied with just writing the sentences with the support of the cue cards. Phoebe said she felt drowsy in the regular class because she could not figure out the multiple-choice grammar questions. Phoebe also told her partner, Gina that English became difficult because of grammar. But now, Phoebe required the teacher to start the grammar instruction by practicing the multiple-choice questions. Phoebe's suggestion reflected the fact that she decided to face her perennial problem, grammar with the help of remedial English class.

After Phoebe's requirement, the teacher inquired the class whether they wanted to practice the multiple-choice grammar questions. They all nodded. It was clear that the students in the remedial class were ready to take the challenge of the multiple-choice questions though they had experienced a series of frustrations. Step Two: the teacher making the obscure grammar rules comprehensible: doing the multiple-choice grammar questions would be implemented to meet the students' need. It could be

inferred that Phoebe and other students had great expectations toward the remedial English class.

Phoebe's performance on the Second Goal of Step Three: the teacher making the multiple-choice grammar questions from the Basic Competence Tests

When it was close to the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students, the teacher engaged in the third goal: answering the multiple-choice grammar questions from previous Basic Competence Tests as a mockup for the Comprehensive Assessment Program. Compared to the second phase of the grammatical instruction, the questions in one unit of the final phase were integrated with various grammar rules and had longer description of each question item.

If the teacher just passed out the handouts, Phoebe would definitely be idled, wriggled on her seat, and chatted. Therefore, the teacher let Phoebe take the active role: let Phoebe talk --talked about the questions and explained them on the blackboard. First, the teacher reviewed the grammatical points, and then asked Phoebe to select the questions that corresponded to the rule. In the whole process, the teacher kept interacting with Phoebe to catch her attention.

For example, the teacher reviewed the “Causative Verbs” by listing the rule such as “make-made/ let-let/ have-had + Vr” and “help-helped + (to) Vr” and induced the class to notice the markers. She interacted with Phoebe by asking and answering the questions that helped Phoebe concentrate in class.

The teacher: Why do we put the root verb behind the make/ let/ have, not the gerund and not the infinitive?

The teacher: Because “make, let, and have” are action words that carry the meaning of order other to do something. S/he hopes others do exactly the thing s/he ordered, and will not slip up. So we choose the root verb that means

something would happen as someone wish without slipping up. We do not choose the gerund or the infinitive that means unstable.

The teacher: Okay, it is about the time to read our handout for today's lesson.

The teacher: Let me select a question from the handout, first. There you go.

Question six: Deborah put some sugar and cream in her coffee to make it _____ better.

(A) taste (B) tasted (C) tasting (D) to taste

The Teacher: Phoebe, please tell us its Chinese meaning?

Phoebe: (Whined) Ah, Do I have to speak its Chinese meanings?

I don't know how to pronounce the name "Deborah?"

The teacher: De-bo-rah. De-bo-rah. Deborah.

Phoebe: (Chinese) Deborah, putcoffee.

The teacher: (Chinese) This word means "cream."

Phoebe: Yes. Deborah put sugar and cream in the coffee.

(Phoebe translated it into Chinese on and off.)

The teacher: (Chinese) Why Decorah did so? Why Deborah put sugar and cream in the coffee? Deborah did so because she wanted to make coffee taste better. What does this word mean? (The teacher gave Phoebe a hint by imitating the action "taste")

Phoebe: (Chinese) It means "taste"

The teacher: So Phoebe, would you please translate the whole sentence.

Phoebe: Deborah put... sugar and.... cream in her coffee... to make it taste better.

Teacher: Phoebe, which key word should we circle?

Phoebe: (paused)

Gina: make

(Phoebe's performance in class, May, 2014.)

Apparently, Phoebe encountered difficulties. She could no longer perform so well with confidence in class. When Phoebe was confronted with the struggles from academic work, she became silent, out of mind, and gave up. To avoid Phoebe shunning the multiple-choice questions, the best way was to make her confident. Therefore, Phoebe was picked up to answer the easier questions first. When Phoebe had the sense of achievement, she was led to answer higher- level questions.

the positive effect from the peers

Helping Phoebe focus on learning took the teacher great efforts and consumed a lot of time. Sometimes it did not work well. Yet, if Gina reminded Phoebe to show positive attitude toward the class activities, Phoebe would get into the learning mode sooner. When it was getting closed to Comprehensive Assessment Programs, the teacher noticed that Phoebe was restless, especially two weeks before the Comprehensive Assessment. Phoebe said,

I felt empty when the Comprehensive Assessment was getting closed. I did not know where to start with my study. Much stuff confused me, and I could not figure out when facing other subjects, math science, social study, and Chinese. Seeing a large amount of handouts, test papers and books, I totally lost the direction. I chose to veg out. (Fourth Interview, May, 2014)

Gina, strained herself to devoting to the class, because she set the goal to enter one of the top ten five-year colleges. Phoebe was lucky to have Gina as her partner. Phoebe was affected by Gina's hard-working spirits which enhanced her will to learning.

When asked to practice the questions on the blackboard, Phoebe whined a little

bit. Gina reminded Phoebe, “The Comprehensive Assessment is on the corner. Study hard or you will have no chance.” Stimulated by Gina’s spirits, Phoebe stopped whining. Through discussing with Gina, Phoebe got involved in the learning. After a while, Phoebe became restless again and suggested

Teacher Alice, I wanted to go back to the seat. Copying questions on the blackboard is a time-consuming and tiring job. I prefer to finish the handout at my desk. (Phoebe’s suggestion in class, May, 2014)

The teacher agreed with Phoebe, and let everyone do so. However, when Phoebe went back to her seat, she wriggled around. Phoebe said, “Teacher Alice, I wanted to stand up. I do not want to sit in the chair.” Just as the teacher predicted, Phoebe could not concentrate on study if the teacher let her do the handouts at the desk for a period of time.

Phoebe’s Performance on the Third Goal: the teacher designing contexts for the students to practice speaking (the students’ interest)

Step One: The teacher having the students speak one sentence

In Step One, the teacher integrated the grammar rules into the speaking lesson so that the focus remained on reviewing the main points of the textbook and the students could achieve their goal: practice speaking.

In Step One, making one sentence, after the teacher’s demonstration, the teacher let Phoebe take the active role --make one sentence by herself to keep her busy in class.

If Phoebe just sat there and made sentences by herself, she would have idled and later remarked that the class was pretty dry. So the teacher divided the students into

three groups, and let them do pair work. The teacher noticed Phoebe's need: learning through joining in activities. Actually, Phoebe had shorter attention span than the average students. She needed fun activities to keep her alert. So, the teacher created a context to arise Phoebe's interest to engage in the speaking activity.

The context was "having breakfast in the classroom." As soon as the students got into the classroom in the morning, they devoured their breakfast. The teacher thought this topic would be pretty appealing because Phoebe often got up early to buy her favorite breakfast and even bought breakfast at MacDonald around six fifteen in the early morning for her classmates. The teacher expected Phoebe to make sentences based on the grammar rules: both/ and, not only/ but also, either/or, neither/ nor. in the textbook.

However, when Phoebe's partner, Gina, gradually got into the learning mode and wrote the sentences on the blackboard with the teacher's aids, Phoebe was distracted and had no idea of how to respond. Making sentences around the topic, "My favorite breakfast" was neither interesting nor easy for Phoebe as the teacher had expected. Because Phoebe did not build up the word bank of the food she wanted to say such as omelets, steam buns, and tuna, she was unwilling to say anything. Even though with the teacher's help, Phoebe wrote down some words, the pronunciations of these words were still tough for her. The teacher noticed Phoebe's uneasiness, and switched the topic to "My Favorite Drink." She thought the word bank of the cold drinks was easier than the breakfast. The following were the sentences Phoebe and Gina made.

Both "Fifty-Blue" and "Fresh Tea Tao" are my favorite.

In "Fifty-Blue", I choose either ice cream tea or black tea latte.

In "Fresh Tea Tao", I choose either bubble milk tea or cocoa smoothie.

The atmosphere was not enlivened as the teacher had looked forward.

Luckily, Gina noticed Phoebe's uneasiness; she joked on Phoebe, and switched

the topic on Phoebe. Phoebe laughed.

Right at this awkward moment, the teacher felt up-lifted by the conversation between Gina and Phoebe. Gina started talking about Phoebe's hobby and future choices. Phoebe burst out laughing by Gina's amusing remarks. With Gina's quick-wit, the embarrassing vibes soon dispel. The teacher took this opportunities to lead Phoebe and Gina to make sentences with Gina's amusing remarks. The following were sentences made by Phoebe and Gina.

Phoebe will choose neither Chung Cheng Armed Forces Preparatory School nor Meiho Nurse School to further study.

Phoebe can play both badminton and basketball.

Gina can not only play computer games but also download the clips from Youtube.

From this incident, the teacher witnessed the positive influence from the peer.

In sum, Phoebe was not responsive to the Step One: Speaking One Sentence. She thought

It is only a sentence. I do not think "speaking one sentence" is what we call, "English speaking." I hope to say more, a paragraph or a conversation. That's really what I think "English conversation." (Small talk with Phoebe and Gina in class, in March, 2014)

Combining Phoebe's opinions and accessing the class performances, the teacher decided to move on to the Step Two of the English speaking instruction: creating a mini dialogue.

Step Two: The teacher having the students create mini dialogues

Phoebe thought as long as the teacher changed the teaching techniques, the students could still develop the English speaking ability even just using the textbook without paying extra money to buy the outside readings. The teacher pondered on Phoebe's opinion and carefully considered that the students were in the urgent needs of reviewing the points in the textbook, not learning the new materials. She decided to make good use of the textbook with innovative instruction to engage the students.

To improve Phoebe's speaking within the limited time, the teacher skipped the translation words by words of the whole dialogues. Instead, she aroused Phoebe's motivation by asking the following questions.

1. If you have chance to go shopping in the foreign countries, can you tell the clerks the item you want, the size you need and the style you like in English?
2. This small town is well known for its beautiful beaches and stunning views, we can often see foreign tourists walking on the streets. If one day, they come to you and ask where they can buy clothes, can you understand their need and have a conversation with them?

The purpose of the questions was to let Phoebe and the other students realize that we were going to learn something very practical and useful in daily life English conversation. After the two questions, the teacher soon listed the four sentence patterns adopted from the dialogue in the textbook.

1. How do you like the jeans/ T-shirt/ skirt/ pants?
2. It/ They look(s) good on you.
3. I like the loose/ tight like.
4. go well with: The White T-shirt goes well with your blue jeans.

The list of the four sentences gave Phoebe clear ideas of what the main points were. The teacher claimed that we were going to create a mini-dialogue embedded in their real life with the partner, applying for these useful four sentences.

However, at this moment, the teacher noticed that the four sentence patterns were actually very perplexing to Phoebe. Also, Phoebe seemed not to totally concentrate yet.

The teacher decided to model how to create a mini dialogue with the four sentences. To prevent Phoebe from distraction, during the demonstration of how to create a mini-dialogue, the teacher involved Phoebe and Gina (Phoebe's partner) by asking them questions.

The teacher: How do you like my skirt?

Phoebe and Gina: (They discussed vigorously.) The skirt is too long. (in Chinese)

Your T-shirt doesn't go well with your skirt. (in Chinese)

The teacher: You can use the four useful sentences on the blackboard to express your ideas. For example, if I want to ask your opinions of my skirt, I can say "How do you like my skirt?"

The teacher: (The teacher instantly asked for students' ideas) I wonder which color of clothes goes well with this skirt?

The students: Blue blouse. (They answered in Chinese.)

The teacher: You can express your idea using the useful expression, "go well with." For example, you can say, "The blue blouse goes well with your skirt."

(The conversation between the teacher and the students, March, 2014)

After asking- answering interaction, Phoebe finally realized what the teacher wanted her to do. The teacher asked Phoebe to offer her thoughts on Gina's outfit today.

Phoebe was stunned and had no idea of how to start it. Apparently, starting the conversation in English was a big problem for Phoebe since she spoke Chinese and south Ming, not English in her life. Besides, the four useful sentence patterns were tougher for Phoebe than what the teacher had expected.

To let the conversation go on, the teacher offered the aids Phoebe needed. Phoebe and Gina were in the same group to create the mini dialogue. The teacher let Phoebe take the more challenging role, while Gina the easy part at the first time. So Gina first started the conversation, the easier part,

Gina: How do you like my black jeans?

Phoebe: (Phoebe docked her head and said in a weak voice)

They look great on you. (in Chinese)

The teacher: How about using the second useful sentence, “*They look good on you.*”

The teacher knew Phoebe spoke Chinese purposely because she was afraid of making blunders in front of her partner. She was always self-assure in the remedial class. The teacher read Phoebe’s mind and gave her a hint soon.

To cope with the awkward moment, the teacher asking the class: ‘Why don’t we say “It looks good on you.”?’ The whole class answered “Because the black jeans have two tubes, we use *they*.” Phoebe suddenly became confident after giving the correct answer to the question. The teacher tried to motive Phoebe,

The teacher: What color of the clothes goes well with Gina’s black jeans?

(Point the sentence pattern ‘go well with.’)

The beige T-shirt goes well with...

Phoebe: (Unwillingly) The beige T-shirt goes well with Gina’s black jeans.

Once Phoebe had no idea of what to say, she hesitated, idled and distracted in class. Therefore, the teacher suggested that Phoebe write their mini dialogue on the

blackboard so that she could practice it with Gina (her partner) without long pauses and role changed. In Phoebe's journal toward the class,

The course for today is very practical in daily use. Visiting the tourist sites and buying the clothes that fit my style are essential part in my life. I hope there is going to be some more activities to add joyful atmosphere. (Phoebe's journal in the remedial class, March, 2014)

After Phoebe had role change in their mini-dialogue, the teacher wanted to further their learning. Phoebe yawned and felt drowsy; that was because English speaking instruction did not start until eight forty. Some students including Phoebe were late for the remedial class, and the students in the remedial class were required to memorize vocabulary, an efficient way to settle their minds. Both could make them feel tired. Creating a mini dialogue based on their real life within a certain sentence patterns were also overwhelming for Phoebe. No wonder Phoebe replied in Chinese to avoid making blunders and losing face in class. After finishing this daunting conversation, it was over nine thirteen. Phoebe was lethargic. Before Phoebe came to the remedial class, she was on girls' basketball team and had to practice from six forty to about eight or nine o'clock at night. When showing up in the remedial class, she was always sweaty and starving. It was a demanding job for her to participate in the girls' basketball team and attend the remedial class at night. Phoebe said she needed some time to rest and study by herself, so the teacher did not further Phoebe's learning with more practices.

Step Three: The teacher having the students communicating directly with the Native English Teachers

Step Three of English speaking instruction was that the teacher trained the students to communicate with the native English teachers. The English speaking instruction moved to the Step Three in April.

Phoebe's opinions: before the first native English teacher, Carlo's visit

Phoebe got excited about the coming of the native English teachers. She even wrote the journal that

To tell the truth, I am looking forward the native English teacher's visit. I hope on that day, I will not make big mistakes. (Phoebe's journal, April, 2014)

Knowing Phoebe's concerns, the teacher alleviated her worries with the following feedback,

It is a natural process for the students to make mistakes in oral presentations. Even teachers make mistakes when speaking. Don't worry about that. You do not have to use many advanced words or complex sentence patterns to voice your thought. Just make it simple and clear. You can make a successful oral presentation. (The teacher's feedback to Phoebe's communication book, April, 2014)

Phoebe's previous experiences with international visitors

Phoebe started to remember her previous experiences meeting foreigners. The first time was that Phoebe and her best classmate, Debby, met a foreigner at the convenience store. The foreigner talked to Phoebe's friend, Debby. Phoebe said that Debby got the wrong idea about what the foreigner meant, and gave the wrong

replies. Phoebe said the foreigner seemed to ask how to microwave the food, but Debby replied something about chocolate bars.

Phoebe's second experience meeting a foreigner was with her best classmate, Carol at the bus station. The foreigner said, "Excuse me....." Both Phoebe and Carol got stunned at what the foreigner said. Phoebe said that Carol did not understand what the foreigner said and kept silent. Phoebe was kidding to Carol that "The English teacher, Alice did not teach you well enough so that you cannot understand what the foreigner means." The foreigner showed them the recharger, and plugged it into his smartphone. Phoebe and Carol finally realized what the foreigner meant and offered their helps.

Phoebe's training process

While picking up the favorite issues from the textbook, Phoebe was turning over the pages aimlessly, playing with her hair, and feeling distracted. The teacher knew it was because the dialogues and the readings in Book Six were quite tough for Phoebe to understand let alone to pick up the issues she liked and commented. The teacher passed out the fixed format as a quick access to oral presentations. The format was divided into two sections, the first section was about self- introduction, and the second section was about their viewpoints on the textbook.

With the format, Phoebe was busy filling out the forms and asking the teacher tons of questions about how to express her thoughts in English.

When the class was discussing the favorite issues, Gina, was particularly interested in the secondhand stores in the Lesson three. Gina said she had watched some related programs on TV. She asked the teacher what other special items would be sold in the secondhand stores in the U.S.A. Phoebe remarked at this moment that the secondhand stores in the U.S.A. made her think about the pawnshop in Taiwan. It was interesting to know that Phoebe related the secondhand stores to pawnshops in

Taiwan. Although the teacher found that Phoebe's idea was great and novel, Gina and other classmates criticized, "You, idiot. The secondhand stores in the U.S.A. are totally different from the pawnshops in Taiwan." No matter how the teacher encouraged Phoebe to express her unique idea, Phoebe gave up her idea soon after Gina and other classmates voiced opposing opinions. The teacher witnessed obvious peer pressure.

Although Phoebe's novel thought was criticized by the peers and caused her to abandon her idea, yet through discussion and expression, Phoebe made more connections of the issues in the textbook to her daily life. She had motivation to improve her English speaking. In her journal, Phoebe wrote

I learned more from today's lesson than the previous class. I would like to know the well-known tasty food and the local cultures in the U.S. I am eager to strengthen and progress my English speaking ability and learn more practical words that I can use in English conversation. (Phoebe's journal, April, 2014).

Phoebe's thinking on Carlo's visit

Phoebe turned over the pages and said she found that in the Lesson Four, there were no obvious relationships among the warm-up activity, the dialogue, the theme words, and the readings. The warm-up activity presented the words: What do you see after it rains: lightening, rainbow, splash, puddles, and flood.

The dialogue talked about the poem, 'The Beautiful Mistake' by Zheng Chou-Yu; the theme words focused on the weather, and the reading was an English poem: "Raindrops fall in puddles." Phoebe questioned why the editors put these discrete four parts together. She could not find the relationships.

In terms of Phoebe's favorite part, Phoebe loved the picture in the Lesson One. Lesson One was about a boy's memory of his first trip to the "Tung-Blossom

Festival” in Miaoli with his grandpa when he was six years old. Though his parents were busy working, he was never bored because his grandfather used to take him to many interesting places. Phoebe said that she liked this picture because it reminded her of her grandmother who suffered a lot from cancer recently.

After a full discussion, the teacher helped Phoebe write down the presentation script. Phoebe practiced the script by reading aloud and asking the teacher questions continuously, even when the teacher was instructing other classmates’ presentations.

Step Four: The students’ performance: Phoebe’s oral presentation

In Phoebe’s presentation, she pointed out there were no relationships among the warm up activity, the dialogue, theme words and the reading. During the presentation, Phoebe was so nervous that she spoke in a low voice. The native English teacher, Carlo, asked Phoebe to show him the scripts so that he could understand what she really meant. When Carlo realized Phoebe’s thinking, his response was more serious than expected. Carlo asked Phoebe whether she found that the words in the warm-up activity and those in the theme words section were very useful in her daily life. Phoebe smiled and nodded. Carlo asked Phoebe how long she spent on English learning and practicing. Phoebe smiled embarrassedly and answered, “No.” Carlo kept stressing that he really hoped Phoebe could spend at least half an hour practicing English after school and use the words in the warm-up and the theme words activities when she talked about the weather with friends. The native English teacher, Carlo, turned around, faced to the class, and told them to use English after school, practice English with their classmates or friends, and apply the words in the textbook to their daily life. Carlo kept stressing that these words were helpful when they chatted in English.

Phoebe's thinking about the first native English teacher, Carlo's course

Phoebe loved the native English teacher, Carlo, very much and expected his next visit. Phoebe especially appreciated his suggestion: practice English after school.

Carlo did not only give you complements “Good!” or “Well-done!” He was different because he gave practical and useful suggestions such as practicing English after school and using English in the daily life. I especially like his idea of listening to English songs on YouTube! (Third interview, April, 2014.)

before the second native English teacher, Jim's visit

Phoebe did not look forward the second native English teacher visit like the first native English teacher, Carlo's. She was lukewarm about it. She just said

Canceling the oral presentations will allow more time for the whole class to get involved in the conversations with the second native English teacher. As for the topics...it depends on what the second native English teacher likes. If he likes pop music or sports, I believe our class will talk a lot with him. (Fifth Interview, May, 2014)

Step Four: the students' performance: Phoebe's performance on Jim's visit

Jim's visit provided an English-only environment. Phoebe looked absent-minded and did not say anything. Even if Jim said, “Anyone?” or “Volunteer,” Phoebe seemed deaf and did not have any reactions or replies to Jim's calling. Phoebe did not get involved in the class.

Phoebe's thoughts on the second native English teacher, Jim's visit

The teacher was quite shocked at Phoebe's cold response toward the second native English teacher. Phoebe said

Why I responded so coldly toward the second native English teacher is that

(smile) I did not understand what he said! After the Comprehensive Assessment Program, the teachers did not give us any formal courses but played the films or let us play sports at the gym. I had no mood for the class, either.

When asked what she learned from the class. Phoebe answered,

If I have to say what impressed me most, it is the team work to come up with the word to word vocabulary puzzles. For example, the riddle from our team is “eight pears.” The answer is “Paris.” Do you know why? First, translate “eight” into Chinese and its pronunciation sounds like “Ba.” Second, translate “pears” into Chinese and its pronunciation sounds like “Li.” Third, combine “Ba” and “Li” together: “Ba-Li.” Here you go. “Ba-Li” sounds like “Paris” in Chinese. Do you know the answer to the riddle “chicken dragon?” The answer is Keelung.

The similar sounds mnemonics is fun. From the activity, I realize that comparing learning English, learning Chinese is much more difficult for international visitors. Like us, they have to come up some tips to help them remember vocabulary. (Sixth Interview, June, 2014)

The Challenges from Phoebe in the Remedial Class

After Phoebe came to the remedial class for about one week, the school suddenly claimed to start the girls’ basketball team. It was just sixty-eight days before the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students. The initiator was Lisa, also a member of the remedial class. Lisa, as the leader of the girls’ basketball team, searched for players from the classmates around her first. Phoebe was invited to join the basketball team, and she was enthusiastic about it. The girls’ basketball team’s practice time was at night, from six thirty and often lasted at nine.

The practice time happened to overlap with the remedial class.

In March, at the fourth class of the remedial course, it was about eight ten. The teacher knew that Phoebe and Lisa were still practicing basketball at the gym. The teacher went to the gym and talked to the basketball coach about Phoebe and Lisa's remedial class. The basketball couch soon reminded Phoebe and Lisa to stop practicing and go back to the classroom for the remedial class. Lisa tended to criticize harshly on everything that went against her will. Phoebe was affected by Lisa's negative comments. When Lisa and Phoebe came in reluctantly, everyone in the classroom felt the tension. The teacher perceived the tension and told the students that we were going to review page twenty-one to twenty-two, which they had learned in the regular class on that day. Reviewing the main points taught in the regular class was what Phoebe needed, particularly the complex concepts which bothered her a lot. The teacher listed seven phrasal verbs on the blackboard soon, including wake up, turn on/off, find out, write down, pick up and put on. She cut right into the points omitting the greetings: quickly to build up a learning atmosphere to dilute the tension. She gave examples of the seven phrasal verbs embedded in the daily life context. In this way, the students' facial expressions were not so rigid, and gradually showed smiles. The teacher tried to convince Phoebe that what she was going to learn in today's lesson definitely worth it. She could not only review the grammatical points but enrich her expressions in English conversation.

After reviewing, the teacher instantly passed the ball to the students and asked them to answer the questions based on the seven phrasal verbs. The teacher tried to clear up the tension in the classroom with the passing-ball activity. In the first round, the teacher asked students questions. Students were gradually familiar with the phrasal verbs, and then the teacher let the students ask questions to each other. Through the passing-ball activity, the students got familiar with the pronunciations of

the phrasal verbs. Then, the students were required to come to the blackboard, asking each other questions about the phrasal verbs and writing their answers on the blackboard. In Phoebe's journal, she wrote

I learn the phrasal verbs from today's class, and get the clear concept of the divided and undivided phrasal verbs. Through the passing ball activity, I get familiar with phrasal verbs. (Phoebe's journal in the remedial class, March, 2014)

At this moment, Phoebe seemed to forget that she felt reluctant about entering the classroom. She even gave the teacher suggestions vigorously, 'Teacher Alice, when you walk into the classroom next time, you can say "Turn on the light.", during the class, you can say, "Write down the points", and when the student is sleeping in class, you can say, "Wake up."' The following was Phoebe's journal on that day:

In the beginning, I was irritated, but I found myself getting better. The course today is good, even though at the beginning, I was upset and rejected the class. Finally, I switch into the learning mode. (Phoebe's journal in the remedial class, March, 2014)

After the Comprehensive Assessment

The remedial class finished on May fifteen, two days before the Comprehensive Assessment Program. After the comprehensive Assessment Program, the teacher asked Phoebe her thoughts and feelings about the Comprehensive Assessment Program:

On June sixth, the date the grades of the Comprehensive Assessment were announced. I checked my grades instantly with my smart phone. What I cared

most was English. I only got C on English subject! I felt so frustrated! When I saw the English comprehensive Assessment Program at the first sight, I talked to myself: Game over. It was all about “reading comprehension.” Reading comprehension was my weakest point! I could only get one or two questions right in the reading comprehension section when I took the English tests. If the Comprehensive Assessment Program focused more on the multiple-choice grammar questions, I believe I could get “B” on the English Comprehensive Assessment Program. Although I felt terrible when I saw the English test paper of the Comprehensive Assessment Program at the first sight, I still tried hard to finish all of the questions. I did not guess the answers! I did read the questions thoroughly with all my efforts. While I was turning pages after pages, I nearly ran out of my time before the due time of the test because I forgot to bring my watch. (The teacher passed Phoebe the English test paper of the Comprehensive Assessment Program which was downloaded from the Internet.) Phoebe pointed out one of the multiple-choice questions

Phoebe: You see we had practiced the similar question type in the remedial class. The answer is (C).

The teacher: The answer is not (C), Phoebe. The correct answer is (B)

Phoebe: Oh, maybe I chose the answer (B).

The teacher: How about the reading comprehension section?

Phoebe: I felt a sense of secure when I read Question thirty-six and thirty- seven which focused on the map. I have practiced the similar questions before: where was his home, walked from place A to place B, saw which building and found out the destination at the end.

But I hate the Question forty and forty-one: the email. There were only a few words in the content of e-mail. It was too condensed for me to understand. It

showed limited information for me to look for the clues. I had to search for the answers extremely carefully. (Fourth Interview, May, 2014)

Phoebe's Thoughts on the Remedial Class

Since Phoebe did not achieve her expectation of getting “B” on the English Comprehensive Assessment Program, the teacher questioned whether taking the remedial class really assisted Phoebe in making progress in English. Phoebe answered,

It does help me. Without the remedial class, I would not do homework until the second day in school and I always scribbled to finish my homework. After I joined the remedial class, I finished my homework on time. When I had questions about homework, I discussed with the classmates or asked Teacher Alice. It made me feel a sense of achievement and secured. I did not scribble my homework and enjoyed my morning time since I joined the remedial class. (Fourth Interview, May, 2014)

When Phoebe was asked to give advice to the younger classmates and offer suggestions toward the remedial class in the future, she answered,

If I have the chance to talk to the younger schoolmates. I would say take every chance to learn. Laying a good foundation is so critical, studying is essential and remember to demand yourself! Take myself for example, I did not pay attention to study and let myself play three years without demanding myself. It caused me to feel empty especially when it was close to the Comprehensive Assessment Program. I tried hard to focus on study, but I felt lost. I chose to give up other subjects at the end.

In the future remedial class, the contents of the course can be deeper.

(Fourth Interview, May, 2014)

When the teacher questioned Phoebe's thoughts on that remedial instruction should be added with more advanced supplements than was this remedial class offered, she asked Phoebe, "What if the students cannot understand what I say or they turn around their heads to chat with the classmates when I give them advanced practice?" Phoebe answered,

If they turn around their heads or chat with classmates, it is because they do not understand what the teacher teaches. They do not have a good foundation of words and grammar. Teacher Alice, you should give time for them to memorize and recap the grammatical points for them.

By the way, Teacher Alice, my mom expects you to continue the remedial class next semester because my mom hopes my younger sister can also take the remedial class. My mom noticed that I had improved a lot on the English tests in the regular class, and my younger sister was good at every subject except English. My younger sister's English was rotten to core! (Fourth Interview, May, 2014)

Although Phoebe did not do well on the Comprehensive Assessment, she thought remedial English class helped her a lot. The most important was that the remedial English class offered a clear direction for Phoebe to follow when she almost gave up studying. With Comprehensive Assessment Program approaching, Phoebe felt lost. Lacking of a good foundation led her to have trouble preparing for academic subjects. At that time, Phoebe looked out of minded in the regular class. When Phoebe was in the remedial English class, she was provided with the material according to her academic level. Phoebe was given a feasible object to achieve. Even when Phoebe became restless, Gina, as her partner reminded her in humorous way. Undergoing the

remedial English class for a semester, Phoebe thought she was well prepared for English test. Therefore, even facing the most challenge test—the Comprehensive Assessment, Phoebe insisted to read the questions thoroughly instead of guessing the answers casually and dozing off. Phoebe developed her confidence toward English in the remedial class.



Student Cases B: Gina

Before the Remedial Class

Gina tended to fall asleep in any courses in the regular class since she was the seventh grader in the junior high school. Her classmates often scoffed her by saying that, “What’s happening in class doesn’t matter with you because you fell asleep all the time.” Hearing these harsh comments, Gina was mad. However, what her classmates said was accurately true. Gina tended to doze off the daytime at school. The homeroom teacher talked to her grandma and showed her concerns about Gina’s problems. Her grandma said,

Gina can see invisible ghosts so she has to turn on TV to keep her company! I knew she was scared at night and had no energy in the morning.

Whether her grandma said was true or not, Gina did not have a good foundation for schoolwork or positive learning attitude. Both were great challenges for the teacher to solve.

Therefore, the teacher had to arise Gina’s interest first and designed some easier tasks to let her engage in so that she had to keep alert and would not fall asleep in the middle of the class. Noticing that Gina took delight in drawing and writing on the blackboard, the teacher decided to make the lecture brief and concise to allow for more time for Gina and other students to practice and discuss on the blackboard.

The First Time to Learn English

Gina had a hard time since she first time learned English in the third grade. When Gina was in the fourth grade, she went to the cram school for English. Gina especially enjoyed the fun stories made up to link all the vocabulary in the unit of the

textbook. Although Gina benefited from both listening to the fun stories and memorizing the difficult words in cram school, she still quitted.

“The English teacher in the cram school was humorous, and the course was fun. I especially love the stories that made up by the teacher. After listening to the fun stories, linking all the new words of the lesson, I found it easier to memorize the words. I did not go there anymore after one semester because I wanted to play. All I wanted was play. I did not like to study.”

In the fifth grade, Gina was not accustomed to the English teacher in the elementary school. She found the English teacher too girlish, and sissy, and she could not understand the content he taught. She did badly on the English tests. What impressed Gina in the elementary English class was the graduation show in the sixth grade. The teacher chose Lady Gaga’s song, “Poker Face,” and divided the lyrics to about twenty- five parts. Each student sang one sentence of the lyrics on the average. Gina and other students had to practice their own lyrics in class and recorded their parts individually as an assignment. When coming back to school, the students handed in their recording to the teacher. Linking all the students’ individual recording together to make the complete song took the teacher days and nights to finish. On the day of the graduation show, the teacher played out the song.

Although the teacher worked so hard to link all the students’ recorders together and made up this song, when it was played on the day of the graduation show, no one could tell it was Lady Gaga’s Poker Face. As a graduation show, a meaningful and critical moment, it was so embarrassing. Before the show, the teacher spent so much time teaching us individually the pronunciations of our own lyrics. Many classmates and I found the lyrics so difficult, and we could hardly understand their Chinese meanings, so we used Chinese similar sounds to rote memorize the lyrics. Because I could only pronounce my lyrics, I had totally

no idea of the meanings of the whole song, let alone sang the whole song. My English did not improve at all even though the whole class spent so much time preparing for the performance. (First interview, January, 2014)

When asked whether there were other things that impressed her a lot in the elementary English class, Gina talked about this same activity.

The other activity that impressed me a lot in the elementary English class was a dance activity. The teacher seemed to choose another song by Lady Gaga. The teacher hoped we could sing and dance to the song. The dance was so complicated, and it took all of my time to memorize the steps rather than singing the English song. The class spent a whole month practicing the dance, not English. I did not improve my English from the activity, either. (First interview, January, 2014)

In the Junior High School

When Gina got into the junior high school, she found English became more complicated. She tried to study hard at first, but gradually she gave up.

Compared with the new words in the elementary school, the number of the new words in the junior high became much more. In the elementary school, there were only four to six words in one unit, and there were many colorful pictures in the textbooks. However, in the textbook of the junior high school, there were twenty-five to thirty words in each lesson! At first, I tried hard to memorize the words, I did well, and it inspired me to keep going. However, when it comes to the grammar rules and readings, I felt dizzy staring at the pages filled with words, not the pictures I used to. They were so difficult, and I was overwhelmed. I got bad scores and felt distressed. I am that kind of the person: when I got good grades, I

had motivation to study. When I failed on the tests, I did not want to touch that subject and ignored it totally. (First Interview, in January, 2014)

why did Gina want to take the remedial class?

The remedial class started ninety days before the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students. The students who joined the class had something in common: They had fooled around for almost three years, and as this was the last semester of the junior high school, they wanted to improve themselves; however, they could not regular themselves to study after school. The remedial class happened to offer them an environment they needed.

As for Gina, she wanted to improve first her English grades so that she could go to a good five-year college.

My mom wanted me to study by myself rather than go to the cram school. Mom observed that I loved animals since I was little. She recommended me to become a vet major and to make a lot of money. Right now, I had my own goal: I want to get into an ideal school after graduating from the junior high school, so I need to study hard to get higher grades on the Comprehensive Assessment Program.

However, when I go back home, I tend to fool around and surf on the Net. Joining the class at least gives me an environment to study for my goal. Unlike the regular class in the daytime, in the remedial class, if I have any questions, I can ask Teacher Alice at any time. (First interview, January, 2014)

what aspects of English did Gina want to improve?

The first goal for Gina to achieve is improve her English scores so that she could get into her ideal school. According to Gina, improving English scores relied mainly

on the grammar rules. Once she could figure out the grammar rules, she could get good scores and made big process in English.

In each monthly examination, there are always a lot of multiple-choice questions in it. These multiple-choice questions are not related to the dialogues or readings. They are all about grammar rules. I hope to figure out the complicated grammar rules which overwhelmed me for so long. The multiple-choice grammar questions are always the typical test items that every teacher favors. (Second Interview, February, 2014)

The second goal for Gina to improve was her English speaking ability. It had been Gina's dream to study in Korea. Gina thought improving English speaking ability would be very helpful when she had chances to study in Korea or visit other foreign countries. Gina viewed English as power to turn her dream into reality.

Gina was a crazy fan of Korea. She even spent five- thousand dollars on a ticket to the concert by Korean artists. She spent another four thousand dollars to buy the round way tickets to commute between Hengchun and Taipei City, not including the accommodation. It was a big number of cash for a junior high school student in the countryside. Besides, during the graduation trip, Gina met a group of Korean girls and got excited. She even spoke Korean to the Korean girls.

I heard the girls chatting in Korean, and it seemed that they needed someone to take photos. I went to them and took photos for them. I also spoke some Korean to them. Talking to the Korean girls excited me. (Informal talk with Gina, March, 2014)

When asked why she could speak Korean, she answered,

I enjoy Korean soap operas. When I watch them, I switch the language to Korean. Gradually, I pick up some basic greetings from the soap operas. I want to learn more and purchase the book, “How to learn Korean” via the Internet. Korean language is not difficult. As long as you get familiar with its spelling systems, you can write out the words according to the sounds. (Informal talk with Gina, March, 2014)

During the lunch time at school, Gina used the Korean chopsticks which had a shape which was skinner and longer than the usual Taiwanese chopsticks.

I ordered the Korean chopsticks through the Internet. Korean chopsticks are skinner and longer so that they will not roll down off the table so easily. The table manners in Korea is that use your chopsticks to get the food, put the bowl on the table, and do not move it. (Informal talk with Gina, April, 2014)

At the beginning of the remedial class, Gina kept asking,

Teacher Alice, does your school, NCCU, offer any opportunity for the students to be exchange students to Korea? ” I hope I can improve my English speaking ability. It is my dream to visit Korea one day. Before visiting Korea, I need to train myself to speak both Korean and English. One day, I will study in Korea and talk to Koreans. If Koreans do not quite understand what I say, I can express myself in English. In this way, I can talk to Koreans without any communication breakdowns. (Informal talk with Gina, April, 2014)

Besides visiting Korea, Gina had other motivation to improve her English speaking ability.

I found that the people who can speak fluent English look very tough and great. I hope I can speak fluent English in the future because it makes me feel outstanding!” (Informal talk with Gina, April, 2014)

Gina’s performance on the first goal: the teacher encouraging the students to build up their word power (the students’ need)

At first, Gina could only memorize three new words in a period of class.

Gradually, Gina was inspired by Phoebe’s positive enthusiastic attitude toward memorizing new words and developed a habit of memorizing new words at the beginning of each remedial English class. In fact, Gina memorized at least ten new words for each class and was benefited from vocabulary quizzes which also trained her listening and speaking ability.

Gina’s Performance on the Second Goal: The teacher making the obscure grammar rules comprehensible (the students’ learning difficulty)

Step One: The students understanding sentences and writing sentences as practice with the supports of the cue cards

Gina still hoped to focus on the current textbook rather than picking up the basic outside readings that corresponded to her level. Before the remedial class which began in February in 2014, the teacher had tried to teach Gina and other students fun English poems and even held a performance to have them read aloud their favorite poems in front of the audience invited by themselves in 2013.

Reading poems is sometimes fun, but it does not help my grammar! I hope to get better grades on English tests. I came to the remedial class to improve my grammar! (Second Interview, February, 2014)

Taking account of Gina's level of grammar understanding, the teacher started the grammatical instruction from shorter phrases rather than longer sentences or descriptions. These strategies aimed to offer Gina rudimentary grasps of grammar so to make help her preparations for more complicated grammatical concepts in the future.

The teacher focused on grammar in the textbook but break the grammar rules into small pieces. The teacher showed Gina the cue card which said "Wake up the little boy," and asked Gina to construct the new phrase, "Wake the boy up." Then Gina wrote her answer on the blackboard. When Gina got familiar with the phrases, the teacher furthered Gina's learning with pronouns which she got confused with. For example, when the teacher showed the cue cards which said, "Pick up Teresa.", Gina had to write down the answer "Pick her up." on the blackboard. "Put on your jacket and cap." and Gina had to write "Put them on.", not "Put on it." or "Put it on." The knowledge related to the use of pronouns was very basic, but for Gina, it was road blocks for her to understand grammar. In the journal, Gina wrote,

In today's lesson, I have learned the phrases such as look up, turn on and put on. They are very useful when I travel overseas. However, I found the course for today is a little bit boring. I would like to add more practical or interesting sentences in class. The current issues or English proverbs are good supplements as well. Speaking the whole English sentences or applying English proverbs make me feel competent and intelligent. (Gina's journal, March, 2014)

The teacher started another grammatical instruction by introducing the four sentence patterns: "both.... and", "eitheror", "not only....but also", and "neither....nor." The teacher expanded the exercises from phrases to sentences. The teacher also handed each student a cue card, and told them to write their answers on

the blackboard with the support of the cue card. While Phoebe was whining, “I don’t want to write on the blackboard. The powders of chalk will spread on my T-shirt, and my jeans will get dirty, too,” Gina picked up the chalk and took delight in writing the answer down on the blackboard. At this moment, Gina turned around to Phoebe and said “Come on!” Gina was quick-wit, and had a good sense of detecting the atmosphere of the classroom. She was good at reading others’ minds and would give suggestions that others would accept.

In the remedial class, even though she has done the exercise, she seldom shouted out loud “Teacher Alice, I am done,” or “Teacher Alice, would you like to check my answer?” such as Phoebe and other classmates did. Gina always waited quietly for the teacher’s feedback. Often, Phoebe and other students kept asking questions or required for helps constantly so that the teacher spent most of her time on those students, not Gina.

In the process of giving the answers based on the cue cards, Gina often got stuck because she had no ideas of the meanings of words. At this moment, Gina did not shout out loud for help. She just stared at the blackboard quietly. When Phoebe as Gina’s partner noticed it, Phoebe started to serve as a small teacher and explain the meanings of the words for Gina. This made Phoebe confident and competent. Sometimes, Phoebe reminded Gina that “Teacher Alice taught these in today’s regular class.” Although in the regular class, Teacher Alice would never allow Gina to fall asleep, yet Gina was drowsy in the daytime. However, in the remedial class, as long as Gina grasped the main points, she would concentrate on writing the answers on the blackboard, which was quite different from her behaviors in the regular class.

After reading Gina’s journal, the teacher realized that although teaching Gina the basic concepts was critical, yet integrating some fun elements into the learning process was also a must. Gina mentioned not only once that she had noticed that some

Taiwanese could speak English fluently with native speakers. She admired them very much because speaking fluent English made these Taiwanese look talented and outstanding. Besides, it was Gina's dream to study in Korea in the future so she especially had the motivation to train her English speaking ability because she thought if she had the chance to study in Korea, it would be better for her to master both Korean and English, which could help her in communication if she failed to express herself well in Korean. Considering what Gina looked forward to, the teacher planned and designed contexts for her to practice speaking.

Step One: Building Up the Students' Word Power

At begging, Gina had difficulty memorizing the new words. Inspired by Phoebe's positive attitudes and under remedial class' cultivation, she performed well in memorizing the new words.

Step Two: The students doing the multiple-choice grammar questions

When asked what to expect in the next class, Gina had exactly the same answer with other classmates that is "Grammar."

Gina wanted to do the multiple-choice grammar questions because of the coming of the first monthly examination. Gina said, "I could not understand multiple-choice grammar questions on English test papers. However, multiple-choice grammar questions constitute the main body of the examination: if I don't understand the multiple-choice questions on the test papers, I can only get poor grades. Whenever I take English test papers, I feel overwhelmed and helpless. I have already memorized some words, but when it comes to multiple-choice questions, I am unable to know the meanings of the sentences, let alone to apply for various

grammar rules to identify which item is correct.” (Gina’s remarks on the multiple-choice questions in class, March, 2014)

Though Gina expressed her setback, she made up her mind to solve this tough problem: the multiple-choice grammar questions. It was clear that Gina was ready for Step Two: The teacher having the students do the multiple-choice grammar questions.

The teacher made her efforts to fight back Gina’s nightmare: multiple-choice grammar questions. The teacher told the class that we were going to practice the multiple-choice grammar questions in the workbook. The teacher asked the students to come out to copy the first multiple-choice questions on the board. Gina’s partner, Phoebe was absent, but Gina still had high spirits. When asked to copy the first question on the blackboard, Gina was so devoted that her attitude inspired other students such as Fred. The reason the teacher asked Gina to copy the questions on the blackboard was mainly that this strategy worked well to keep her alert. In the process of copying the question on the blackboard, she at least read the sentence once. To make good use of the questions that the students took efforts and time to copy on the blackboard, the teacher required them to read aloud the sentences, circle certain key words, take notes, explain them to the teacher, and select the answer. Accumulating about three to five questions, the teacher asked the students to wipe out the notes and hints and explained the questions to the teacher again. The teacher wanted to make sure that the students really understand the meanings and can get the gist of the multiple questions.

In the process, the teacher noticed that Gina read the sentences with hesitation and was unsure whether she was able to read them out. The teacher helped her with pronunciations of some words, and encouraged her to keep going.

Gina was often stuck when she read the complicated multiple-choice questions. But she was relentless to try. For example, when asked the question such as “_____ *Annie knows fast food is not good for her health, she still eats it.* (A) *Although* (B) *Because* (C) *If* (D) *When*”, Gina first chose (B) *Because*, it was not correct. The teacher would not directly say, “No.” and told her the correct answer. Instead, the teacher induced her to think about the meanings of the sentences when she put down the item (B) *Because* in it. Then, Gina gave another try and chose (C) *If*. The teacher encouraged her to think about the sentences when she put the item (C) *If* in it. It was common for Gina to try out all the four items. Gina was embarrassed about her performance. After all, she was practicing the multiple-choice grammar questions which overwhelmed her for long time. The teacher encouraged her to move on, “It is okay. Let’s take the second challenge.”

In the second round of explaining the questions to the teacher again, Gina could not only read out the whole sentences without too many pauses but also could analyze the questions with assertive attitude, which was quite different from the first practice: in the weak and hesitated voice. In Gina’s journal, she wrote

In today’s lesson, I have learned much more than the previous courses. Through practicing the multiple-choice questions on the test paper, I understood what the teacher taught better than before. (Gina’s journal, March, 2014)

The teacher found out that asking Gina to recap the multiple-choice questions for second time could not only for the teacher check whether Gina got the gist of the grammar rules, and this understanding brings Gina an unexpected reward: she could finally tackle the grammar problems by herself.

Gina's Performance on the Third Goal: The teacher creating contexts for the students to practice speaking (the students' interest)

Step One: The teacher having the students speaking one sentence

Considering Gina's concerns and dream, the teacher designed the grammatical instruction integrating the speaking activity, Step One: The Students Speak One Sentence.

Gina's positive influence on the partner on English speaking section

When Gina was getting familiar with grammatical points through cue cards, the teacher started the pair work. On the one hand, pair work kept Gina alert. On the other hand, Gina could develop her English speaking ability. The teacher asked the class, "Tell your partners at least two of your favorite breakfast stores." Phoebe was always very bubbly in class; however, when she heard the topic, she was silent and did not say anything. Phoebe's reaction was totally out of the teacher's expectation. Because the teacher thought most of the students in the class would enjoy having breakfast during the morning time in class, and tell partners their favorite breakfast stores. The teacher turned around to talk to Gina,

The teacher: Isn't *Morning Kitchen* your favorite breakfast store? What others?

Gina: *Laya* is also my favorite, too.

The teacher: What do you usually order in the *Morning Kitchen*?

Gina: (Replied in Chinese) Corn omelets or vegetables omelets.

The teacher: When you are in *Laya*, what do you usually order?"

Gina: (Replied in Chinese) Spaghetti or hamburgers. (The talk between Gina and the teacher in class, March, 2014)

The teacher helped Gina spell the words, “omelets”, “spaghetti”, “corn” or “vegetables”, and encouraged Gina to write her answers on the blackboard as following,

Both *Morning Kitchen* and *Laya* are my favorite breakfast stores.

I choose either a vegetables omelet or corn omelets at *Morning Kitchen*.

I choose either spaghetti or hamburgers.

However, omelets, spaghetti, corns, and vegetables were difficult words for Gina though the teacher helped her spell out.

At this moment, the teacher switched the topic from “breakfast stores” to “favorite drink shops.”

Gina’s behavior was out of the teacher’s expectation as well: Though she was silent at first, she joked with Phoebe and said, “Isn’t *Fifty Blue* your favorite cold drink store?” Phoebe replied, “Yes. *Fresh Tea Tao* is nice, too.” What they said was in Chinese, but Gina used her quick wit to initiate Phoebe’s motivation, to enliven the vibes, and to start the conversation rather than being silent in the dull atmosphere. The following were the sentences and Phoebe’s answers.

Both *Fifty Blue* and *Fresh Tea Tao* are my favorite cold drink shops.

I like either ice cream black tea or black tea latte at *Fifty Blue*.

I choose either bubble milk tea or cocoa smoothie at *Fresh Tea Tao*.

The teacher chose the topic “cold drink stores” because the teacher thought most of the students in the remedial class had the habit of drinking iced tea or milk tea. However, the topic “cold drink stores” seemed not to stimulate many responses. Because the students were still not used to expressing themselves in English, they did not know how to start and could only keep quiet.

At this moment, Gina played a joke on Phoebe and said, “You join the basketball school team and badminton team.” Gina’s joke broke the ice. The teacher made good

use of this chance and induced Gina to write down the sentences, “Phoebe plays not only badminton but also basketball.” Gina kept playing the joke on Phoebe and said something about their future choices.

Gina: Phoebe wants to study in the army school.

Phoebe: It is impossible for me to study in the army school! I will not study in the nurse school, either.

(The talk between the students in class, March, 2014)

Phoebe came back to life after Gina’s jokes. The topic of “future choices” started by Gina seemed to evoke Phoebe’s great interest, which the topic of “the favorite breakfast stores or drinks shops would not generate.” The teacher took the great chance to tell Gina and Phoebe to write down their discussion as the following,

Phoebe chooses *neither* the army school *nor* the nurse school as further education.

The teacher noticed that Gina was often ignored; it seemed that all the topics focused on Phoebe. The teacher then induced Phoebe to make a sentence to describe Gina. Phoebe said, “Oh, Gina is online all the time.” The teacher transferred what Phoebe said into a positive concept, and induced Gina and Phoebe to write down the following sentence,

Gina not only can play computer games but also download the clips from the YouTube.

Gina actually had helped the teacher download the clips from the YouTube when the teacher needed the clips to show the class.

The English conversation finished with a satisfying ending. In Gina’s journal, she wrote,

What I have learned from today's lesson is very useful. The words are practical as well. However, the sentence patterns are a little bit difficult. I do not understand some words, either. I suggest the teacher write down all the words on the blackboard and provide us with more words related to the topic of the local market. (Gina's journal, March, 2014.)

Gina's different attitudes in the regular and remedial classes

Although Gina's demeanor in the regular class was low-spirited and gave the classmates an impression that "She falls asleep all day long.", yet in the remedial class, Gina was quick wit, always making humorous remarks. She expressed her wish for the teacher to have more supplements.

Gina kept a low profile compared to her partner, Phoebe, who expressed her ideas in a loud voice. Gina's quietness caused her to be ignored by the teacher easily. Nevertheless, she played a critical role in Phoebe's learning and demonstrated a positive learning attitude which inspired other classmates to concentrate in the remedial class.

Step Two: The teacher having the students creating a mini dialogue

Different from the regular class which was the class at school in daytime, in the remedial class, the teacher started the dialogue in the textbook by asking the students questions like the following

If you have chances to travel overseas, you may go shopping on an exotic and splendid street. Can you tell clerks which items you need, such as skirts, T-shirt, pants and jeans, etc., what size you are, and your favorite style in English? In

today's lesson, we are going to learn four useful grammatical sentence patterns which help you conduct the whole English conversations with clerks.

(The teacher's talk in class, March, 2014)

The teacher listed the four grammatical sentence patterns, and tried to capture Gina's attention by engaging her in the following dialogue:

The teacher: How do you like my skirt today?

Gina: (replies in Chinese) The skirt is too long and tight which makes your bottom looks weird.

The teacher: Wow! You girls really offer me a brilliant suggestion! Gina, you sound like a fashion designer! I would like to hear your opinions about my outfits more. In this case, I can ask for your opinion in English just using the Sentence Pattern One, "How do you like my skirt?" With this sentence, you can start an English conversation with foreign clerks.

Gina, imagine that you are in Korea now, and you want to go shopping. You are going to tell a clerk which style of outfits you prefer in English. It is not as difficult as you think. Just use the Sentence Pattern Two: I like the loose/ tight look." (The teacher's talk in class, March, 2014)

At this moment, the class was silent and still. The teacher was aware that it was time for them to interact. Considering the Sentence Pattern One was easier, the teacher designated it to Gina, "Gina, would you like to ask Phoebe's opinion about your outfit today?" Gina tried to speak but paused in the middle of the utterance. Gina's willingness to try to speak still moved the teacher. The teacher indicated Gina to use the Sentence Pattern One. The teacher read out the Sentence Pattern One as well. When Gina tried the second time, "Phoebe, how do you like my black jeans?", she

spoke quite fluently with her soft and sweet voice. However, her partner, Phoebe was unwilling to speak English. She replied to Gina in Chinese. Phoebe seemed unsure whether or not she could keep the conversation going in English and thus chose to keep quiet in case of making any blunders and lost face in front of Gina. The teacher encouraged Phoebe to try by indicating Phoebe to make use of Sentence Pattern Two, “They look good on you.” Phoebe’s indifferent attitude threw a wet blanket on Gina’s passion to start English conversation. The teacher perceived low spirits between Gina and Phoebe and came up with an idea to boost their energy. “Do you girls know why I use “they” rather than “it”?” The teacher asked. Both Gina and Phoebe answered loudly in high spirits “Because jeans have two tubes, we use “they”.” Giving the correct answer made them feel high spirited. The teacher took the opportunity to indicate Phoebe to use Sentence Pattern Four: “A goes well with B” to describe Gina. “Your T-shirt goes well with your black jeans.” Gina showed her smile. Again, the teacher seized the chance to tell Gina to give her comment on Phoebe’s outfit. Gina said carefully but joyfully. “Your T-shirt goes well with your jeans.”

Step Three: The teacher having the students directly communicate with native English speakers

Gina suggested the teacher to supplement the class with more practical conversations, interesting sentences related to the current issues, or English proverbs and slangs. Why did Gina make these suggestions? Because if she could speak fluent English, use the proverbs or slangs which made herself sound like a native speaker or think about current issues in English, she would feel so proud of herself and make herself become a talented and competent person.

I have noticed some guys in Taiwan who could speak fluent English with foreigners. They all look so smart and competent!

(Small talk with Gina, April, 2014)

When the teacher asked Gina whether or not she had a chance to talk to some foreigners, Gina answered,

Seldom. But at the place where I work part time, my boss can speak good English. For several times, some girls came to our stand and required the dishes in English. My boss would introduce the ingredients of each dish, and these girls would keep asking more questions and finally decided what to order -- all in English! I heard these girls chatting in Korean. I find out that many Koreans are good at speaking English. (Small talk with Gina, March, 2014)

The teacher recalled that Gina expressed more than once that

It is my dream to study in Korean when I turn eighteen years old. To survive in Korea, I have to practice not only Korean but also English because Koreans are also good at speaking English.

(Small talk with Gina, March, 2014)

The teacher decided to give Gina a brand new experience—communicating with native English teachers directly.

before the first native English teacher's visit

Upon informed of the first native English teacher, Gina had sparkling in her eyes, but she also showed concerns that she could neither understand what the foreign teacher said nor reply to his questions. Gina wrote her concerns in the journal again,

For the native English teacher's visit, I want to make sure that we will ask the teacher questions. Will the native English teacher ask us questions as well?

What kinds of questions will s/he ask? Can you teach us how to answer the questions? (Gina's journal, March, 2014)

The teacher instantly offered a clear answer:

The native English teacher is one of the editors of our textbook. He would be interested in what you think about the textbook. You can share with him your views on what is your favorite or the least interesting parts of the textbook. He will likely ask you questions based on your sharing and reports. So you can think about which lesson in the textbook you would like to share with the native English teacher. Tell me your choice in the next class. (The teacher's replies to Gina's concerns, March, 2014)

Gina's thinking on the textbook

At the next class, while other students remained not sure which lesson they had interests in, Gina was the only one who had decided which was her favorite lesson.

The second hand store in Lesson Three is intriguing to me. I have watched some TV programs that the hosts searched for precious items everywhere, and finally found the delicate antiques and fine arts in the second-hand stores. I wonder what special items Americans sell in their second hand stores. May I ask the native English teacher what special items they sell in second hand stores in the U.S.A.? (Gina's viewpoints in class, March, 2014)

Gina was articulate, and her devotion in the remedial class was totally different from her attitudes in the regular class. In the regular class, she felt drowsy all the time and it was so hard to keep her attention; however, in the remedial class, she concentrated in learning and became positive and active in learning.

The teacher then helped Gina with her script. Before the native English teacher came, Gina had asked Phoebe to teach her pronunciations of some of the words that she wanted to use. Gina practiced her lines again and again.

Step Four: The students' performance: Gina's oral presentation

Although Gina's voice was weak at first during the presentation, things were getting better soon. Gina finally had clear articulation of each word and spoke pretty well. At the end of her presentation, she asked the native English teacher, Carlo, what special items there are in the second hand stores in the U.S.A. "I really don't know. I have no idea of what special items they sell in the second stores in America," Carlo answered with great interests. Carlo praised Gina for speaking English well.

Gina's thinking about the first native English teacher Carlo's visit

Gina commented that if they had one more chance to speak to a native English teacher, she hoped the native English teacher would be Carlo again.

I hope the next native English teacher will be Carlo because we have already got familiar with him. The next time when he visits us, we can ask him deeper questions without spending time on self- introduction. (Third interview, April, 2014)

When Gina was asked whether she learned anything or had benefited from Carlo's visit, she nodded firmly and said,

Carlo said my presentation was pretty good. I think that's because of my good pronunciation. I am so glad to hear Carlo's praise. After all, it is the praise from a native English teacher. Besides, Carlo's suggestions are very practical and down to earth. He encouraged us to use English after school. For example, we

can watch the funny short clips on YouTube or listen to favorite English songs. His suggestions made me feel that English is not a subject at all. It is also the first time in my life to realize that English is not equal to tests. Learning English can be fun and can relate to my daily life. (Third Interview, April, 2014)

When asked whether she made any changes in her daily life after Carlo's visit, Gina said,

I often browse the Korean fans' club websites. Many of the fans leave their messages in English because they are people from all of the world, not Koreans. I used to skip English messages because I thought I did not understand them at all. But now, I try to read English messages, and they are not as mysterious as I expected. I can understand some of them.

(Third Interview, April, 2014)

before the second native English teacher's visit:

As for the second native English teacher's visit, Gina held the same point of view as Phoebe's.

I thought we should cancel the personal oral presentations because they are too time-consuming. Without personal oral presentations, it will leave more time for the whole class to converse with the foreign teacher. After all, if we have chances to talk to foreigners someday, it is impossible for us to talk about the contents of English textbooks. The point lies in the conversation which comes back and forth between us and the native English teacher.

As for the topic, it really depends on the native English teacher's interests. We can search for some information related to the native English teacher's interests. I believe in that way the native English teacher would be glad to talk to us and

answer our questions. I wonder whether the native English teacher is also interested in Korean pop songs. Or if he is interested in sports, we can talk about sports with him/her. (Fifth Interview, June, 2014)

Gina's response to the second native English's visit

On the day of the second native English teacher's visit, instead of participating in the class passionately and staring at the teacher all the time as in Carlo's visit, the whole class were not so responsive. The teacher perceived something wrong. She encouraged the students to raise their hands and replied to the teacher's questions. However, one of the students reflected,

Teacher Alice, it is not because I didn't want to answer these questions. It is because I was not able to answer them! I really had no idea of what the foreign teacher was talking about. How could I answer the questions?

(The student's instant feedback during the second native English speaker's visit, June, 2014)

Other top students looked depressed as well. When other students asked these top students to translate the meanings of the native English teacher, the homeroom teacher overheard them whispered, "I don't know what the teacher said, either."

In the beginning of the course, the native English teacher, Jim, let the students guess which state he came from and pointed out the geographical position on the map. He shared his life experiences in his hometown, Detroit, Michigan integrating with the American students' life in the U.S.A. He also shared with the students his favorite professional baseball and basketball teams—they were all came from his hometown, Detroit. He expanded on his talk into the particular style of the American sports news report: That is, they would introduce the anecdotes of each player and glamorous feats

of the teams in the past, which was quite different from the style used in Taiwan as the latter aimed at reporting the scores only.

Compared to the first foreign teacher who mainly focused on the students' oral presentations or answering the students' questions, Jim's talk apparently became unpredictable and therefore was beyond the students' capabilities, although Jim was well-prepared and the contents of his talk was quite informative. Luckily, at the end of the class, Jim led the students do some activities and had them watch funny short clips which appealed to the students.

Gina's thoughts on the second native English teacher, Jim's course

Gina admitted that she was not so enthusiastic about the second native English teacher, Jim's visit. She explained

That was partly because the second native English teacher's visit happened right after the Comprehensive Assessment. After the Comprehensive Assessment, we do not have formal classes anymore. All of the teachers had finished all the courses before we took the Comprehensive Assessment. So when the second native English teacher came and offered us the English course, I was not used to listening to the teacher's lecture and have no mood for any formal learning, either. I got so excited about the first native English teacher's course because compared to the English course in the regular class, Carlo's course was relaxing, easy, and refreshingly.

When asked if there was anything else that confused her in the second native English teacher's visit, she answered,

The background of the second teacher's PowerPoint was too dark, and the words on the PowerPoint were also too dark to recognize able. I hope the teacher would have more interaction with us. The most important thing is that I could not understand what the teacher said! (Sixth Interview, June, 2014)

When Gina was asked whether she had any gains from the second visit, she answered,

The second native English teacher showed us American pop song clips from which I could know some American singers and songs. Although I could not understand what the native English teacher said, at least I was emerged in the speaking English environment. Learning a language needs more listening.

(Sixth Interview, June, 2014)

When Gina recalled anything she could still remember from the second native English teacher's visit, she said,

The second native English teacher shared his experience about how he learned Chinese. He used English similar sounds to memorize the Chinese lexicon. For example, he used English similar sounds "cat salty" to memorize Chinese "mao xian" (冒險) which means taking risks or adventures. The name of the city "Keelung" was related to "chicken dragon" which facilitated him to memorize. With the second native English teacher's sharing, I realized that the way the second native English teacher learn Chinese was. Knowing the twenty-six letters, we can write all the words in English. Writing Chinese characters is much more difficult than writing English words because it is impossible for you to write all the Chinese with only several parts of the characters.

Though Gina seemed not so involved in Jim's visit, yet she still had a positive peer influence on Phoebe. For example, when Jim required the students to think of riddles, it was Gina that came up funny riddles, making Phoebe laugh out loud. Gina took the chance to make Phoebe involve in the task. Second, though Gina did not understand what Jim said, she remarked that she benefited from Jim's visit. Gina said

her mom reminded her that immersing in English-speaking environment is a good way to learn the language. After all, listening is a must when learning a language.



Challenges

After the students attended the remedial class for a while, the problems started. The followings were the challenges the students encountered during the remedial class.

Students Being Late for Class

The students in the remedial class were all from the PE specialty class that meant they had at least eight PE training classes a week. Considering their needs to take showers after a long day's physical training, the teacher set the remedial class to start at 8: 10 p.m.

However, most of these students failed to arrive at class on time. Their delays severely reduced the efficiency of the remedial class and resulted in their being unable to finish the tasks and slow down their improvement. The followings are the challenges resulted from the students being late.

The students being unable to undertake the tasks

First, their delays shortened their own learning time. Taking Fred for example, he often arrived so late that he missed the teacher's instruction. Fred did not appear in the class until the students' teamwork time. Due to missing the instruction, Fred had no ideas of how to start the English conversation, or could not figure out grammar exercises. In Fred's journal, he wrote

I have no idea of how to ask my partner questions in English. Creating the mini-dialogue is difficult for me. I suggest the teacher teach me how to ask these questions in English first. (Fred's journal, March, 2014)

In fact, it was Fred's delay causing him to be unable to finish the tasks. As for Fred's constantly being late, the teacher informed Fred's mom of his situation many

times. However, Fred's mom just said, "He is still having dinner. He will come to the class later." After the teacher called Fred's Mom several times, her mom said, "Fred is not well today. He will not go to the class today."

The teacher turned to advise Fred that he should come to the class earlier, or he would miss the instruction. But Fred said

I have to take care of my father (His father's left-sided body is paralyzed.), do the laundry, and mop the floors. After doing the housechore, I am tired and need a rest. When I wake up, it is almost eight thirty p.m. (Fred's personal communication , April, 2014)

Facing Fred's situation, the teacher valued Fred's devotion to the family but she asked Fred to mop the floors on another days so that he would not be so tired before going to the remedial class. Fred seemed disagree with the teacher's suggestion at first. Gradually, Fred's attitude improved and came to the class earlier

The students' improvement being slowed down

Second, the students' being late slowed down their improvement. In Gina's journal, she wrote,

I'd like to learn more words related to the topic of "local market."

(Gina's journal, April, 2014)

I still don't understand the meanings of some sentences. If the teacher could write the meaning of each word on the blackboard, it would be very helpful.

(Gina's journal, April, 2014)

I have learned some irregular verb forms. However, most of the irregular verbs are still difficult for me. I hope I can gain more exercises in the remedial class.

(Phoebe's journal, April, 2014)

From the students' journals, they were motivated to advance their learning: either to gain upper-level practices or to be given explicit explanations and supplements. However, all of these required time to carry out, and their being late cut off their learning time and the chances to be better.

The discipline lax

The teacher could not start the class until three or four students arrived. The punctual students had to wait for their classmates and this made them question the efficiency of the remedial class. Though the teacher was with the punctual students to do their homework when waiting, they were still restless and made excuses to go to the restroom. Actually, they wandered and chatted on the corridor. Required to come back to the classroom, they sat at desk absentminded. Then, the students who arrived late constantly came in and kept interrupting the class. The discipline was lax, and the students gradually became slack.

The problem of the students' being late seemed minor. However, it crippled the students' improvement.

The Student's Inconsistency

Attending the remedial class 90 minutes a day, two days a week at night required students' determination. Especially for the low-level students, they were well aware of the fact that they need to work hard, but when they were asked to make efforts, they often escaped and retrieved to their own comfort zone. The inconsistency was the most apparent on Phoebe. Phoebe told the teacher several times that she hated the dreary learning atmosphere. She preferred to talk to the teacher and discuss with the classmates, in an interactive mode. The teacher also observed Phoebe that she tended

to idle and distracted in the regular class. Therefore, the teacher shortened the lecture to allow for the students to express their understandings so that they had issues to discuss. However, when being required to copy and explain the question of the multiple choice questions, Phoebe became unwilling. After all, practicing and explaining the grammatical multiple choices questions needed a lot of energy and was brain consuming. Phoebe said she just wanted to chat and relax in class. Apparently, Phoebe's attitude had inconsistency: she thought she should do advanced exercises (doing the multiple choice questions rather than practicing the basic sentence pattern exercises) but when working on multiple-choice questions, she refused to make efforts.

Facing Phoebe's inconsistency, the teacher asked her easier questions. This method worked well to make Phoebe have a sense of achievement, boost her energy and gradually give her the mood to learn. The following was the conversation between Phoebe and the teacher.

Phoebe: (Phoebe read aloud the sentence)

Some people think _____ rich people are not really the happiest.

(A) that (B) whether (C) who (D) what

Phoebe: I know the happiest is the p.p. (the past participle)

Teacher: "The happiest" is not the p.p. Do you know the meaning of the word, "happy"?

Phoebe: I know it means glad. (Phoebe answered in Chinese.)

Teacher: Yes. The word "happy" is an.....(with a hint in Chinese)

Phoebe: I know it was an adjective.

Teacher: Yes. Do you notice any marker at the end of the word?

Phoebe: est.

Teacher: Yes, it is the marker "-iest." The word happiest is the superlative form

of the happy. Only verbs have three forms: root verb, past tense and p.p.(present participle)

(Phoebe read aloud the sentence again and translated the sentence to Chinese.)

Phoebe: Oh, Teacher Alice, I know the answer is definitely “whether.”

Teacher: Think about it. If the answer is “whether”, the meaning of the sentence will become..... ? (Phoebe’s performance in class, April, 2014.)

After the interaction with Phoebe, the teacher noticed that Phoebe speak the answers without thinking just like she wrote the new words quickly but often missed one letter or put the order of the letters wrong. Even though she made mistakes, she looked so triumphant when answering questions in the remedial class.

If Phoebe was satisfied with her own performance after answering teacher’s questions, she wrote sentences after sentences. However, it took the teacher too much time to have Phoebe concentrate in class. It occupied the time for advanced exercises.

If Phoebe was high in spirits on any given day, she would be very talkative and chatting with her classmates all the time. It took the teacher much time to make her calm down. For example, one day, walking in the classroom, Phoebe talked joyfully about her family’s grand festival dinner party.

Phoebe: To celebrate Mother’s Day, my family held a grand party last Sunday! We even held the Karaoke competition and set up a fabulous stage with a high quality stereo set. My uncles and aunts clamored Grandma and Grandpa to kiss each other in public. Oh, my goodness! Can you believe it.....

Teacher: Phoebe, would you please take out the English workbook, and turn to page thirty and copy the question on the blackboard?

Phoebe: (Phoebe walked to the blackboard, took a piece of chalk, and turned around to talk Sean and Fred) Sean and Fred, can you believe that my grandma

and grandpa really kissed each other on the stage! They are both over seventy.

My aunts and uncles instantly gave them red envelopes!

Teacher: Phoebe. Phoebe!

Phoebe: My aunts sang on the stage all the time.....

Teacher: Phoebe. (Walk to Phoebe) Phoebe, now, you have only ten minutes.

Memorize the new words in Lesson Five and Six, only memorize the words within the range from one thousand and two hundred words that MOE formulates.

Phoebe: (Phoebe went back to her seat and still got excited) (After a while) I joined the Karaoke competition, and was given red envelopes! Can you believe it? Not only my grandma and grandpa, but other couples like my aunts and uncles in law, they all.....

Teacher: Phoebe, are you ready to have a vocabulary quiz on the blackboard?

Phoebe; Oh, not yet.

Teacher, Okay, you still have seven minutes. (Phoebe's performance in class, May, 2014.)

The teacher tried to cancel the vocabulary quizzes and engaged in the grammatical instruction so that the students had enough time to practice the multiple-choice questions and voice their understanding. However, cancelling the vocabulary quizzes only made the situation worse because the students in the remedial class such as Phoebe needed to calm down first, or they could not focus. That was why the teacher asked Phoebe to memorize the words as soon as she walked into the classroom and implemented the grammatical or English speaking instruction later. The grammatical instruction must make room for vocabulary quizzes and the time was apparently not enough. It caused Phoebe to utter the opinion that grammatical

instruction was not enough and hoped to add more questions. She wrote in her journal that

I have gotten familiar with the grammar point in today's lesson, but I still cannot write the forms of p.p. (present participle). I hope the teacher will offer us more grammatical supplements next time. (Phoebe's journal, May, 2014)

Phoebe required the teacher to give her more supplements. When the teacher did it, she thought the atmosphere was not active enough and suggested the teacher offer some fun activities. Phoebe often said she hoped to gain more practice in the remedial class. However, the truth was that she kept talking in class and the teacher had to spend much time disciplining her that scarified the time for advance exercises.

Phoebe was unconscious that her being talkative occupied the precious time to learn. The following was the conversation between Phoebe and the teacher.

Phoebe: I learn more in today's lesson than the previous one. My classmates talked too much, and I couldn't learn anything last time. They kept chatting so I learned nothing. I thought this time I learn much more because they are quiet.

Teacher: (Shocked) Phoebe, it was not that your classmates talked too much.

You talked a lot to them, didn't you?

(The teacher's field-note, April, 2014)

In the process of implementation of the remedial class, it required the teacher to discipline the class consistently so that the students could concentrate and benefit from the class. However, how to balance the good relationship between the teacher and the students, and discipline the class to develop the students' positive attitudes were challenges that remedial teachers needed to face.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings to the three research questions. It is divided into three parts: before, while, and after remedial instruction. The first section discusses how the instruction was designed based on the low-level students' past experience before implementation of the remedial instruction. The second part presents the challenges and advantages the low-level students experienced during the remedial English instruction. After the remedial class, what is learned about providing low-level students instruction is concluded in the third section.

Research Question One

This section is mainly addressed the first research question as the following.

1. In the process of implementing the design, what challenges and advantages are there based on the students' experiences?

Challenges

In the process of the implementation of the remedial class, the teacher constantly experienced inner struggles. The struggling feelings came from the two challenges. The first was the class discipline and the second was the students' attitudes.

The first challenge was the class discipline. The students took the class by their wiliness, and most of them went to the remedial class late. When the students came, the time for the class was so less that the students could not gain enough assistance from the teacher and have time to develop their thinking and abilities. The class

discipline was lax. According to Kao (2013), he adopted the “remarking points” to warn the students’ misbehaviors and reward the students for their efforts in class. at the begging, the students regarded the remaking points as a burden and pressure. Finally, the students realized that the remarking points inspires them to learn and keep them from misbehaviors. Combining the researcher’s experiences and the suggestion from literature review, the class discipline was critical to maintain the efficiency remedial class. In this study, the research kept reminded the students of being punctual and quiet.

The second challenge was the students’ attitudes. Because the remedial class did not belong to compulsory education, the students did not have obligation to attend the class. The students knew the remedial class was designed to help their learning, but when facing the temptation, they chose to give up the remedial class. For example, Phoebe replaced the remedial class with the basketball team’s practice. The teacher was infuriating, and enforced her to leave the basketball court right away. Though Phoebe finally went back to the class, the students felt the tension in class. Remedial class offered the students assistance they needed, but if the students lack positive attitude, they still could not benefit from the class.

The remedial English class was designed to meet the students’ needs, yet, it did not mean that the students could do whatever they wanted. From the research, remedial class teachers had to care the students’ need and maintain the class’ discipline. Reminding students of positive attitudes and still keeping good relationships with the students required the remedial class teacher’s wisdom and grit.

Advantages

Through a semester of the remedial English instruction, the students had positive changes. The followings are the advantages of the implementation of the remedial class.

First, the remedial class allowed for a lot of interaction between the teacher and the students. In that case, the students had accesses to express their thoughts and the relationships between the teacher and the students was closed. They also had a good interaction with the peers.

Second, the remedial class did not have to catch up the set schedule so that the teacher could fulfill the concept of learning by doing. In the remedial class, the students experienced and used English rather than listen to lecture.

Third, in the remedial class, the students could tell the teacher what kinds of activities help them a lot through interviews, their journals and small talks. The remedial class matched the concept of “student-center” learning.

Fourth, under a lot of interaction between the students and the teacher, the comprehensible instruction based on their readiness level, and activities that sparked their interests, the students gradually cultivated a study habit. The students had a habit of memorizing new words, and some of them could even recap the points what they had learned in the daytime.

Finally, there were diverse activities in the remedial class to meet the low-level students preferred learning styles such as passing ball to practice speaking, creating mini-dialogues to express their likes and directly communication with Carlo and Jim. Through diverse activities, the students developed a positive attitude toward English. They all express that they would like to communicate with the international visitors and increase their willingness to read English information online.

In conclusion, according to the two low-achievers' experiences, the remedial class had improved the students' English. Both challenges and advantages were discussed in the research. However, there were still a lot needed improving, especially students' attitudes. If students did not regular their learning with positive attitudes, the remedial class could not increase students' proficiency even under such a good environment.

Research Question Two

This section is mainly addressed the second research question as the following

2. What problems did the researcher encounter? How should the design be planned and revised for the remedial class?

The researcher, also the teacher, encountered a common problem in most junior high schools in Taiwan. That was some ninth graders gave up learning English, and some of them even hated English. The following was the problem that the teacher encountered in the classroom.

These students were almost English low-level students. They did not memorize new English words, did not do homework, and kept English test paper untouched. When they were forced to hand in the workbooks, they just copied their classmates. In regular class, they sat at their desk without vigor. They seemed to fall asleep anytime or chatted to other classmates. When asked to sit straight, they looked absent-minded. The teacher tried hard to solve the problem, and talked to these students in person.

When asked why they did not pay attention to English class, they all said that they did not understand what the teacher said because they did not have a solid foundation of English. One of them, Allen, expressed that,

I hated English tests because I did not understand the questions on paper. I think I can never learn English well in my life. I really don't like English.

(Informal talk, February, 2014)

When Allen said so, the rest of the low-level students nodded. The teacher had a clear vision of remedial instruction. This remedial English class aimed at that first, help these students develop basic English competence. Second, enhancing the low-level students' confidence so that they could have a positive attitude toward English.

The teacher, also the researcher planned the action research based on the low-level students' learning experiences. The findings related to designing the instruction based on the interviews with these low-level students included three issues. First, the contents of remedial instruction should be adapted to meet the two low-level students' readiness level. Second, to enhance two students' confidence, grammar which overwhelmed them should be the focus of instruction. Third, to arouse their interest and motivation, the instruction needed to meet their learning styles. The details are as follows.

The First Issue: The contents must be adapted to meet the low-level students' readiness level.

The most prevailing problem these low-level students shared was that the materials were not comprehensible for them. Once the students could not figure out what the textbooks said, they became distracted and misbehavior would be expected. The followings is one of the low-level students' experience.

Teacher Alice, you always remind me to sit straight. But I could not understand what the textbook said, I felt defeated. All I can do is to lie down the desk.

(Phoebe's opinion in class, May, 2014)

To increase the low-level students' confidence, the materials must be made comprehensible. According to the studies, most of the remedial teachers adopted the story books (Hsu, 2011), English songs (Chen, 2013), and chants (Wu, 2011) as comprehensible materials. The students in these studies were all seventh and eighth graders. However, the low-level students in this study were ninth graders and they told the teacher clearly that they hoped to review the main points in the textbooks instead of learning outside reading. To meet the low-level students' expectation, the teacher adopted the textbook as the remedial material. The contents of the textbooks must be adapted to meet the low-level students' readiness levels. The followings were the adaptation that the teacher made.

First, the dialogues in the textbook were adapted and shortened. Take Lesson Two for example. The dialogue was shortened to be four sentences and the students used the four sentences to create a mini-dialogue to express their preferred clothing styles. The second adaption of the textbook was to transfer obscure grammar rules into the activities. For example, the students passed the ball to one another to practice common use verb phrases. The third adaptation was to aid students to write their thinking about the textbooks and communicated with the one of book editors, Carlo. This was also the most unforgettable memory that the low-level students had during the remedial class.

Through adaptation of the textbooks, the low-level students had motivation to read dialogues and readings.

The Second Issue: The class needs to focus on grammar to enhance the students' confidence.

As studies indicated diagnosis the students' learning difficulty was critical when the teacher implemented the remedial instruction (Grubb et al., 2011, Wang, 2003) When the researcher interviewed the low-level students, they expressed

I found that grammar made English difficult. (Phoebe's opinion in class, February, 2014)

The monthly exams are filled with grammar multiple-choice questions. If I do not understand grammar, I definitely would fail on the exams. (Gina's opinion in class, February, 2014)

The grammar is so difficult that I do not believe that I can understand it in my life. (Allen's opinion in class, February, 2014)

I don't know why. I just can't understand grammar, and English was so hard. (Nick's opinion in class, February, 2014)

The low-level students viewed grammar as overwhelming obstacle when they learn English. To alleviate their defeated feelings, offering certain degree of grammar instruction was necessary. Through the remedial class, the students could enhance their understanding of grammar. In this way, the students built up their confidence in English, increased their chances to pass the monthly exams, and motivated to keep learning.

The Third Issue: The class needed to reduce lectures and increased activities based on the students' learning styles.

The researcher aimed at designing the course based on students' learning styles. In the pre-remedial English class interview, the researcher asked the students,

T: What impressed you most when learning English?

Nick: Activities.

(First Interview, January, 2014)

T: You have learned English since third grade in the elementary school. What types of English lesson you like most?

Gina: Well, I think it is an “activity.” After all, activities are much more interesting than lectures.

(First Interview, January, 2014)

These students preferred kinesthetic learning and engaging in activities arouse their interests. Besides, according to the government report (Grubb, et al., 2011), if the teacher lectured all class, the remedial instruction tended to be tedious, and the students got bored. Reducing lectures to allow for activities was the idea arrangement for the remedial class. Joining in activities meant that the students used their brains to think instead of being led by the teacher. Through activities, the teacher returned the learning to the students, carrying out the students-centered concept. The students developed abilities and bolstered their confidence up by carrying out the tasks and activities.

Through the process of implementation, the teacher learned that providing remedial instruction for low-level students can combine the following issues.

Connecting Students' learning to Their Living Experiences

The students in the remedial English class expressed that they found English obscure. “It’s OK for me to recognize some words. However, when the words are strung together, they somehow become another meaning that confuses

me.” Allen, one of the remedial English class students said, “English grammar is so difficult that I don’t really think I can understand.” Phoebe, Gina and Nick also expressed their discouragement when learning grammar in the regular class. Thus, in the remedial English class, the teacher had to make English meaningful and practical.

Letting the Students Take the Active Role

From the talks, the students often expressed “I feel drowsy in class.” “I do not understand what the teacher said.” This was especially common when these students in the ninth grade. In the remedial English class, it is important to let the students take the active role, and make they become the hosts of the classroom, not the guests. In this way, they may become more involved in the course and have maximized comprehension.

During Carlo’s visit, the students took the active role to make oral presentation. Take Sean for example. He shunned away from doing oral report. With the teacher’s support and guide, Sean made the following oral report,

I chose Lesson Five as my oral presentation topic because I appreciate the athletic spirits which the reading discussed. After all, I was once a member of track-and-field team.

After finishing the oral report, Sean told the teacher joyfully,

Carlo asked me whether I had watched the movie discussed in Lesson Five and other questions. I think he was really interested in my oral presentation.

Other student, Fred said, “I chose Lesson Two because I was curious about the origin of jeans. It is hard to believe that the jeans were made for the gold miners.” Gina also said, “I once watched the TV program which introduced

second-hand stores. Many precious antiques could only be found in these stores.

Lesson Three talking about second-hand stores arouses my great interest.”

From the students’ journals, it is clear that when the students took the active role, English became much more interesting because the students had more chances to express their likes and thoughts. In this process, the students made good use of what they learned and maximized their understanding. English was not only for tests but also provided the topics that they could discuss and shared with friends.

Creating a Support Environment

In the remedial English class, a smaller class size compared to the regular class, enabled the teacher to devote more time on each of the individual students. Most of the low-level students were afraid of asking questions in public because they thought if they did so, other classmates would make fun of them and their stupid questions. However, in the remedial class, they felt free to ask questions. As Phoebe said

I take the remedial English class because I can ask questions of Alice (the teacher) anytime.

(First and Second Interviews, January and February, 2014)

Gina also made good use of remedial English class to ask questions of the teacher which she would not ask in the regular class such as her dream to study in Korea, and her goal to get into one of top ten five-year junior colleges. These students expressed their inner voices in the remedial class without worrying about being judged or criticized. They felt valued in the remedial class.

The students in the remedial English class all experienced setbacks when

learning English. Some of them even said, “English grammar is too complex to learn. I will never understand grammar for my whole life.” Therefore, offering a supportive environment when the students faced difficulties was critical.

Take Fred and Gina for example. At first, they could neither read the sentences of the multiple-choice questions nor gave the correct answers. Both Gina and Fred looked discouraged. At this moment, patiently guiding them to circle the key word of each multiple-choice question would be very helpful. The teacher realized that Fred and Gina were low –level students, so once they could figure it out, the teacher praised them immediately. The positive feedback given by the teacher might have plucked up the low-level students allowing them to go on learning the complex grammatical concepts.

In short, connecting the students’ learning to their living experiences aroused low-level students’ interests in English. Letting the students take the active role allowed the low-level students to demonstrate their ideas and opinions that maximized their understanding of abstract concepts. Creating a support environment made them feel valued and develop faith in themselves that they could would conquer difficulties. All these contributed to the success of this remedial class.

Reflection

From this remedial English class, the researcher, also the teacher, had the following reflection.

First, the discipline was very critical because it affected the students’ learning attitudes and what they would do in class. Under good discipline, the students attended the class on time and were quiet in class. In that case, the students could

concentrate on learning, and remedial instruction would work. Without good discipline, no matter how helpful remedial class would be, students could not benefit from it.

Second, the standards of assessing the effectiveness of the remedial class should not be confined to the students' test scores. The students' attitude toward English played an important role, too. In this study, the students' performance on the Comprehensive Assessment was not good. However, their attitude toward English changed dramatically. For example, after the remedial English class, Phoebe had motivation to talk to international visitors, and increased her willingness to "use" English. Gina started to read English messages on her favorite singers' official website instead of skipping anything in English. Under the training for speaking in the remedial class, Gina had confidence of carrying out her dream: studying in Korea. The remedial class also sparked Fred's interest in English. Fred listened to English pop songs on YouTube. Another student in the remedial class, Sean changed his misbehavior. Attending the remedial class, Sean developed a good relationship with the teacher instead of fooling around with gangsters. The changes resulted from the remedial class were meaningful especially when the students at the adolescent stage.

Third, the student-centered concept did not mean that the teacher "obeyed" all the students' suggestions and "followed" what they wanted. The teacher should think and then made a wise decision. For example, all the students insisted that doing multiple-choice grammar questions in remedial class is the most helpful for them to pass the tests. But the fact was that the Comprehensive Assessment focused on the reading ability. From this experience, the teacher reflected that she should convince the students of the importance of reading and develop their reading ability.

In conclusion, according to the low-achievers' experiences, the remedial English class had improved the students' English. Both challenges and advantages

were discussed in the research. However, there were still a lot needed improving, especially the problem of class discipline. If students did not regular their learning with positive attitudes, the remedial class could not increase students' proficiency even under such a good environment.





CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study attempted to investigate how instruction was devised based on the students' readiness level would be helpful for the low-level students. The challenges and advantages the students experienced in the remedial English class were also presented. Derived from the students' feedback and the teacher's observation, this chapter will conclude (1) summary of the findings, (2) pedagogical implications, (3) limitations of the study, (4) suggestions for future study and, (5) conclusion.

Summary of the Findings

This study collected data including the students' journals, the teacher's log, class observation, small talks and six interviews with each student. Through these qualitative data, the students' learning process during the remedial English class was presented. The advantages and challenges that the students experienced, especially Phoebe and Gina were also provided.

In the remedial English class, the students received three aspects of training. The first one is building up the students' word power. At first, the students could only memorize no more than five words. After several classes, most of them could memorize ten words. They were so proud of themselves. The second is to understand grammar rules. Grammar rules used to be overwhelming for these students. Through discussing with their classmates and explaining the multiple-choices questions to the teachers, the students gradually felt that they could grip the main points of grammar rules. They gained a sense of achievement when practicing multiple-choice grammar questions. As for the third goal, practicing speaking English, the students regarded

Carlo's visit as the most impressed. Because Carlo suggested they watch clips on YouTube and listen to English songs online, they found that English could be part of their life and they could enjoy using it.

After the remedial English class, it is found that the students' attitudes toward English changed. They used to guess answers randomly on English tests. After the remedial English class, they believed they had received special training and developed the abilities that could cope with English tests. So when facing the challenging examination such as The Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students, most of the students still read through the whole questions, fluttered efforts to choose the best answers and hung in there in the last minute. Besides, through making the oral presentation, interaction with the native English teachers, creating mini-dialogues and sharing the students' thoughts and dreams with the teacher, the students realized English could incorporate into their life. They students changed their behaviors: noticing English messages on the Internet rather than skipping them, listening to English songs. Being asked whether they had courage to talk to international visitors someday, they smiled and nodded.

However, two major challenges in the remedial English class still need to be solved: the class discipline such as students' being late which decreased their learning and students' inconsistency which made them shun away from remedial English class. Nonetheless, the students' interest being piqued, and confidence being built helped the remedial English class completed. Their positive feedback proves that the remedial English instruction is worth implementing in Taiwan.

Pedagogical Implications

Three teaching inspirations can be formed through this study for remedial English teachers in Taiwan.

First, connecting the low-level students' learning to their living experience, based on the findings of this study, is one of the critical elements to remedial English instruction. To low-level students, English was obscure and overwhelming. Once the students found English is close to their living experience through the teacher's guidance in the remedial class, English becomes meaningful. In that case, low-level students would be motivated to learn English.

Second, according to this study, letting the students take the active role is also crucial to make remedial English instruction successful. From the students' journals, it was clear that when the students took the active role, English would become much more interesting because the students had chances to express their thoughts. In this process, the students made good use of what they learned and this maximized their understanding. English is not only for tests, but that it is the topics they could discuss and shared with others. Finally, it is suggested that create a support environment for the low-level students. Low-level students have suffered lots of setback when learning English. Remedial instruction features small class size so that the teacher can devote more time on individual student. In that case, low-level students have access to gain help from the teacher once they encounter difficulties. It will increase their willingness to attend to remedial English class.

Facing different low-level students' styles, remedial instruction is always under a state of challenges. Though implementation of remedial instruction confronts difficulties, if done well, low-level students are constantly enlightened to learn based on their readiness level and pick up their interest in English.

Limitations of the Study

Two limitations of the present study are addressed in this section. Since this is action research, limit to one study is useful and the study that does not mean to generalize the result to other contexts. Second, due to time limitation, the three goals of the remedial English class have not be fully achieved. Therefore, it is suggested that the remedial English class starts from the seventh grade so that the students have enough time and opportunities to accomplish their goals.

Suggestions for Future Research

Although the present study was fruitful, further research is still needed to investigate how to design an efficient, interesting and helpful remedial English class for low-level students. Two suggestions are provided for future study. First, to meet the students' different readiness levels and learning styles, more teaching techniques and tasks can be devised and developed to guide low-level students' learning in remedial English class. The second suggestion is that a longer period of study duration is required to examine how remedial English class affect low-level students. With more diverse techniques and longer duration of further study, remedial English class can be a powerful tool to spark low-level students' learning interest and increase their abilities.

Conclusion

This study shows that though both the students and the teacher experienced tough challenges and struggles through the remedial English class, it is clear that designing the class based on the students' readiness level and connecting to their daily lives are

critical. In the process of implementation, revising the course according to the students' reactions and feedback and managing the class well are also needed to make the remedial English class efficiency. Remedial English class, as a feasible way to make low-level students pick up learning, is worth continuing so that it is possible to bridge the gap between the high and low achieving students in Taiwan.





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Appendix A

Questions for the Pre- Remedial English Instruction Interview

1. When did you start learning English? Was it at school or in the cram school?
2. Was your English teacher intimidating or friendly? Did you feel comfortable at English class? Why or why not?
3. Tell me what you remember about the early English class? What made you happy at the time? Could you give me an example?
4. What made you unhappy? Could you give me an example?
5. When you felt confused about the letters, Phonics or KK symbols, did you ask your teacher, classmates, or friends? How did you help yourself to solve the problem?
6. Did you like the English class? Which part was your favorite? Which part depressed you a lot?
7. Did you enjoy learning English with your classmates? Why?
8. How would you describe yourself as an English learner?

Appendix B

Questions for the While- Remedial English Instruction Interview

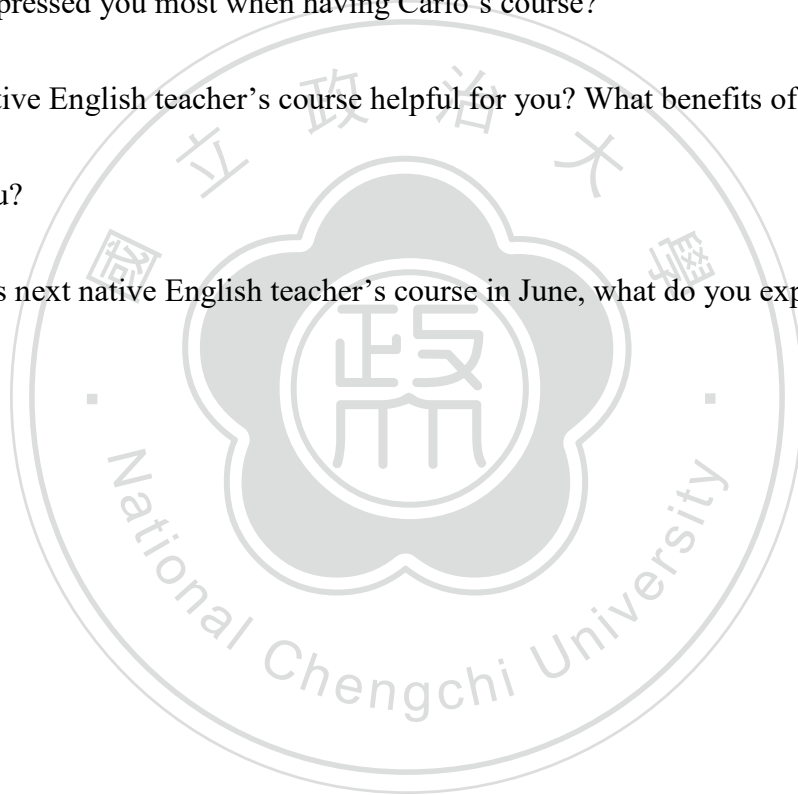
1. Why you participate in the remedial English class?
2. What aspect of language skill you want to improve most? Why?
3. What kind of support do you think the remedial English can offer you?
4. What difficulties have you encountered since you were junior high school student?
5. How do you describe yourself as an English learner?



Appendix C

Questions for After the First Native English Teacher's course Interview

1. How do you think about your oral presentation?
2. How do you think the native English teacher, Carlo's course?
3. Did you have any difficulties when having Carlo's course? What are they?
4. What impressed you most when having Carlo's course?
5. Is the native English teacher's course helpful for you? What benefits of this course bring to you?
6. If there is next native English teacher's course in June, what do you expect it will be?



Appendix D

Questions for the Post Remedial English Instruction Interview After the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students

1. What difficulties do you encounter when taking the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students? How do you deal with these difficulties?
2. Do you think remedial English instruction really help you prepare for the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students? Tell me why you think so.
3. What difficulties do you encounter during the 12-week remedial English instruction? How do you deal with these difficulties?
4. What events impressed you the most during 12-week remedial English instruction?
5. If there is another remedial English class next semester, do you have any suggestion for Alice (the teacher)?
6. After the 12-week remedial English instruction, how do you view yourself as an English learner?

Appendix E

Questions for the Pre-Second Native English Teacher's Course Interview

1. What impressed you most when having the first native English teacher, Carlo's course?
2. What do you think about the oral presentation you did on Carlo's course?
3. What do you expect to learn in the second native English teacher's course?
4. What topic are you interested in and would like to share with the second native English teacher?



Appendix F

Questions for the Post-Second Native English Teacher's Course Interview

1. How do you think the second native English teacher's course?
2. Did you have any difficulties when having the course? What are they?
3. What impressed you most?
4. Is the native English teacher's course helpful for you? What benefits of this course bring to you?



