

Exploring the outcomes of immersion programs for adult second language learners in higher education: Linguistic and nonlinguistic benefits

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3:30-4:30pm, Greene Hall 512

Abstract: Learning a second language as an adult is a complex endeavor that has been theorized and subsequently shown to be affected by various factors, some of which are internal to the learner (e.g., cognitive abilities, motivation, anxiety, language aptitude, etc.) and others which are external to the learner (e.g., amount and type of exposure, learning environment, method of instruction, etc.). Since the 1970's, the idea that contextual factors in the learning environment can influence learning outcomes for second language acquisition (SLA) has been a central part of SLA theory-building and has fueled research agendas in the field. In this talk, I will focus on two manifestations of a particular learning environment: Immersion programs, discussing my previous, ongoing and future work in the areas of study abroad and domestic immersion programs.

Bio: Bernard Issa is an Associate Professor of Spanish Linguistics with a specialization in Second Language Acquisition. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago. His dissertation research, supported by National Science Foundation and Language Learning dissertation grants, employed eye-tracking to investigate how learners allocate their attention under different instructional interventions. Bernard's broader research agenda examines how individual difference variables (e.g., motivation, attention, second language use, and working memory) relate to the learning and processing of second language grammar and furthermore, understand how those variables interact with learner external factors such as type of instructional intervention and learning context. Bernard also serves as the First-Year Spanish Language Program Director and the Language Training Coordinator for Graduate Students.

