Objective
To examine the impact of class size reduction and technology use on foreign language learning and teaching at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), using a “thick description” research approach.

Definition
A **thick description** provides a detailed account of a setting, from the perspectives of people who are immersed in it. Such studies may use a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods, and often lead to hypotheses about behaviors and processes that can be investigated in follow-up studies.

Findings
CASL research on class size reduction and technology use in foreign language classrooms at DLIFLC has found the following:
- Class size reduction increases target language practice and the amount of individual attention students receive.
- Learning technologies, such as SMART Boards, are well integrated in DLIFLC classrooms.
- Outside of class, learners use iPods nearly daily for studying.

CASL will continue to investigate the use of technology for language learning and teaching in DLIFLC classrooms.

Relevance
Evidence-based policy decisions are required for decisions about funding for foreign language learning, to the extent possible. The trends that emerged from this research indicate that class size reduction and technology use have the potential to improve learning outcomes significantly at DLIFLC.

Reports
*Optimal foreign language learning: The role of class size reduction and language learning technology* (July 2008)—This recent CASL technical report thoroughly reviews previous empirical studies and expert judgments on the role of class size reduction and technology use in the foreign language classroom. It then presents original CASL research that examines how these variables impact the adult foreign language learning process at DLIFLC.

For More Information
For more information about this project or for a copy of the report, contact us:

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