

AN ESP READING COURSE: METHODS AND MATERIALS

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Chapter One-Introduction

Overview of Issue

In October of 2007, the Indiana Center for Intercultural Communications (ICIC) on the Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) campus began an English for Special Purposes (ESP) program to help facilitate 12 Afghan college instructors' (a 13th student joined the program at the beginning of 2008) achievement in their English language learning goals. The goals of the ESP program in question were to (1) improve the Internet Based Test (IBT) of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores of the students for admission to a U.S. graduate school, and (2) build their English skills up to a level where they can compete at the graduate level through improved proficiencies of the four skills, e.g. writing, listening, speaking, and in particular, reading.

First, they needed to have a sufficient cumulative score of about 75 on the IBT before they would be allowed to transfer to Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, where they would begin preparing for graduate school to acquire their advanced degrees (M.A. or M.S.) in agronomy, agriculture economics, or English. Secondly, the ESP program needed to help them improve the proficiency of their four English skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) so that they could face the demands of higher education in the U.S. and be successful in their pursuits of an advanced degree before returning to Afghanistan.

In February of 2008, they took their first TOEFL in the U.S. and certain material and curriculum changes were deemed necessary to improve their poorest area of performance, reading.

Statement of Problem

A great deal of research literature has been produced on the issues related to ESP reading proficiencies and development (See Bell, 2004; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Kilickaya, 2005; Savvidou, 2004). Supported in this research is the use of authentic materials. They have become commonplace within successful ESP programs, and Kilickaya (2005) defines them as reading materials that “involve language naturally occurring as communication in native-speaker contexts of use, or rather those selected contexts where standard English is the norm [and they may include] real newspaper reports, real magazine articles, real articles...” (2004, p. 1).

Due to the low scores on their February, 2008, IBT reading test, ICIC’s Director, the lead instructor and myself, whose role was the reading and writing instructor, developed new reading initiatives that included authentic materials (books, academic articles, news stories, and short stories) in newly designed activities to improve their performance in class, on the May, 2008, TOEFL, and towards the higher proficiencies required for graduate school. In Figure 1.1, the breakdown of scores highlights the necessity of an improved curriculum design for the reading and writing class for the Afghan students. An IBT TOEFL score of 17 is desirable for each of the four areas. Only students L and D met this standard. Numerous students, five in all, achieved a score of lower than five. When

compared to their performance in the other three areas, listening, speaking and writing, the data is somewhat startling. The cumulative reading score for all 13 students is 113. When compared to the cumulative scores for listening (175), speaking (248), and writing (243), there is between a 62 (listening) point to 135 (speaking) point difference. On average, the students performed well below the 17 threshold with an average reading score of 8.69.

Figure 1.1 Afghan Student Scores for Feb. 2008 IBT TOEFL

Student	Field	Total	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
A	English	75	11	22	22	20
B	English	60	4	14	18	24
C	AgEcon	39	0	8	17	14
D	AgEcon	77	19	18	19	21
E	Agronomy	45	2	8	20	15
F	Agronomy	61	13	8	22	18
G	Agronomy	53	15	3	18	17
H	Agronomy	55	2	18	15	20
I	Agronomy	43	5	6	17	15
J	AgEcon	75	15	17	19	24
K	AgEcon	51	3	8	23	17
L	Agronomy	67	17	14	19	17
M	AgEcon	61	7	14	19	21

Through the supervision and guidance of ICIC's Director and the lead instructor, I began developing three reading project initiatives with authentic materials and further used short stories as authentic materials (further explained in the goals and methods section, Chapter Three) to supplement the program's numerous texts and TOEFL study manuals. Within the design of these reading initiatives, which were founded on authentic materials, a researchable thesis question arose as to whether or not these materials would help the students achieve a greater reading proficiency and academic vocabulary knowledge that would be tested by the final TOEFL in May of 2008. Additionally, I questioned if the design and methods of the reading initiatives would successfully use the authentic materials and be well received by the Afghan students. Thus, this thesis has been developed around these two questions.

Goal

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the success of the authentic reading materials used in the reading initiatives by using comparisons in the February and May, 2008, IBT TOEFL scores, and results from a detailed student questionnaire (See Appendix D). Additionally, the reading initiatives were evaluated by student response data compiled from the questionnaires. The questionnaire data provided student evaluations of the reading initiatives and the rated success of vocabulary building, reading comprehension and speed, knowledge relevance, and authentic materials usage. A summary of the reading initiatives and authentic materials used is summarized in the following paragraphs

to illustrate the work done within the Afghan student program, which is further explained in the Chapter Three.

The first project consisted of reading circle groups. Students participated in groups where weekly a “leader” provided a news and/or academic article package that included pre and post comprehension work, vocabulary, and discussion materials that mimicked authentic teaching methodology mentioned in Chapter Two, the literature review. Leaders would rotate weekly within each group and would get feedback from the instructor on material appropriateness. The goal of the circles was to build vocabulary knowledge, reading speed and comprehension, and open them to a greater view of literature that offers a lot more in the way of local idiomatic language and cultural issues connected to their regular textbooks.

Second, book groups were developed where groups selected biographies related to their fields of study, e.g. agronomy, agriculture economics and English. Over the course of four weeks students completed the books and prepared presentations on key points. The goal was to build knowledge in their field, reading speed, comprehension and academic vocabulary. Furthermore, the extensive reading task opened them to authentic materials of greater length that, perhaps, would be necessary in their graduate research and studies

Third, short stories were utilized in class as part of improving their background in literature, since according to Savvidou, this kind of authentic material allows “learners to explore and interpret the social, political, literary and historical context of a specific text” (2004, p. 3). Additionally, the study of more

complex sentence structures in literature can be found in advance readings and textbooks at the graduate level, and, of course, the reading section of the TOEFL.

Finally, as part of their final writing project they joined specific academic journals provided by Purdue University and IUPUI with a longer academic paper of the problem/solution format that is common with academic papers and TOEFL required essays.

To conclude and reiterate, this thesis will hopefully add to the knowledge, curriculum, and pedagogy of future ICIC programs and to the relatively unexplored area and issues involving the combination of Afghan students, ESP and authentic materials. The results of the work done by myself for the ESP program through these curriculum changes and supplemented authentic materials might offer insight into the workings of a more successful reading and writing curriculum for future ESP programs with Afghan students, but also, other college-level ESP programs. Furthermore, the design of the reading initiatives and related handout materials (See Appendices A through C) may aid future instructors of an ESP program, particularly one with Afghan students. Finally, the results in this thesis can be added to the wealth of knowledge that continues to support authentic materials in teaching English to non-native speakers.

This thesis contains five chapters. Following the introduction, the second chapter of this thesis reviews relevant research to the focus of this thesis. Part of a successful ESP course involves using authentic literature, such as newspapers, academic journals, magazines, fictional works, and so on. Along with research on

materials, the literature review discusses ESP and what methods instructors can use to facilitate the use of these materials in an ESP course.

The third chapter describes the development of the four reading projects for the Afghan student reading and writing class, and how they were created with different authentic materials as the foundation for improving the students' scores for the TOEFL and general improvement of their academic reading and writing skills. Additionally, the chapter describes how a student survey and the different TOEFL reading and writing scores are utilized as an effective means for data analysis.

Chapter Four discusses the data from the TOEFL scores and student survey, and finally correlates the data. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the limitations of the study and provides recommendations for further studies and use of the thesis materials and data.

Chapter Two-Literature Review

English for Specific Purposes Overview

Many considerations are critical in the development of the curriculum and techniques of an ESP reading (and writing) program, e.g. materials, affective factors, and necessary reading strategies that include “skimming and scanning, developing reading speed, intensive reading and building up student’s ability to tolerate uncertainty, access background knowledge to predict linguistic and rhetorical features of texts and develop interpretation skills” (Bell, 1998).

Before looking in on the specifics of reading and writing materials and methods involved in a successful ESP class, the definition and characteristics of ESP need to be elaborated upon. As ESP has come from obscurity since before the 1960s, much has been done to define and clarify the characteristics of this branch of English as a Second Language (ESL). Within the last decade, many have continued the work to set down the characteristics of ESP. Dudley-Evans and St. John may provide the best as they classify ESP (1998) as an approach to language learning over a product. The concern with ESP is what is necessary for the language learner to get out of a language for their particular purpose, in that, language development which may focus on, for example, business, vocational, or academic English; these three examples exist in an ever-growing list. For example, at present, some branches of ESL include English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), and English for Business Purposes (EBP). Thus the learners and context of the language to be used takes precedence over the language. Dudley-Evans and St. John define two

absolute characteristics (1998) that are necessary in the operation of an ESP program:

- ESP is designed with the specific needs of the language learners in mind
- ESP utilizes the activities and methodologies of the learner's discipline (business, trades, college, manufacturing, and so on)

Furthermore, they add four additional optional characteristics:

- ESP is most common with adult learners whose focus is college or areas of business professionals
- ESP has the option of using different methods not used in the teaching of general English
- ESP usually serves intermediate or advanced language learners since a certain proficiency of the language is assumed in most courses
- ESP considers specific disciplines as it develops its curriculum

Authentic Materials

As international students make up a larger number of the students in American universities, the need for ESP programs to improve their pedagogy, classroom materials and methods is stronger than ever. A review of some of the literature that has emerged in the last five years on the ESP classroom has shown a focus of developing reading skills through the addition of newspapers to class literature as viable authentic materials, particular pedagogical focus on utilizing such authentic materials, and corpora and collocation exercises as vocabulary builders.

Authentic materials have become commonplace within successful ESP programs, as well as ESL ones, and Kilickaya (2005) defines them as reading materials that “involve language naturally occurring as communication in native-speaker contexts of use, or rather those selected contexts where standard English is the norm [and they may include] real newspaper reports, real magazine articles,

real articles...” (2004, p. 1). Many kinds of reading materials can be defined as authentic materials, e.g. brochures, pamphlets, advertisements, etc., as long as they expose the language learner to real language that is used within the community that the learner participates in (Kilickaya). To further develop the functions of authentic material, such as newspapers and books in the ESP classroom, five advantages for using these types of authentic materials are worth mentioning (for further details see Philips and Shettlesworth 1978; Clarke 1989; Peacock 1997, cited in Richards, 2001):

- Learner motivation is positively influenced by such material
- Such materials provide authentic and relevant cultural knowledge
- Real language is exposed within the use of the material
- They relate more closely to learners needs than other materials
- They offer a creative vein for educators

Kilickaya further argues for authentic materials to include local newspapers, because “successful language learning requires language learners to know that culture underlying language in order to get the meaning across” (2004, p. 3). He further argues this point when he cites Shanahan (1997, p. 168) with saying “cultural content provides exposure to [a] living language that a foreign student lacks.” Once reading material has been decided upon for a specific ESL course, the next step is to invest time into deciding what approach to take towards pulling all the benefits out of the text.

English for Specific Purposes Methodology

Many kinds of authentic materials for the ESP or ESL classroom have been developed; therefore, many decisions have to be made when considering what kinds of authentic materials are best, and more importantly, how they should

be received by the students. Theoretically, three distinct approaches have emerged in the span of the last three decades that have great relevance to the strategies that may be used to help students get a handle on many types of authentic materials in the classroom, such as novels, poetry, and of course, newspaper articles, columns and editorial works.

The Cultural Model

According to Savvidou, this traditional approach requires “learners to explore and interpret the social, political, literary and historical context of a specific text” (2004, p. 3).

The fallback to this model is that it is one that is not considered reliable by certain ESL organizations such as TEFL. This is due to the fact that it is teacher-centered and does not allow for continued work beyond the initial text and exercises as described by Savvidou (2004).

The Language Model

Carter and Long (1991) refer to this model as the ‘language-based approach.’ Currently, it is the most popular of approaches in the ESP classroom. It enables the student to access “a text in a systematic and methodical way in order to exemplify specific linguistic features e.g. literal and figurative language, direct and indirect speech. This approach lends itself well to the repertoire of strategies used in language teaching, [such as the] cloze procedure, [the] prediction exercise, jumbled sentences, summary writing, creative writing and role play” (Savvidou, p. 3).

This model is highly debated by Carter and McRae (1996). They believe that this approach is 'reductive.' In other words, the activities in association to the model create "activities that are disconnected from the literary goals of the specific text in that they can be applied to any text. There is little engagement of the learner (p. 8)," they continue, "with the text other than for purely linguistic practice; literature is used in a rather purposeless and mechanistic way in order to provide a series of language activities orchestrated by the teacher" (Savvidou, 2004; also see Carter and McRae 1996).

The Personal Growth Model

The final model acts as a chain to bring together the previous models. Here, "the focus is on the particular use of language in a text, as well as placing it in a specific cultural context" (Savvidou, p. 3). In essence, the ESP readers of the literature express their own affective response to the text. Additionally, the personal and cultural feelings that the text evokes are applied to those that are part of the text. Then, students can compare and contrast their personal and cultural emotional responses against those of the text. Thus, they are connecting to the author's work in a meaningful, motivational way that enables four skills acquisition through reader interaction that can not be easily found in the mechanical approach of The Language Model or the teacher centered Cultural Model.

To add credence that the final method is the most beneficial model of the three, this paper looks to Duff and Maley (1990). According to them, there are three reasons for integration of all three methods. According to Duff and Maley,

three elements of the three models make for a successful integrated model for teaching literature: linguistic, methodological, and motivational. For the first element, ESP readers need to be exposed to “a variety of types and difficulties of English language. For the second method, they report that “literary discourse connects readers to the processes of reading” (1990) by the use of background information and different reading strategies e.g. intensive and extensive.

Furthermore, along with applying this blended model against a literature curriculum in use, they offer the following teaching method steps for the classroom:

Stage 1---Preparation and Anticipation

The main meanings of the text are made accessible by utilizing the language learner’s schema.

Stage 2---Focusing

Specific content is focused on by listening and reading experiences.

Stage 3---Preliminary Response

Learners give their first reaction to the text by written or oral presentations.

Stage 4---Working at it, I

First level of comprehension is developed.

Stage 5---Working at it, II

Deeper level analysis is conducted for “exploring how the message(s) is conveyed through overall structure and any special uses of language---rhythm, imagery, word choice etc” (Duff and Maley, 1990, p. 13).

Stage 6---Interpretation and Personal Response

The Personal Growth Model is evident in this final stage (Duff and Maley, 1990). Here, understanding is made more extensive as learners find pleasure in their connection with the text. Through their own interpretation of the text, understanding is enhanced as are the positive feelings that the text evokes in the reader.

To utilize the benefits put forth by newspapers as authentic materials, pedagogy connected to literature usage in the classroom, and collocation/corpora vocabulary builders, all of which are supported by the literature review, a set of lessons covering a two-week period will be developed to exemplify these three components and introduced into the Afghan students' reading class curriculum.

Chapter Three-Methodology

Introduction

Upon the Afghan students' completion of the first TOEFL exam conducted in the U.S. on February of 2008, it became obvious that they needed additional projects that focused on reading authentic materials to help improve their reading skills and scores. Figure 1.2 shows that the students' reading scores for the February TOEFL averaged 8.538 compared to the pre-departure TOEFL in August of 2007 which averaged 3.454. Due to the fact that each of the four skills has a scale of 0 to 30 on the IBT, comparisons between the four skills was possible. While there was a five point increase, the second reading score was significantly lower compared to the speaking and writing averages which were 19.079 and 18.692, respectively. The listening score rated noticeably higher with 12.153. The median score for the August test was three. The February test which came in at a median score of seven showed a small increase. Of the four skill scores for the February test, it was deemed necessary by the ESP instructors and Director of ICIC that methods and materials for the reading and writing class needed further development and focus. While the listening scores were comparably low to the reading scores, the necessity of improvement in reading curriculum was of greater importance due to the nature of the skills. Listening is an acquired skill that benefits and improves by being in an English setting. Thus, planned and unplanned interactions with spoken English are likely to strengthen this skill with or without instruction. However, reading is a learned skill that demands constant focus and diligence. Due to these factors, greater emphasis was

placed upon addressing the reading and writing class. From this point, the instructors developed a number of projects with authentic materials to help improve students' reading skills (e.g. comprehension, speed, academic vocabulary, strategies, etc.) to bring the students near to the desired 17 point score, but also their overall TOEFL score and to help improve the reading proficiency that would be critical for them to tackle the reading demands of a U.S. graduate school. Thus, through these developments in the reading component of the program, a research question was born: how much, if any, could these projects with their methods and materials help these particular, relatively unstudied language learners improve their reading skills and scores? Hence, this thesis has been able to focus on the reading projects and authentic materials specifically for Afghan students in an ESP program influenced by research in methods and authentic materials supported by many in the ESL research community (see Kilickaya, 2004; Richards, 2001; Shanahan, 1997). Furthermore, the proficiency of the projects towards these improvements was testable through the Afghan students' final TOEFL test score and an in-depth questionnaire that focused on these students rating reading skills successes for each of the projects.

Figure 1.2 Afghan Student TOEFL Scores for August, February and May

TOEFL score report
Afghan Ss 11/08-06/08

Student	Date	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Total
1 A	8/10/2007	0	5	15	11	31
	2/8/2008	17	14	19	17	67
	5/16/2008	10	18	23	17	68
2 B	8/10/2007	5	12	18	15	50
	2/15/2008	13	8	22	18	61
	5/16/2008	9	12	22	18	61
3 C	8/10/2007	2	5	9	11	27
	2/15/2008	0	8	17	14	39
	5/16/2008	6	14	20	18	58
4 D	8/10/2007	1	14	15	11	41
	2/15/2008	2	8	20	15	45
	5/3/2008	19	20	19	20	78
5 E	8/10/2007	1	7	14	10	32
	2/15/2008	15	3	18	17	53
	5/16/2008	9	6	19	15	49
6 F	8/10/2007	4	1	18	15	38
	2/15/2008	3	8	23	17	51
	5/16/2008	1	20	17	20	58
7 G	8/10/2007	1	16	17	15	49
	2/15/2008	19	18	19	21	77
8 H	2/15/2008	4	14	18	24	60
	5/16/2008	17	12	22	15	66
9 I	8/10/2007	3	1	17	12	33
	2/15/2008	7	14	19	21	61
	5/16/2008	17	25	18	18	78
10 J	8/10/2007	13	14	19	17	63
	2/8/2008	15	17	19	24	75
	5/3/2008	19	20	22	18	79
11 K	8/10/2007	3	6	17	18	44
	2/15/2008	2	18	15	20	55
	5/3/2008	20	20	22	22	84
12 L	2/15/2008	11	22	22	20	75
	5/3/2008	13	17	22	22	74
13 M	8/10/2007	5	1	13	11	30
	2/15/2008	5	6	17	15	43
	5/3/2008	4	15	20	18	57

Projects with Authentic Materials

According to Kilickaya (2005) “authentic materials involve language naturally occurring as communication in native-speaker contexts of use, or rather those selected contexts where affective factors and necessary reading strategies

are included” (p. 12). Thereby, since an ESP course depends upon the language needs of its clients, in this case, the Afghan students, projects were developed and authentic material selected on the fundamental basis to provide reading development improvement, and thus increasing reading speed, vocabulary and comprehension for the time-restricted TOEFL exam. Furthermore, with the language expectations of graduate school and the Afghan students’ specific fields of study connecting them to such language goals was facilitated through materials that were genuine to the language and research that the Afghan students would most likely be expected to know at the graduate level and to their field in particular. Thus, authentic materials to these Afghan students included topic connected news articles, internet research and academic articles, book-length texts on familiar topics, grammar-building literature, and so on. The following pages show diagrams of each project and summarize their specific authentic materials, design and goals. Additionally, Appendixes A, B and C are the actual project handouts that the Afghan students followed. Furthermore, they are included for future instructors of an ESP program with Afghan students, or for any ESP program which may want to use them in-class and/or for research.

The materials for each project are considered as authentic since each adheres to Bell’s (1998) assertions that authentic materials are not for the purpose of teaching language, but use language in a genuine, natural way to pass on knowledge to a general or specific readership. Compounding upon the authentic literature rule, the materials were made more meaningful since they served an integrated curriculum approach, in that projects, language skills, and class

boundaries became blurred as the projects reached into many or all parts of the program and into the necessary skill improvements for graduate programs and the TOEFL exam. This can be seen in the topics for the projects, in that exercises in the listening and speaking class were contacted by topic to the projects, and textbook topics were also focused upon in the projects. Thus, their meaningfulness became more apparent to the Afghan students in their effort to reach their language learning and graduate school preparation goals. Additionally, the authentic materials and the structured projects made it easier for developing data sources, along with the TOEFL scores, and have allowed this thesis to document the methods and materials for future use and research.

Project I: Reading Circles

Authentic Materials: News and academic articles from such online sites as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and library article databases such as InfoTrac.

Goals:

- 1) Online research for relevant and appropriate materials related to the integrated topics that are current in both classes will allow students to genuinely connect to authentic materials that are utilized beyond the project itself to make the work more beneficial through its usefulness in a number of avenues.
- 2) The material itself opens students up to new lexicon, grammatical structures, and colloquial language. By using it in a structured, integrated project, students can control their language learning and actually teach

these materials which have a number of positive emotional influences, such as motivation and self-esteem.

Design: Afghan students were put into groups of 3 or 4. Before each week a new leader in each group selected academic and/or news articles for the group members to read and discuss on a designated day. Leaders got approval of articles through communication with the reading and writing instructor on length and appropriateness. On the day of the circles, leaders taught the articles by presenting pre-reading, academic tasks, and schemata. Following the reading of the articles, the groups worked on comprehension tasks and critical analysis through discussions. Finally, groups presented their materials to the whole class and gave feedback on each group's materials.

Project II: Book Club

Authentic Materials: Selected biographies about American and English persons of influence to the fields of study for the Afghan students. Biographies had to be between 100 and 300 pages. Historical people in the project included: John Deere, Noam Chomsky, Mendel, and so forth.

Goals:

- 1) The reading of much longer works of non-fiction is built upon the belief that reading speed will increase since the schedules for reading these books amounts to around 20 pages per day, and that would be highly beneficial to the timed TOEFL exams.
- 2) Furthermore, the students will naturally increase comprehension of these authentic materials just by the additional reading work.

- 3) Students can build academic vocabulary as they are exposed to language that will be relevant to them in their graduate studies.
- 4) Finally, students will be conditioned to the greater load of reading that is expected of graduate students in the U.S.

Design: As part of an integration between speaking, listening and reading work, Afghan students selected biographies written in English on people who have had a great influence on the Afghan students' chosen fields of graduate study (e.g. English, agronomy, agriculture economics). Working in pairs Afghan students developed study group skills as they stuck with an instructor approved schedule to the completion of reading the books. After three weeks, the Afghan students presented PowerPoint presentations on the significant points they examined from each work. Additionally, groups were assigned to develop questions for panel discussions of other group's biographies.

Project III: Final Project

Authentic Materials: Academic articles related to fields of study. Purdue University and IUPUI provided databases with articles in the fields of linguistics, agronomy and economics.

Goals:

- 1) This integrated project is relevant and motivational since it supports language learning and academic leaning goals.
- 2) Students continue to improve those basic, but critical reading skills.
- 3) Additionally, it supports their writing skills as they produce graduate-level research papers.

- 4) The authentic materials are to be highly motivational and relevant since they are likely to be topics they already have some background knowledge on, and they are likely to be something they will use in future research projects at graduate school.

Design: As part of a longer problem/solution paper, the Afghan students were to research the databases for larger global topics (e.g. world food supply, Global Warming and crop production, language acquisition, and so on), and once collected, use the materials as supporting research in their papers. In addition to these papers, the Afghan students presented their findings and research to the class on the day that papers were to be turned in.

Project IV: Short Fiction

Authentic Materials: Short fiction for class reading work. Such work included short modern American fiction and fairy tales.

Goals:

- 1) By using these authentic materials, students gain cultural knowledge of the U.S. and its literary tradition.
- 2) In addition to introducing students to the more complicated sentence structures and embedded meanings of fiction, they have access to colloquial language and metaphor that is an important part of the English language.
- 3) Finally, their literature teaching exercises for the projects have a method example in which they can mimic and examine.

Design: In addition to the reading materials provided in the various texts for the program, short fiction was to be utilized to improve reading skills. Of the four projects, this one allowed the instructors to use their own teaching methodology which followed Carter and Long's (1991) Language-Based Method for the instruction of literature. Consistent with the texts' reading exercises, instructors applied pre-reading knowledge and language development along with supporting the Afghan students' schemata. After reading the material, comprehension knowledge and meaning understanding were highlighted by well designed methods and tasks.

Data

At the end of the program in May of 2008, the Afghan students retook the TOEFL exam. This score along with the previous two constitutes the first part of the data for this thesis. The TOEFL scores provide a viable, quantifiable means in which to score their reading skills necessary for graduate school. Additionally, the "outside" scoring allowed for a greater impartiality of data for analysis.

Next, data were collected from an in-depth Afghan student survey given to them at the end of the program. The survey is broken into four parts. Each part represents a project and eight to ten questions that were asked in each section. The questions were repetitive for each section and consisted of their ranking of how each project and its authentic materials helped or did not help them towards improving such things as reading comprehension, reading speed, vocabulary development, TOEFL reading scores, academic reading towards graduate school, and so forth. In addition to these responses, which coincided with a numerical

score, the Afghan students were asked to provide written feedback on any response they deemed necessary. This would be beneficial in helping to explain the Afghan students' scores towards certain answers or sections, and would allow them to "speak" within the thesis' data analysis to the writer and reader, and thus further enriching its purpose and goals.

Analysis

First, I chose to average and evaluate the three TOEFL scores to see what improvements occurred with the Afghan students' reading scores. Particular attention was paid to the February and May scores since these two came before and after the reading projects with authentic materials were utilized. The expectation of the projects influence on those scores would be shown in an overall larger increase in scores for the whole class as compared to the February, and pre-departure TOEFL reading scores.

Second, the Afghan students' feedback on the materials and projects was deemed very necessary as to provide not just quantitative data, such as the TOEFL scores could provide, but also qualitative data that would enrich the thesis results with the Afghan students' opinions to the successes and weaknesses of the projects and their related methods and materials. The Afghan student survey was developed and given on the final day of class in May. The survey consists of four sections representing the four projects. Each section is repetitive in most questions to provide consistency. This approach made the results comparable. The survey answers were tallied for each Afghan student and then broken down into sections, and then further examined by questions for each section. Once this was

completed, student scores were compared with each other to gain insight into the Afghan students' rankings of projects, and how each either positively or negatively influenced the different reading skills and TOEFL reading scores.

Finally, the last TOEFL reading scores from May of 2008 were correlated with the overall Afghan student scores for the survey. The effort here was to see if any patterning existed for the Afghan students' low or high scores on the exam with negative or positive responses on the survey.

Chapter Four-Summary of Results

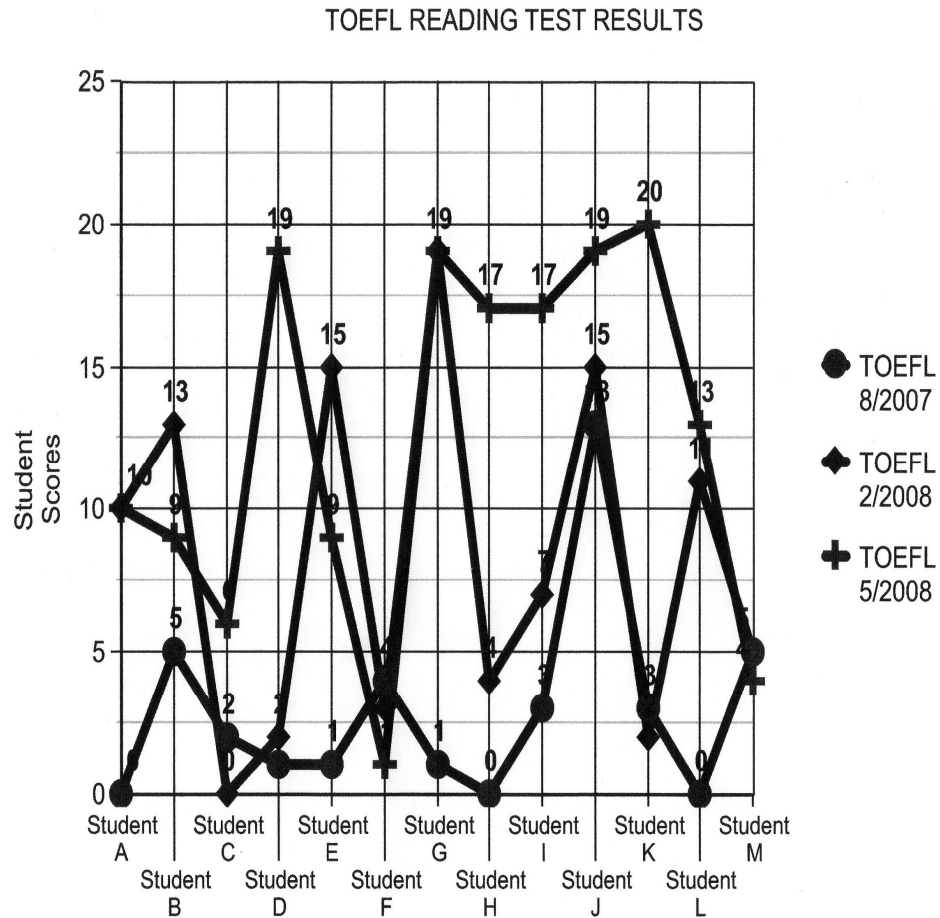
The goal of this thesis was to determine if additional authentic materials used in a variety of projects between the February and May TOEFL exams for the Afghan students would help improve their scores in the reading component of the TOEFL and evaluate their opinions about the authentic materials and the projects and methods that were related. In addition to three TOEFL exam scores, data were collected from an Afghan student survey (see Appendix D) at the end of the Afghan student program in May, before their departure to Purdue University. It was designed to gather data into the opinions of the 13 Afghan students as to whether the authentic materials were perceived helpful when it came to improving such things as reading speed, comprehension, academic vocabulary, and TOEFL reading test results. Furthermore, the survey continued to collect responses on issues that the TOEFL scores could not provide data for, such as qualitative data in the form of written responses on a number of reading skills issues in the program. Part of this thesis also looked at the methods in which the authentic materials were introduced into and utilized for in the program. Afghan student responses were tallied as a whole, but also recorded separately for each of the four projects that utilized different authentic materials.

The first analysis of data to possibly show the impact of authentic materials and the related projects came from looking at the Afghan students' TOEFL scores. The Afghan students took three TOEFL exams at different times: the first in August of 2007 before the beginning of the program in October, the second in February of 2008, and the final one in May of 2008 before their

departure in June to Purdue University. The Afghan students' scores (as seen in Figure 1.2) for the February TOEFL reading score averaged 8.538 compared to the pre-departure TOEFL in August of 2007 which averaged 3.454. While there was a five point increase, the second score was significantly lower compared to the speaking and writing averages which were 19.079 and 18.692, respectively. The final reading score from May averaged 13.909, an important 5.371 gain. While the pre-departure scores have been included, the focus will be on the last two TOEFL exams, since the authentic materials and projects were introduced following the February TOEFL due to the Afghan students' low reading scores.

Initially with the analysis of the TOEFL scores, it was hoped that great gains would exist in the scores to support the beneficial use of the additional authentic materials. As it can be seen in Figure 1.3, 6 out of the 13 Afghan students, nearly half, made improvements in their reading scores.

Figure 1.3 Afghan Student TOEFL Reading Score for All Three Tests



On average, these Afghan students made a 10 point improvement.

Considering that 17 points are desired to pass each skill section of the TOEFL (reading, writing, speaking and listening) this improvement allowed for five of the six to meet the cut off. A seventh Afghan student, student G, already had a score of 19 for both their February and May scores.

However, while about half, 6 out of 13, were above the 17 point cutoff, the remaining six remained without the desired minimum score. Furthermore, four actually had scores lower than their previous scores. On average, these Afghan

students scored about four points lower on their May test in comparison to their February one.

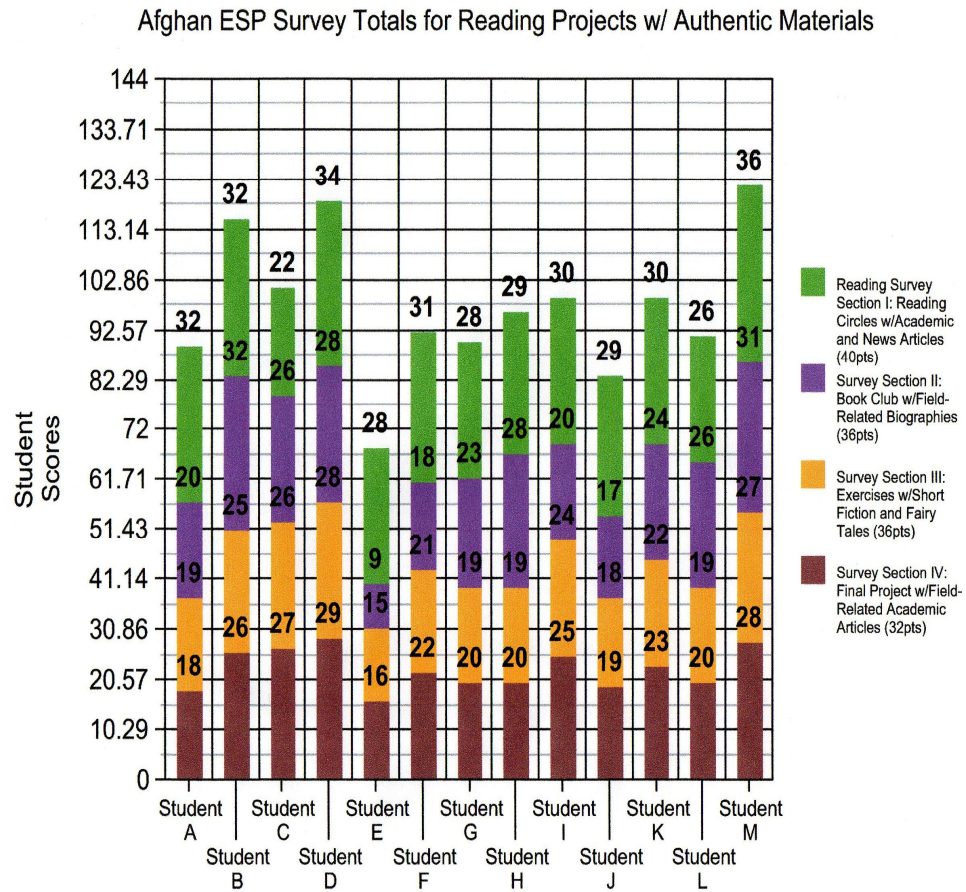
While the TOEFL exam analysis results are mixed to the implications of the four projects and their authentic materials aid in improving the final TOEFL exam's reading scores, the extensive data from the Afghan student survey is more clear as to how and to what extent the Afghan students believed the use of authentic materials improved their reading skills, both overall and for the TOEFL. Additionally, their results showed how the materials and the supporting projects changed their perception to what works favorably as authentic materials in an Afghan student ESP program and what does not.

In Figure 1.4, the totals for each Afghan student's survey have been calculated, and each section or projects total scores are also shown and tallied. Out of a total of 144 points, a rating scale has been produced for evaluating the Afghan student responses in the survey. Similar to a university grading scale, the survey responses are graded according to the following scale: 144-115 Excellent, 115-86 Good, 86-57 Average, 57-28 Below Average, 28-0 Failing. Additionally, the Afghan students' scores for each section or project with its specific authentic materials are separated and illustrated in the graph by individual section scores and color coding. For a further break down of the scores on the question level, see Appendixes E through N.

In Figure 1.4, Afghan students scoring the projects with authentic materials as "excellent," or between 144-115 points, equaled 3 out of 13. Those ranking the projects as "good," or between 86-57 points, in improving such things

as reading speed, comprehension, academic vocabulary, and perceived TOEFL reading score improvement included 8 out of 13 Afghan students, an obvious majority.

Figure 1.4 Afghan Student Questionnaire Results



The remaining two rated the projects and material as “average,” or between 86-57 points. A “below average” rating equaled 57-28 points, whereas a “failing” rating equaled 28-0 points.

Thus, overall, the Afghan students responded favorably to the projects and their usage of various authentic materials. To which projects and materials the

Afghan students favored more highly than others, a further breakdown of their survey scores was warranted.

From a breakdown in the survey responses, 92 percent, 12 out of 13, reported a rating of good to excellent for the weekly reading circles (see Appendix E) which included student chosen academic and news articles. Next, for the final project (see Appendix H) that included academic articles from databases related to their field of study (e.g. agronomy, literature, agriculture economics) 77 percent, 10 out of 13, reported good to excellent. On the other end of the spectrum, only 62 percent rated the book club (see Appendix F) with field-related biographies as good to excellent. Finally, the Afghan students reported the use of short fiction and fairy tales (see Appendix G) as the most unfavorable of the four with only 46 percent, 6 out of 13, rated the materials as good to excellent when it comes to improving reading skills for the TOEFL and graduate school.

In addition to the quantitative components of the survey, the Afghan students were able to provide comments for any or all of the questions. This is helpful to a greater understanding of their numerical responses to each of the four projects.

Figure 1.5 has categorized both the positive and negative responses that the Afghan students wrote in the questionnaire. Of the 104 comments, 66 were positive in nature while 38 were negative.

Figure 1.5 Afghan Students Written Responses on Questionnaire

Reading Circles	Book Club	Stories Fairytales	Final Project
FI: 6 BU: 1	FI: 2 BU: 1	FI: 0 BU: 3	FI: 8 BU: 1
HRF: 1 NMH: 0	NRF: 0 HMH: 1	NRF: 5 HMH: 4	NRF: 0 HMH: 0
MN: 2 HU: 2	MN: 2 HU: 3	MN: 6 HU: 4	MN: 1 HU: 1
MP: 9 HVRS: 8	MP: 6 HVRS: 5	MP: 3 HVRS: 1	MP: 8 HVRS: 10

Codes: Negative: BU=Boring or Uninteresting NRF=Not Related to Field

NMH=Not Much Help MN=Miscellaneous Negative HU=Hard to Understand

Positive: FI=Fun and Interesting HVRS=Helped Vocabulary and Reading Skills

MP=Miscellaneous Positive

The most interesting responses are the majority of negative ones for short fiction and fairy tales. Thus, these responses are contrary to Carter and Long (1991) and Savvidou's (2004) belief that literature, creative literature, is highly desirable for language learners since it is engaging, culturally relevant, and able to develop an understanding of deeper sentence structures. However, the Afghan students' responses were highly critical; the Afghan students reported the literature to be "not relevant," "boring," "too difficult," and "not important to my field of study." Obviously, there is justification for further research into the use of short fiction in an ESP program such as this one. However, that is further addressed in the implications section.

The final analysis of data deals with a correlation study of the final TOEFL exam (Fig. 1.1) and the Afghan students' overall scoring of projects in the survey (Fig. 1.4). Using Aiken's Correlation Method the two sets of scores

were correlated with the result of a minus .083 correlation. This result does not support a connection between the results of the final TOEFL score and the Afghan students' tallied responses to the questionnaire. In other words, a positive score on the TOEFL reading section did not necessarily equal a positive response on the questionnaire and vice versa. Thus, no correlation exists between the two.

While, on the whole, the Afghan student's reading scores improved, and the survey results were mostly positive, it is not justifiable to conclude that the four projects were completely successful in helping improve the TOEFL reading scores and reading skills necessary for a U.S. graduate school. Due to the fact that neither a pattern of high TOEFL reading scores with high survey scores nor a pattern of low TOEFL reading scores with a low survey scores exist, the success of the four projects can not be supported by the final TOEFL reading scores in May, 2008. The implications of this are discussed in Chapter Five. However, to preface the chapter, more research is needed, and future ESP instructors should look at the projects critically if they consider them for their own use and classes.

Chapter Five-Limitations and Recommendations

Limitations

While the thesis data relied heavily on an elaborate Afghan student survey and very representative iBT TOEFL test results, it is apparent that certain limitations have reduced the strength of the meanings in the testable data.

First, while it is likely from the TOEFL test results that the projects and materials helped a number of Afghan students improve their scores, it is also likely that they would have made certain improvements through their regular test preparation class work in the program. How much of an impact it made with those Afghan students that showed improvement is not exactly certain. Considering that other factors affect test taking (e.g. affective, motivational, personal, environmental), the TOEFL scores of those Afghan students who slightly improved, stayed the same, or got worse may not truly be representative of their true reading skills at the time of the test.

Next, the number in the program and the data from them used in this research project only represents a small number. It is not certain that this group could be representative of other or future Afghan student groups taking a similar ESP course for the purposes of improving TOEFL exam results and preparing for graduate school in the U.S.

Finally, the individual plays, if not the most, one of the most important roles when it comes to the performance in acquiring a second language, such as English. The Afghan students' outside stimulations, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, perceptions of the target language, and language learning goals, all which can be

negative or positive towards language acquisition, can be things that are beyond the reach of the ESP instructor to manipulate and capitalize on fully.

Recommendations

The four projects and their authentic materials were specifically designed to fit the needs of the Afghan students to help them with TOEFL reading scores and reading skills related to their future work within their respective graduate programs. However, these projects and materials could easily be suited for other ESP, ESL and EFL programs.

As English continues to grow as the mode in which to communicate in business, academics, politics and a variety of arenas, it seems feasible that the use of ESP programs for English language learners will continue to grow. As educators work to develop programs that fulfill the needs of their “customers” it will continue to be likely that authentic materials will be a critical component in the success of those programs. The projects here and their related authentic materials not only support the claim of the importance of such materials, but provide more in the wealth of rich methods and materials for educators to look at as a potentiality in their own English language programs as authentic materials are needed to improve reading skills and motivate the learners; these materials connect them to the language they need to utilize for their own specific purposes.

Furthermore, since it is likely that the Afghan student program will be continued at IUPUI, the work done here will hopefully be worthy as a guide for the future ESP instructors for this program. It would be well to see how the reading projects used and examined in this program and research project will

perform in future classes of Afghan students in an ESP program at IUPUI. Such an endeavor could hopefully provide future evidence to what works best as authentic materials with these learners specifically, and what findings within the work of this research project could further be strengthened with additional data. One such area is the use of fictional stories and fairytales. While researchers in the field continue to support such use in language learning (see Savvidou, 2004; Carter and Long, 1991), from the contrary responses of the Afghan students, greater consideration is needed by the educator, and further research into these kinds of authentic materials with Afghan students in an ESP program is warranted since it could not be adequately examined in this research project.

Appendix A-Reading Project Handout for Students

READING CIRCLE (GUIDELINES)

PURPOSE

- To give you the opportunity to select your own readings and gain experience in making your own materials for discussion.
- To give you practice in leading group discussions.

Every week you will gather with your “reading circle” group to critically read and discuss a 1-2 page article in class.

THE GROUP LEADER

- ◆ Within your reading circle, the *group leader* will rotate every session.
- ◆ The group leader for the week is responsible for:
 - 1) Selecting the 4-8 page reading.
 - 2) Email me the link to the article so I can review it before each leader begins preparing the article for the group. You can begin preparing once I email you with approval.
 - 3) Provide me with a 1-page summary.
 - 4) Preparing a vocabulary list of 10-15 difficult words/phrases, underlining the words in the article, and providing a definition and part of speech.
 - 5) Creating 10 questions (5 comprehension and 5 discussion questions) to facilitate the reading circle in-class discussion.
 - 6) Providing copies of all materials for each member in your reading circle (and me).
 - 7) Turning in 1 copy of ALL materials to me one class session before your reading circle meets.
 - 8) Leading and monitoring the discussion of your article among your group members.

IN-CLASS READING AND DISCUSSION

***** The leader is completely responsible for facilitating the reading circle activity.**

- 1) The leader passes out materials and gives a brief explanation of the article.

- 2) All members then read the article. While reading, be sure to mark difficult vocabulary and areas of the text that are difficult to understand. Individually, members should write down answers to the comprehension questions provided by the leader.
- 3) The leader goes over the vocabulary list and members raise questions they may have concerning the text.
- 4) The leader checks answers to the comprehension questions.
- 5) Finally, the group answers and discusses the discussion questions provided by the leader.

THE READINGS

- ◆ Consider the reading ability of your group when selecting articles. The article should be academic and challenging, but not so difficult that your group members will struggle to understand the content.
- ◆ Some examples of resources where you can find readings – newspapers, magazines, the internet, textbooks, etc.

READING CIRCLE LEADER DATES:

Unit 7: CRIME: Global versus Local	W 3/12	1. 2. 3. 4.
Unit 7: CRIME: Causes and Solutions	W 3/19	1. 2. 3. 4.
Unit 8: Punishment: Juveniles	W 3/26	1. 2. 3. 4.
Unit 8: Punishment: Capital Punishment	W 4/2	1. 2. 3. 4.

Appendix B-Book Club Handout for Students

Book Club Handout

The more you read, the better your reading skills become. Therefore, in the coming months, we will be reading more and more. Book Reading Groups will be one of the ongoing activities we will be doing.

Purpose/Goals:

- The additional readings (including biographies, historical non-fiction, essays, and world fiction) will raise your background knowledge in your given field of graduate studies.
- You will improve your reading skills and comprehension for TOEFL and graduate level work.
- You will have a greater awareness of the many forms of literature.
- Your reading speed will improve.
- Hopefully, you will develop a general love of reading!

Groups:

The following are the groups that we have assigned to work together. To the best of our ability, we have paired people according to their proximity (closeness) so that if there is only one copy of a book available, students living together will have greater access to the copy. Hopefully, you will also be able to discuss the book daily with your partner. Additionally, we paired students with the same academic focus, i.e. agriculture is with agriculture and linguistics is with linguistics. They are the following:

A:

B:

C:

D:

E:

F:

Selection and Reading Information:

Our first genre of literature is *biographies*. Each pair of students will choose a biography that is around **150-300 pages** to read together. We have come up with a list of some important people within agriculture and linguistics that you may have learned about or you might learn about in your future studies at Purdue University. We have included people on the list whose biographies are available at the IUPUI Library. Since there is only one copy of many of these books in the library, each pair must choose a different book. Also, as mentioned, you will probably need to share books with your partner. (It may be possible to find additional copies of your chosen book in other libraries in Indianapolis or to request an additional copy be sent from another IU library if possible). You can search for and choose biographies not listed, but all books must be approved by me before you can begin reading.

On Monday of next week, I need a reading schedule from each group. On it, list how many pages each partner plans on reading each night and when you expect to be completed (this must be done by the beginning of the third week (4/14/2008-4/16/2008)). Because you will probably be sharing a book with your partner, *this reading schedule needs to be followed as closely as possible*. Respect your reading partner's scheduled reading time and be sure that the book is available to them.

I will check in with each group twice a week, about every three days, to see how you are keeping on track with the work.

Presentation and Panel Discussion Information:

Reading the books is only one part of the assignment. On 4/16/2008 and 4/18/2008, the pairs will be giving 15-minute presentations on their biographies. So, once the reading is complete, pairs need to prepare a presentation on the key knowledge that comes from their text and be able to competently discuss it. There will be three presentations per day.

Additionally, pairs will be joined by other pairs for panel discussions. After each group gives its presentation, about 10 minutes will be set aside for a panel (another group) to ask questions of the presenting group. Each panel group needs to get some basic background information about the person that their assigned presentation group is reading about. This can be done with online encyclopedias and brief articles that cover the book's topic. The panel group should come to the presentation with a number of questions. They should not be "yes/no" questions. To test comprehension, questions might be in the WH-form: How has John Deere's inventions changed crop production results and the size of the farm? What did the poetry of William Wordsworth do for working class people? The questions should encourage *thoughtful, in-depth* responses. However, do not think that this is a competition or quiz and that the questions should be too difficult. Then again, they should not be too easy, either.

The groups have been paired so that each group will be the panel of the other. Thus: A and B will prepare questions for each other, as will C--D, and E--F.

Overall Schedule:

Week I (3/31/2008-4/4/2008): Today we will discuss this new activity in reading so everyone understands what needs to be done. By Friday, the pairs need to have selected a book and obtained it. Once decided, the pairs must get approval from me before starting to read.

Week II (4/7/2008-4/11/2008): On Monday, give me a brief reading schedule for your group, and what your work schedule will be for the presentation in the 3rd week.

Week III (4/14/2008-4/18/2008): You should have the reading complete by the beginning of this week, so that you can prepare for the presentations and panel discussions. Wednesday and Friday will be for presentations, so be prepared! Reading circle work will be done on Tuesday instead of Wednesday of this week.

Final word: We believe this will be an enjoyable, active, helpful activity to help you all in a number of ways. Our intentions are to continue this until you leave for PU. So, once the TOEFL exam is done on the fourth week of this month we will start with another list of books. To help make this very successful, your feedback is very welcome. So, with all this said, "Good Luck and Good Reading!"

Appendix C-Final Project Handout for Students

Final Project and Problem/Solution Paper Handout

Goal

This project combines your argumentative paper with readings related to your field of study. Since you all will be going on to Purdue University to tackle graduate work in Agriculture Economics, Agronomy, or Linguistics, you need to further broaden your knowledge of this kind of academic paper writing and its style, and gain greater knowledge of the issues and vocabulary that you may be confronted with in the coming year. It is our hope that this project, with help and feedback by your instructors and fellow-Afghan students, will help you with the writing styles of problem/solution papers, research, use of sources materials and citation, building a larger pool of vocabulary both general academic and specific to your field, group project cooperation, presentation skills, reading proficiencies, critical thinking and judgment, and dealing with issues that face many people in the world.

Paper

By the 23rd of this month, you will need to have completed a 6-8 page paper. This paper needs to be 12-point Times type, and double-spaced. Additionally, you need your name at the top of each page as a header and a separated work cited page must be attached with at least five resources. Anything else will not be accepted and must be redone before submitting. If you need help, your instructors are more than happy to help. It is a problem/solution paper. Thus, it is encouraged that you have a paper format that reflects this. There are many ways of designing such a paper:

- 1) Introduction to problem---solution and proof of its viability---conclusion
- 2) Introduction to problem---one solution---a second solution with proof of its superiority over the first and backing by the paper's author---conclusion
- 3) Introduction of problem---three (or so) solutions---evaluation of each (the good and bad)---endorsement of one---conclusion

There are many ways of doing this paper, but I suggest that you consider 2 or 3. These instill critical thinking within the research and paper. Critical thinking is a very large part of the U.S. college atmosphere, and something that you will need to master as graduate students. Finally, remember that information and data must be used in citation form in your paper from at least five articles. This is very important! Research is necessary in college papers. Using other authors' key information and data to support your claims and illustrate points is a must for good college writing. I will be counting how many resources you use in your paper. Less than five and it needs to be redone! Some resources you may use very little as citation in your paper, while others are more important and used greatly.

Presentation

On the 29th and 30th of this month, students will provide a brief 10 minute presentation on their paper. PowerPoint is encouraged as part of the presentation

since it is common in graduate presentations. During the presentation discuss the issue (s) that you chose and the solution(s) it seeks to prove or debunk.

Resources

The Purdue University Agriculture Department has sent numerous internet links to agriculture journals online that are very appropriate for you finding issues and solution(s) to research and write about. They are attached on the following page. Additionally, a third page has been attached with a large number of online linguistic resources from IUPUI that can be used by the two linguistic students in our group. By Friday of this week, I want you to find at least five articles that focus on an issue. I would like to connect our final Orange Book Chapter, "Global Issues", with the topics that this project may focus upon. I have looked through the online resources and I have found many "big picture" issues that can be used in this paper: Mad Cow Disease, Global Warming, and Genetically Engineered Crops. For the linguists: Global Loss of Indigenous Languages to English, Pidgin versus Creole, Dialect or Language (African-American Vernacular English is a hot one!). There are many other issues that affect people not just from one area or country. However, since many of these resources are local (American) and your studies might just deal with some local issues or studies, it is not necessary to find the big global issues or problems. I am sorry to say that it may be very difficult to find resources that focus on Afghanistan. However, a problem in linguistics or agriculture that affects Indiana might also be something that is a concern with your area of Afghanistan. We are all connected, and so are most of our problems and solutions! Since most of these articles have great bibliographies or work cited pages, you have very helpful resources. If you find a great article that you want to use, the next thing you should do is look at the work cited page. The author may have 10 great related articles that you may be able to use. I noticed that many of the articles from the online resources I have listed even have web links to the complete articles. Your search for articles may be complete in no time at all!

Schedule

By this Friday, May 16, you need to have a problem or issue that you are focused on and at least 5 articles printed for class that you are reading and plan to use as resources (citation) for your paper. The hardest part of a paper is getting started and finding a topic. So, start today on researching the online resources we have provided.

By next Friday, May 23, you need to have completed your paper for submission. The best process for writing a paper deals with many drafts and revisions. Due to the fact, that many of you are likely to leave for Purdue at the end of this month, we simply do not have the time to do many revisions like we have done in the past. However, the campus writing center can help you daily with developing and

writing your paper. Additionally, we are here to guide you and give you any advice we can to help you with this project.

The following Thursday and Friday, May 29 & 30, we will be doing in class presentations as mentioned earlier in this handout.

Final Word

We hope this project helps you to reach the goals that we have in mind to help improve your English skills, but also any personal goals that you have in preparing for and being successful at Purdue University. Remember, people are always there to help you meet them, at Purdue or here, if you just remember to ask. Good luck!

Links to Agriculture Journals

<http://www.choicesmagazine.org/backissues.htm>

<http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/extension/pubs/2006pubs.htm>

<http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/extension/pubs/paer/>

Links to Linguistics Journals

American Speech

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://americanspeech.dukejournals.org/content/vol82/issue1/>

Applied Linguistics

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://applij.oxfordjournals.org/archive/>

Canadian Journal of Linguistics

http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://muse.jhu.edu/cgi-bin/resolve_openurl.cgi?issn=1710-1115

Discourse Processes: A Multidisciplinary Journal

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://www.leaonline.com/loi/dp>

ETC: A Review of General Semantics

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/direct.asp?db=crh&jid=%22ETC%22&scope=site>

International Journal of American Linguistics

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/IJAL/journal/available.html>

Interpreting: International Journal of Research and Practice in Interpreting

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://openurl.ingenta.com/content?genre=journal&issn=1384-6647> (Only have access to 2004)

Journal of American Folklore

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jaf/>

Journal of Linguistics

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://www.journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=LIN>

Journal of Semantics

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://jos.oxfordjournals.org/archive/>

Appendix D-Student Survey or Questionnaire

Afghan Student English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Program Survey

For Marvin R. Kiefer M.A. Thesis Data Collection

Purpose: The survey is a voluntary and anonymous questionnaire to gather data from you, the Afghan students, who has taken part in ICIC's ESP program to improve the four English skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The information that you provide will help evaluate the four reading initiatives that were created by your instructors to improve reading comprehension, speed, and vocabulary, both for improving TOEFL reading scores after the February test and improving reading skills for your upcoming post-bachelor and graduate classes at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. If you remember, the four reading projects were the Reading Circles and their uses of newspaper and academic articles, the Book Club and its use of biographies related to your fields of study (e.g. Agronomy, Ag. Economics, and Linguistics), the occasional use of short fiction (e.g. the fictional story of the women who died of a broken heart at the return of her husband, "The Story of an Hour," and fairy tales), and the final Reading and Writing project that allowed you to write an extended problem/solution paper developed from research sources from Purdue University sponsored academic sites with multiple agricultural-related articles, and linguistic websites from Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis that contained numerous academic recourses. All of these projects were built upon the assumption that "authentic materials" (e.g. those forms of literature not created for teaching, such as fiction/non-fiction books, newspaper articles, academic articles, brochures, poems, fictional stories) would improve your academic vocabulary base, reading comprehension, and speed. Additionally, it was our hope that these projects would: increase your cultural knowledge of the U.S., its diverse people, and its university atmosphere, and help develop a greater desire to read more. Thus, your honest answers to this survey along with your anonymous TOEFL test scores will help provide information that can be analyzed to see whether or not the reading projects have been successful, what improvements can possibly be made to improve materials in an ESP program, and what pedagogical (teaching methods) concerns should be addressed. Again, this survey is voluntary and anonymous.

I. Reading Circles

Do you believe that the authentic materials (e.g. academic and newspaper articles) that students selected for their groups each week were helpful in:

Improving reading comprehension? (circle a number):

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving reading speed?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving academic vocabulary?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving colloquial language (e.g. idioms, slang)?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving cultural knowledge?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving TOEFL reading scores?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving overall academic reading skills?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

How enjoyable did you find the authentic materials which may have included academic and newspaper articles?

not at all	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

When preparing teaching materials for your groups during the weeks that you were group leader, did you use pre-reading materials (e.g. vocabulary building exercises, questions and discussions that familiarized the learners with the material)?

never	not often	sometimes	often	always
0	1	2	3	4

What do you think is beneficial or not beneficial about these pre-reading activities?

After completing the pre-reading work and material (s), did you include post-reading work that developed comprehension and vocabulary, such as discussion and comprehension questions?

never	not often	sometimes	often	always
0	1	2	3	4

What do you think is beneficial or not beneficial about these post-reading activities?

II. Book Club

Did you find the reading of a 100 to 300 page biography to be helpful in:

Improving reading comprehension? (circle a number):

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving reading speed?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving academic vocabulary?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving colloquial language (e.g. idioms, slang)?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving cultural knowledge?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving TOEFL reading scores?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving overall academic reading skills?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

How enjoyable did you find this authentic material enjoyable to read?

not at all	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improve knowledge related to your field of study?

not at all	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

III. Short Fiction Stories

During the program your teachers taught with short fictional (made up) stories, such as "The Story of an Hour". How helpful were these in:

Improving reading comprehension? (circle a number):

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving reading speed?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving academic vocabulary?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving colloquial language (e.g. idioms, slang)?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving cultural knowledge?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving TOEFL reading scores?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving overall academic reading skills?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

How enjoyable did you find this authentic material to read?

not at all	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Did your teachers use pre- and post-reading activities to help you understand the stories better and more fully:

not at all	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Was this helpful or not helpful:

IV. Final Project: Problem/Solution Paper built upon major-related academic article and/or journal readings.

Did this project, which was based upon authentic materials that you researched from academic websites, help you:

Improving reading comprehension? (circle a number):

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving reading speed?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving academic vocabulary?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving colloquial language (e.g. idioms, slang)?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving cultural knowledge?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving TOEFL reading scores?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

Improving overall academic reading skills?

no	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

How enjoyable did you find this authentic material to read?

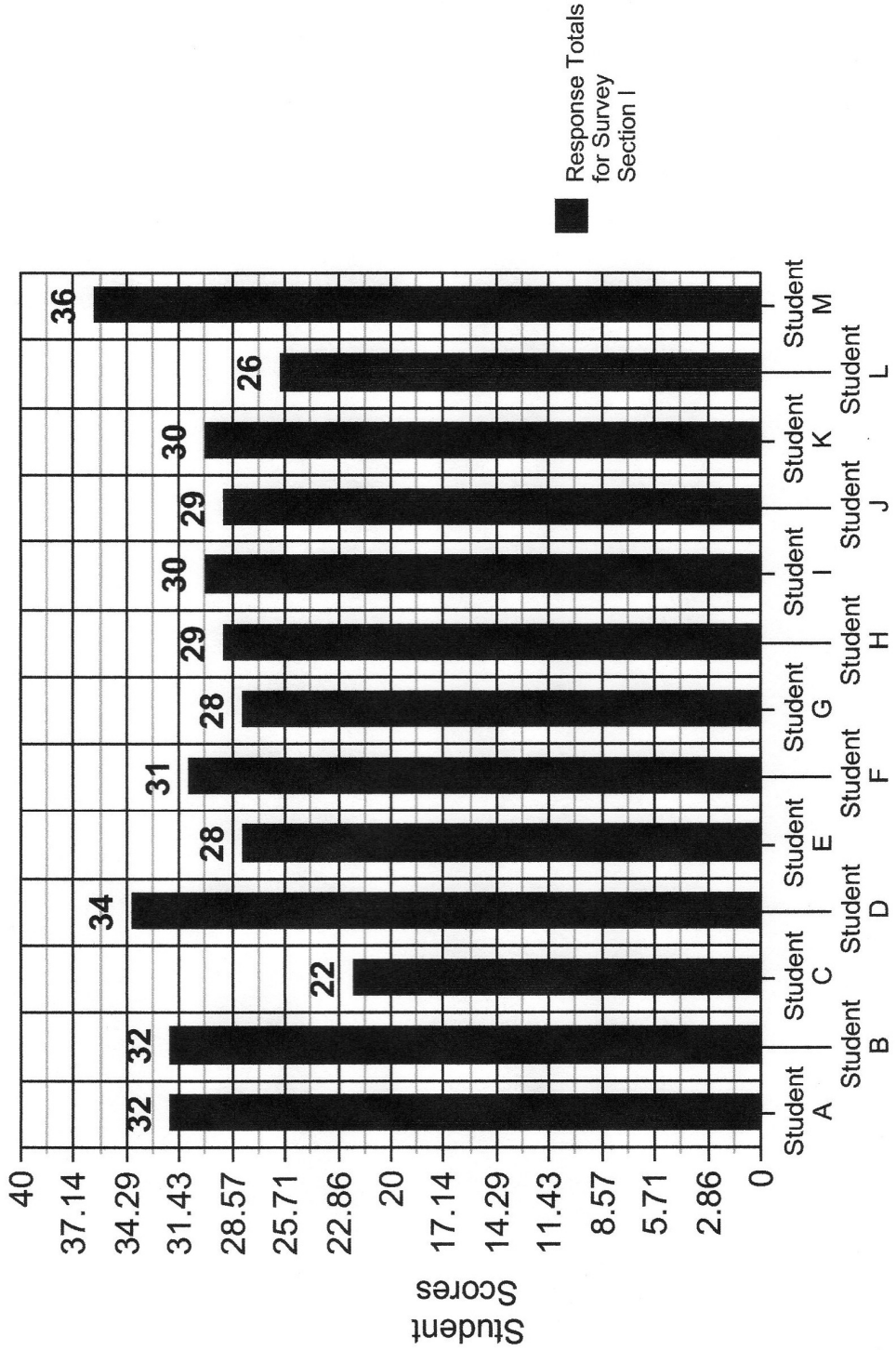
not at all	slightly	somewhat	very	extremely
0	1	2	3	4

Please explain:

This is the end of the survey. Thank you for your time and responses. It is hoped that this information along with the three TOEFL scores, pre-departure, February, and May, will provide valuable knowledge as to the success or failure of the four reading initiatives and the authentic materials used. Additionally, the information gathered, its analysis, and reproduction of teaching materials related to the initiatives within the pages of thesis can help further ESP instructors with their students, and in particular, Afghan students. Finally, remember that your answers and related-TOEFL scores are anonymous, in that students' identities will not be published within the pages of the thesis this survey is connect to and only the writer of the thesis and the committee that oversees its development and completion are privy to that knowledge. Thank you, again, and best of luck at Purdue University.

Appendix E-Student Responses for Reading Circles

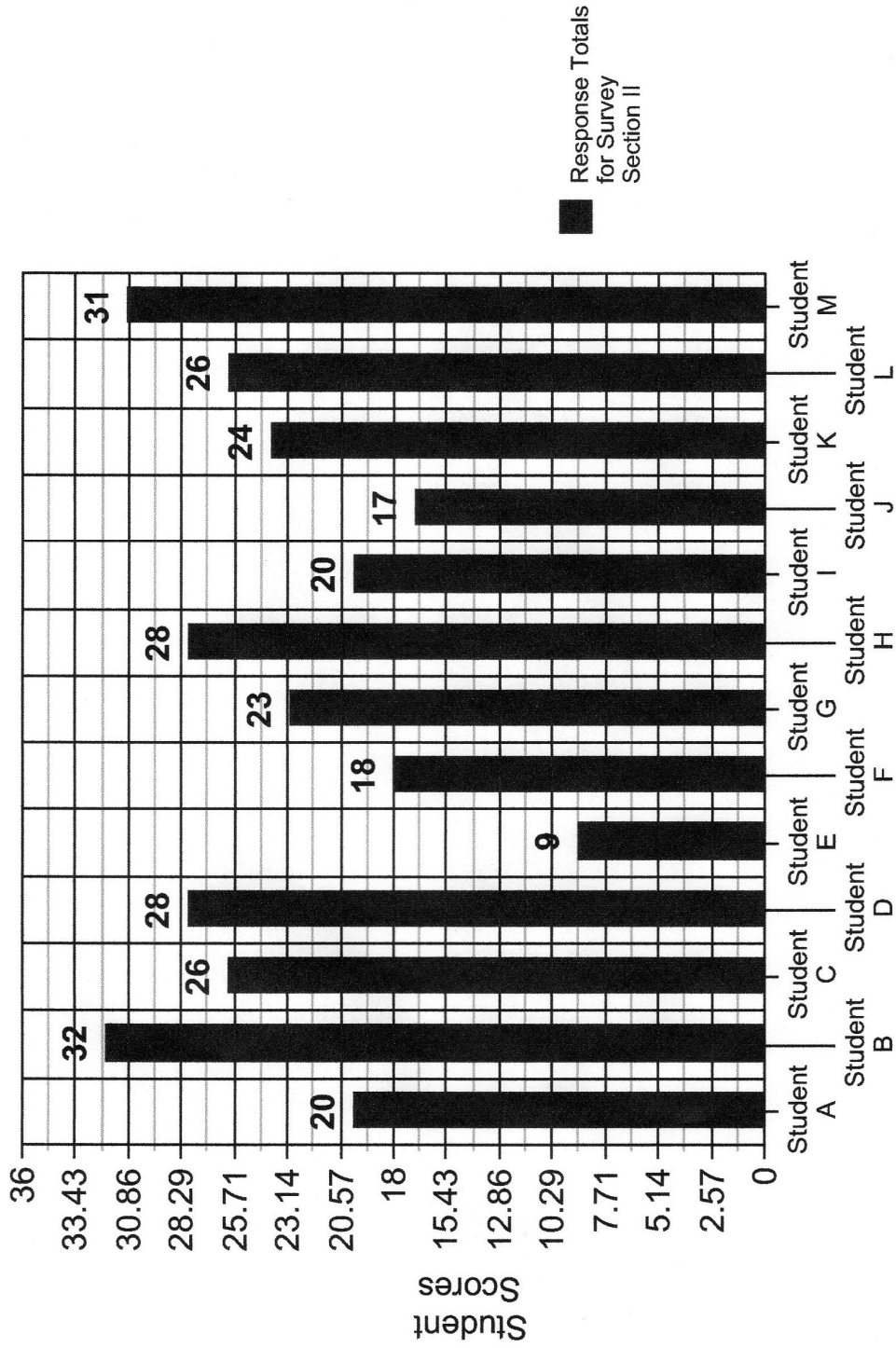
Afghan ESP Survey for Reading Circles w/Academic and News Articles



Scores: 40-32 Excellent, 32-24 Good, 24-16 Average, 16-8 Below Average, 8-0 Failing

Appendix F-Student Survey Responses for Book Club

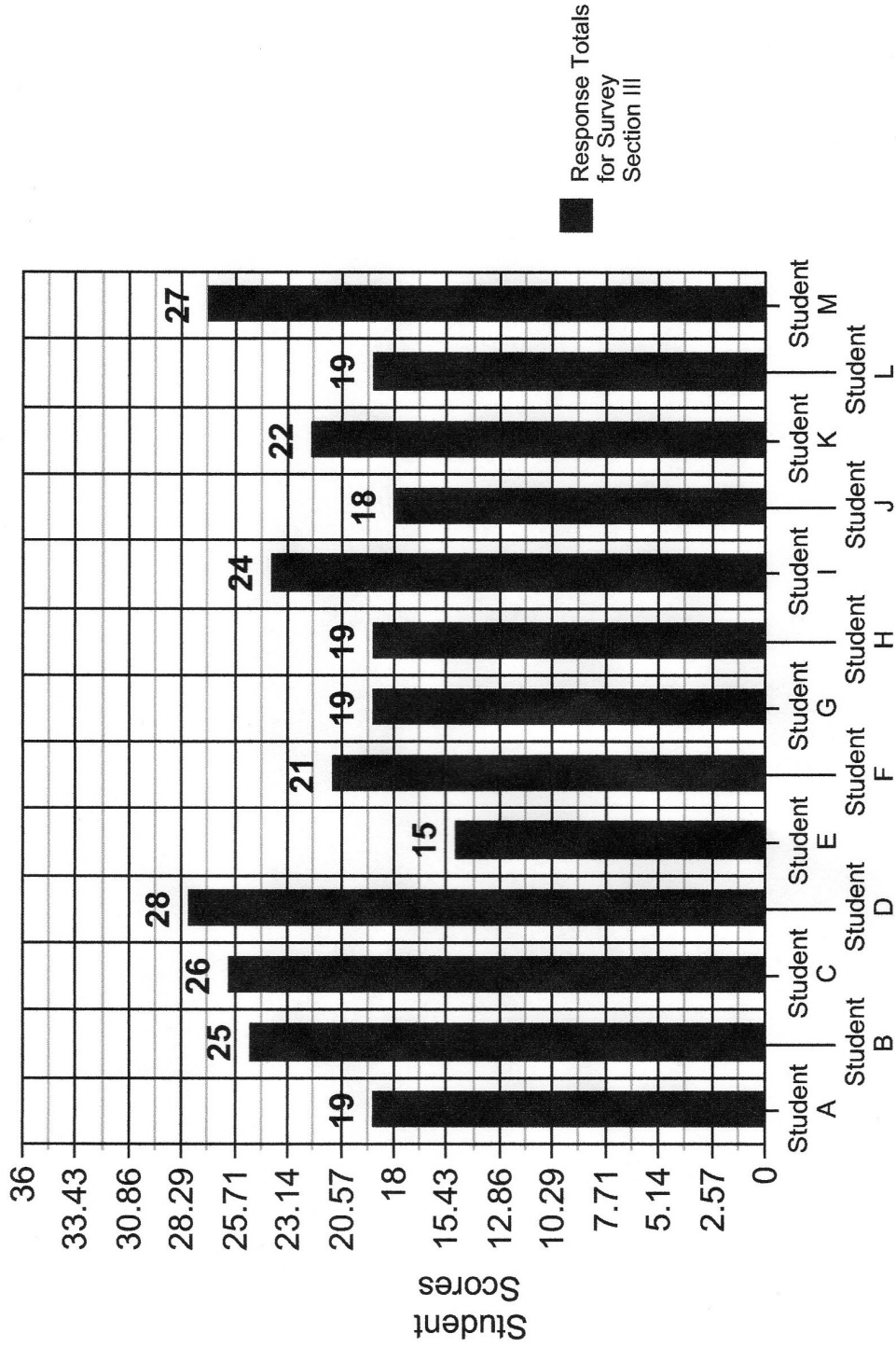
Afghan ESP Survey for Book Club Project w/Field-Related Biographies



Scores: 36-29 Excellent, 29-22 Good, 22-15 Average, 15-8 Below Average, 7-0 Failing

Appendix G-Student Survey Responses for Short Fiction Usage

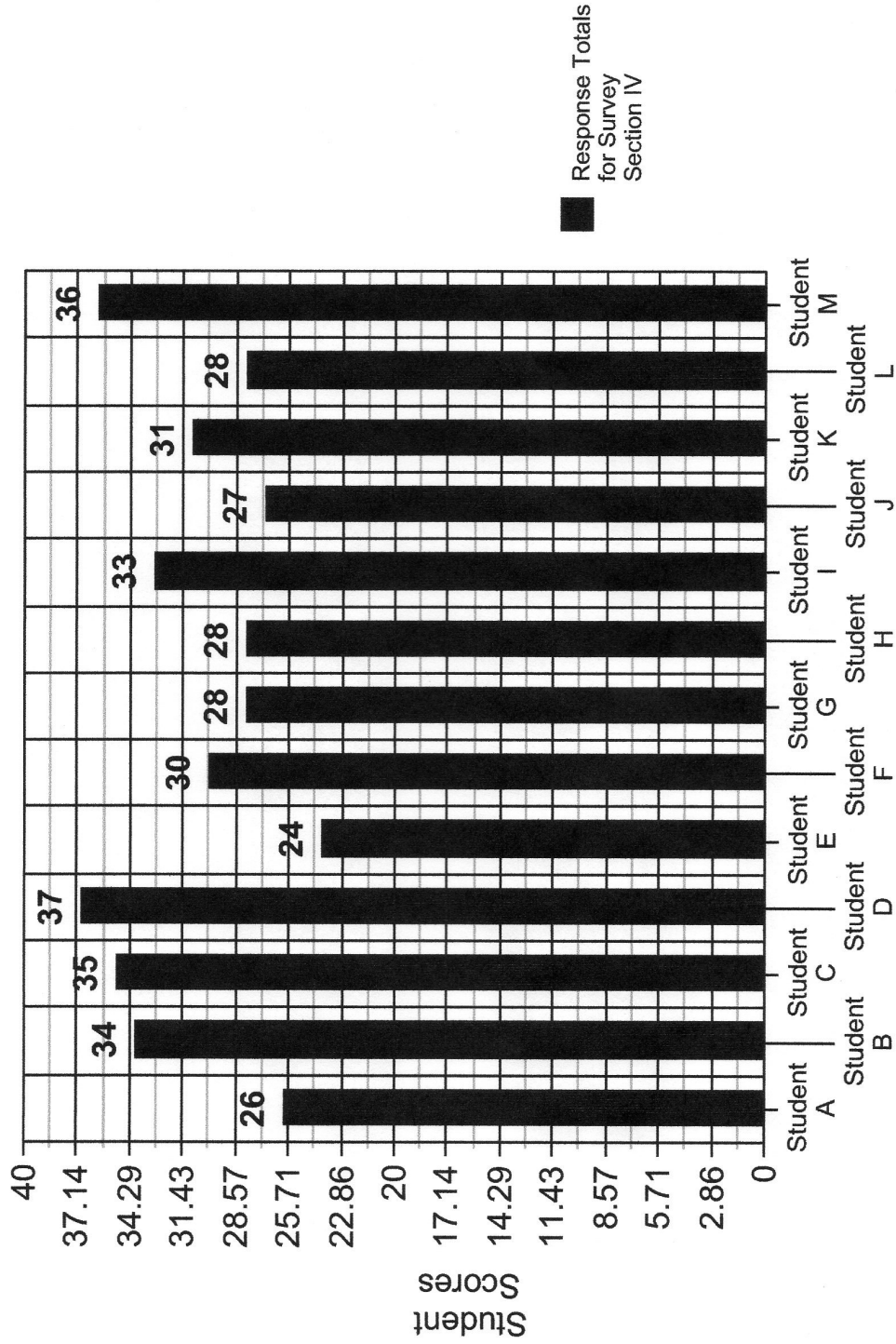
Afghan ESP Survey for Exercisesw/Short Fiction and Fairy Tales



Scores: 36-29 Excellent, 29-22 Good, 22-15 Average, 15-8 Below Average, 7-0 Failing

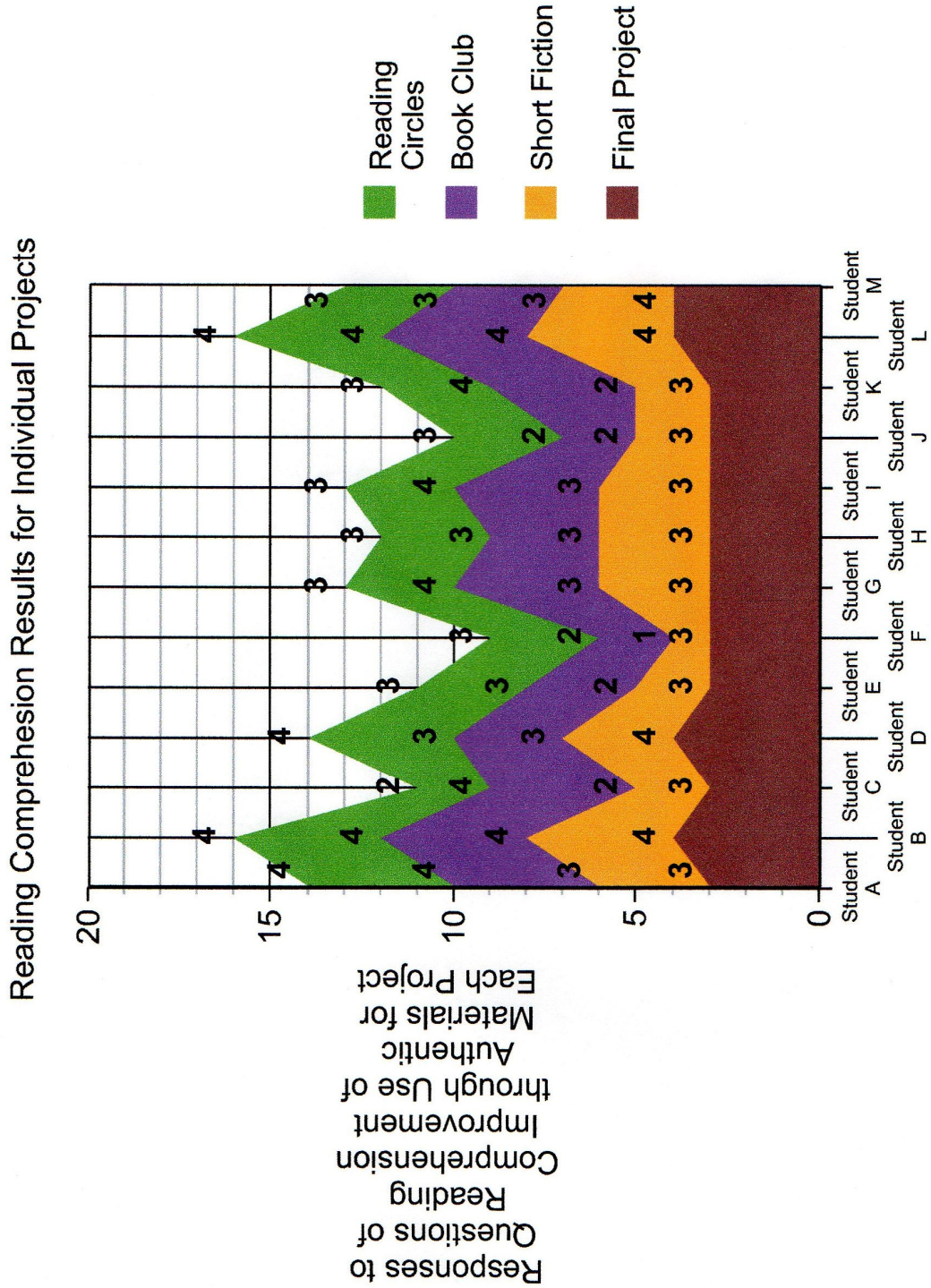
Appendix H-Student Survey Responses for Final Project

Afghan ESP Survey for Final Project w/Academic and News Articles



Scores: 40-32 Excellent, 32-24 Good, 24-16 Average, 16-8 Below Average, 8-0 Failing

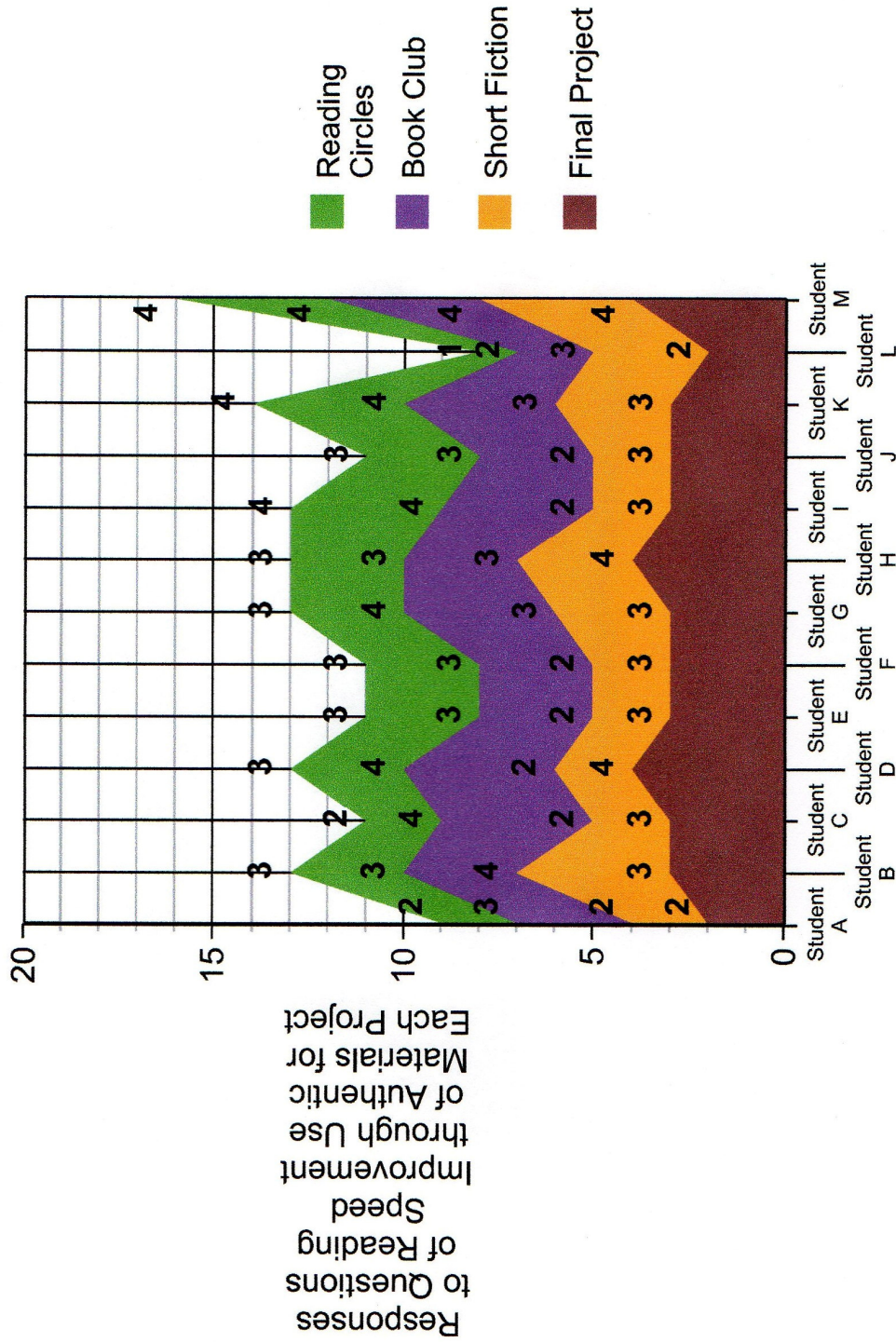
Appendix I-Student Survey Reading Comprehension Results



Scores: 4 Extremely Helpful, 3 Very Helpful, 2 Somewhat Helpful, 1 Slightly Helpful, 0 Not Helpful

Appendix J-Student Survey Speed Reading Results

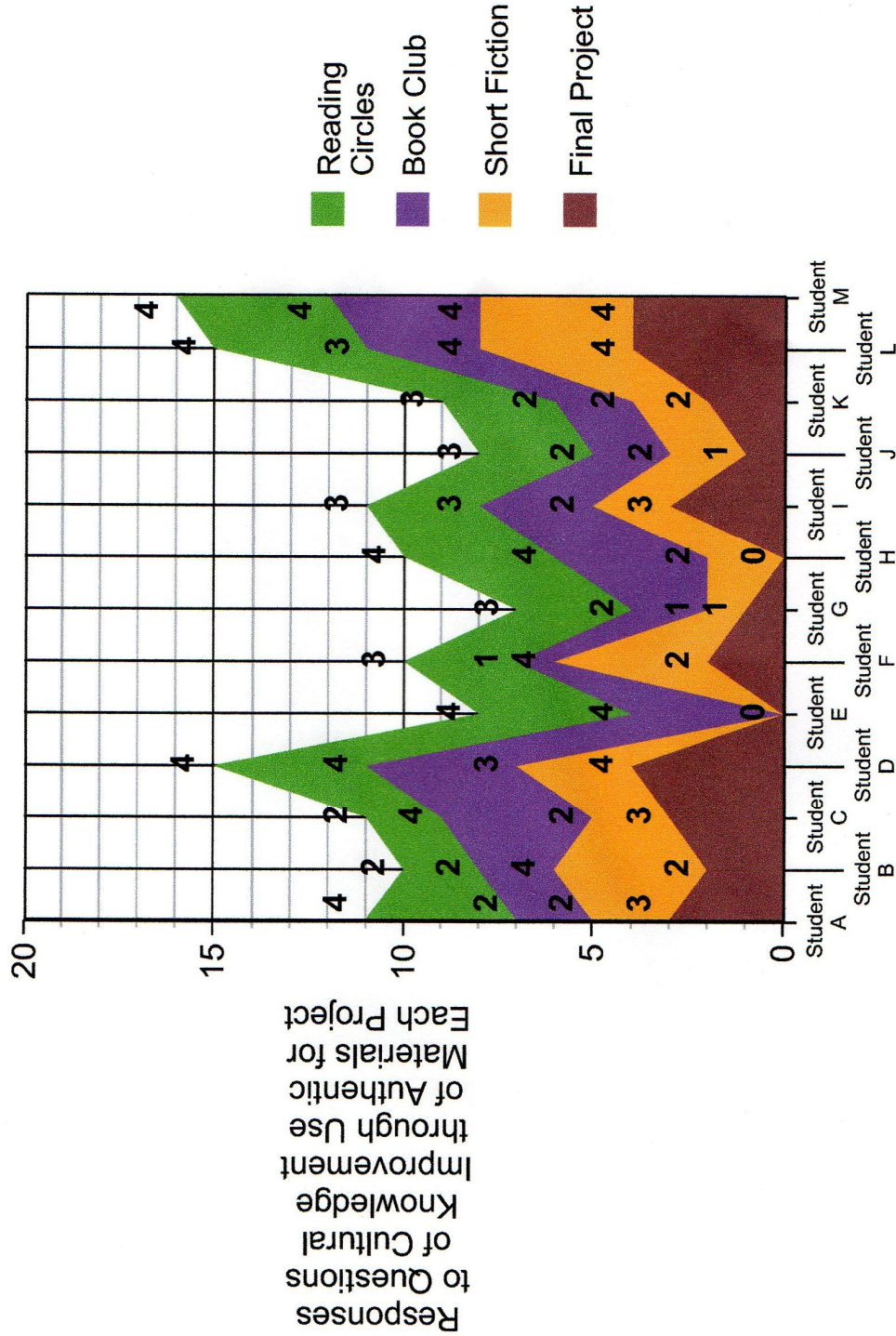
Improved Reading Speed Results for Individual Projects



Scores: 4 Extremely Helpful, 3 Very Helpful, 2 Somewhat Helpful, 1 Slightly Helpful, 0 Not Helpful

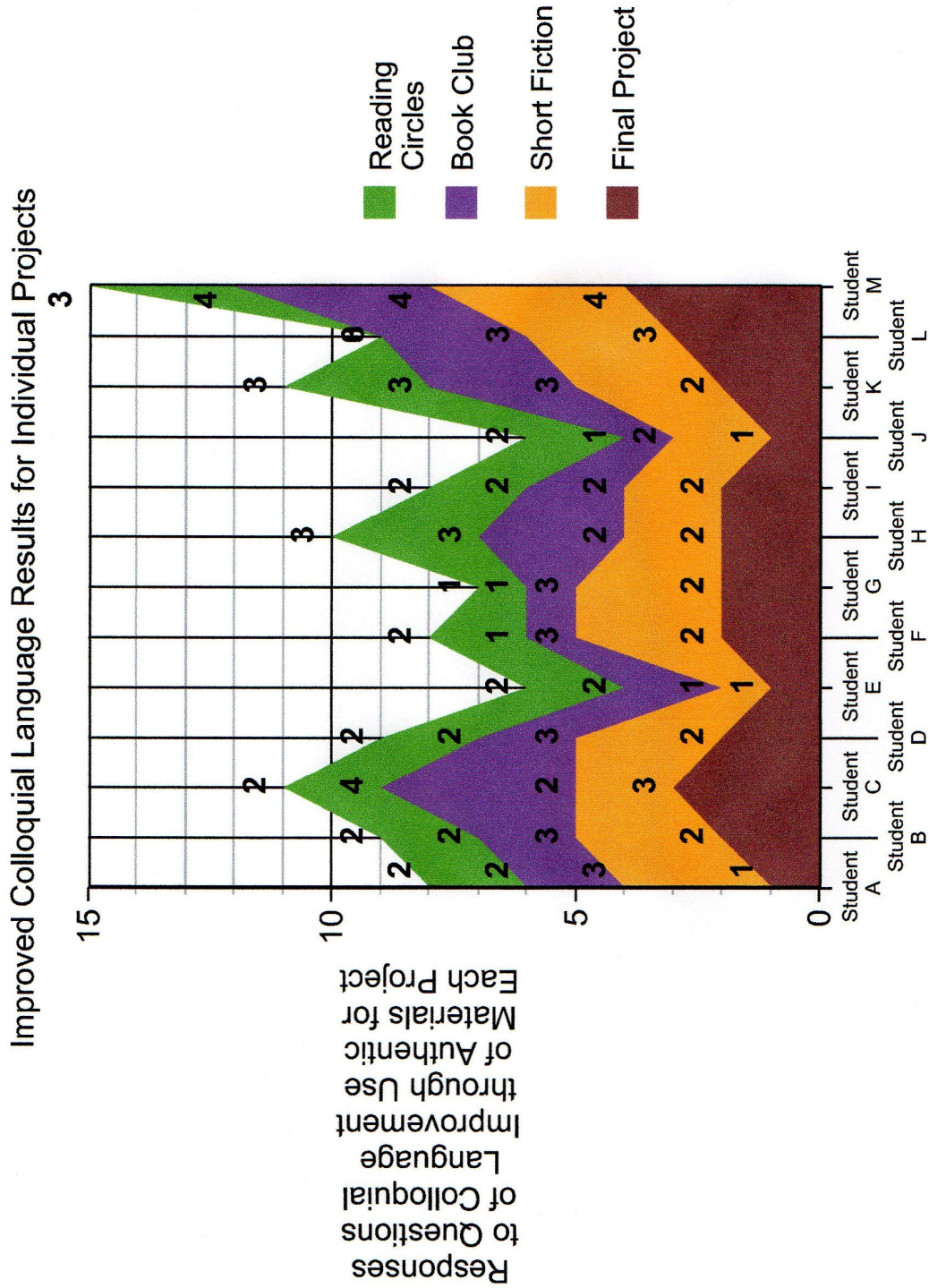
Appendix K-Student Survey Cultural Knowledge Results

Improved Cultural Knowledge Results for Individual Projects



Scores: 4 Extremely Helpful, 3 Very Helpful, 2 Somewhat Helpful, 1 Slightly Helpful, 0 Not Helpful

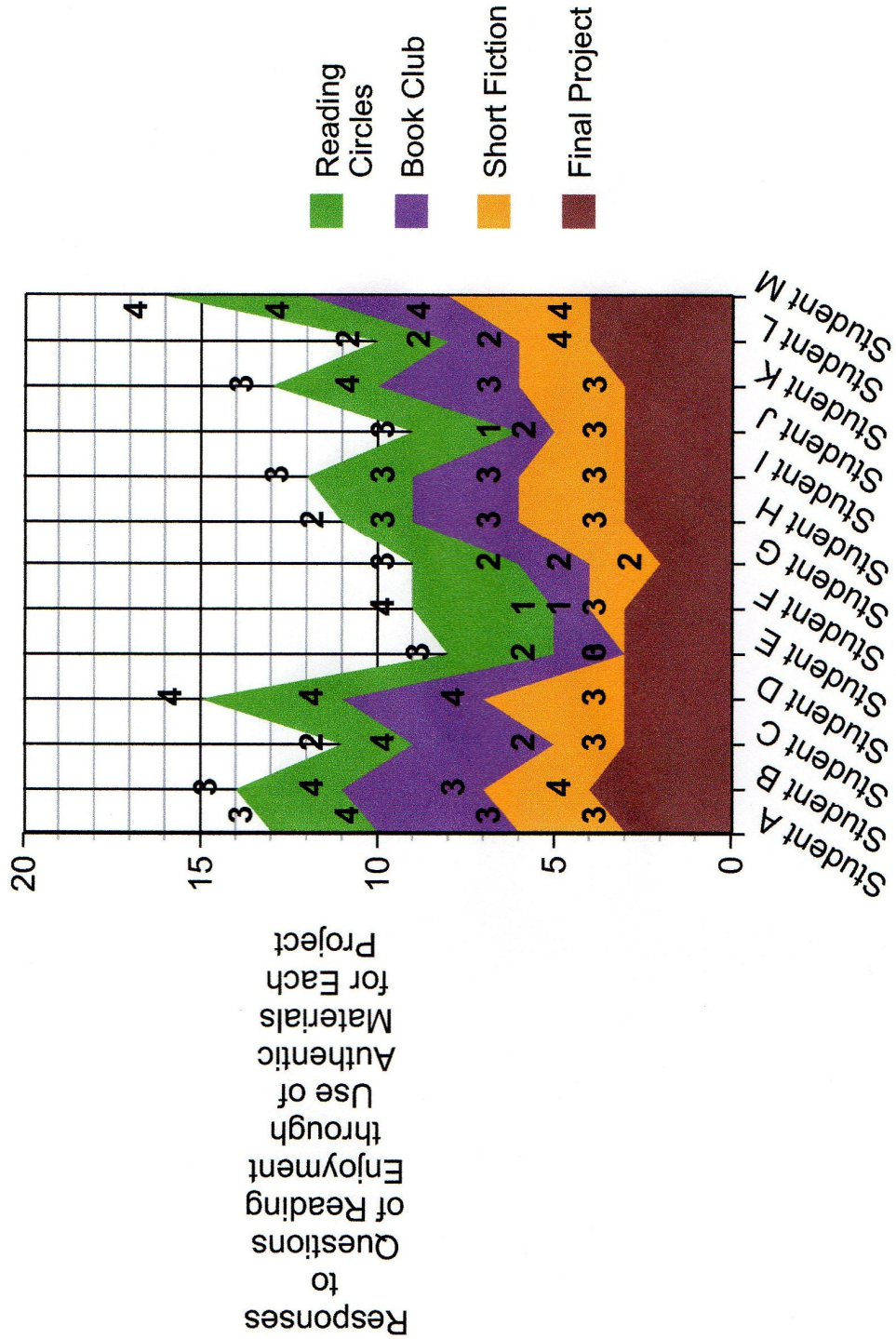
Appendix L-Student Survey Colloquial Language Results



Scores: 4 Extremely Helpful, 3 Very Helpful, 2 Somewhat Helpful, 1 Slightly Helpful, 0 Not Helpful

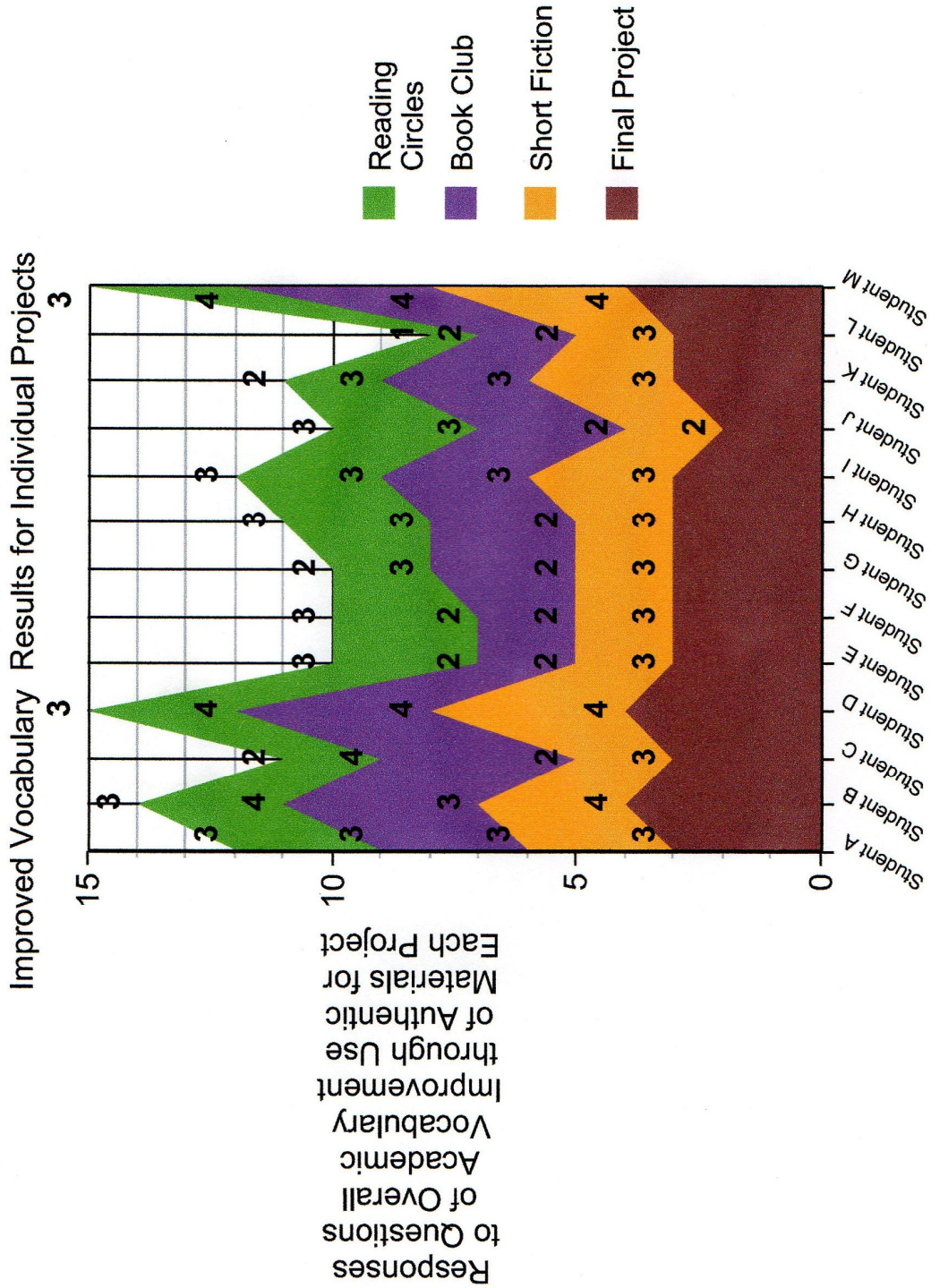
Appendix M-Student Survey Authentic Materials Pleasure Results

Authentic Materials Reading Enjoyment Results for Individual Projects



Scores: 4 Extremely Helpful, 3 Very Helpful, 2 Somewhat Helpful, 1 Slightly Helpful, 0 Not Helpful

Appendix N-Student Survey Vocabulary Improvement Results



Scores: 4 Extremely Helpful, 3 Very Helpful, 2 Somewhat Helpful, 1 Slightly Helpful, 0 Not Helpful

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Curriculum Vitae

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Education:

Master of Arts – English Indiana University Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis	September, 2008
TESL Teaching Certificate Indiana University Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis	December, 2006
Bachelor of Arts – English Indiana University Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis	August, 2005
Bachelor of Science – Journalism Ball State University	August, 1994
Associate of Science – Journalism Vincennes University	August, 1992

Honors:

IUPUI English Department Fiction Writing Honorable Mention	Spring 2005
Published in IUPUC' <i>Talking Leaves</i> literary magazine	Spring 2005
Bonderman Workshop Participant	Spring 2005
Golden Key International Honor Society, IUPUI	Fall 2004
IUPUC Dean's List	Fall 2004
Golden Key National Honor Society, BSU	Fall 1993
National and University Deans' Lists	Fall 1990-1992
Eugene C. Pulliam Journalism Scholarship Award, VU	Fall 1991
Tina Ross-Tim Swarens Journalism Scholarship, VU	Spring 1991
David G. Meinhart Memorial Journalism Scholarship, VU	Spring 1991
Greg Litherland Award for Dedication to <i>The Trailblazer</i> , VU	Spring 1991

Experience:

ESP Reading and Writing Instructor
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