

TESOL INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRAXIS
TEACHING ADULT EMERGENT READERS

by

Jill Marie Carter M.A., M.Ed.

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Committee Members:

Clarena Larrotta, Chair

Joellen E. Coryell

Jovita M. Ross-Gordon

Jennifer Swoyer

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Dr. Charles P. Bigger III
for inspiring me many years ago to believe in myself academically.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative layered case study examined the perceptions and practices of teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) providing English instruction to adult emergent readers in community-based programs in Central Texas. Study participants were four experienced TESOL instructors teaching in a face-to-face modality in three community-based programs. They had not been trained specifically for working with adult English speakers of other languages (ESOL) who were also emergent readers.

The dissertation research questions included:

1. What are the experiences of TESOL instructors teaching adult emergent readers?
2. What do they perceive as the needs of adult emergent readers learning ESOL?
3. How do these perceptions impact their teaching practices?
4. How do they approach teaching when the learners are adult emergent readers?

Data were collected through a Q-sort exercise, conversational interviews, classroom observations, documents, artifacts, and a research journal. Data analysis followed the steps suggested by Yin (2016) and used critical pedagogy and democratic education as a lens to interpret study findings.

The instructors' teaching displayed varying degrees of democratic education, such as a real-life focus, dialogism, reciprocal learning, and praxis. However, the data showed little to no connection to critical consciousness or learner autonomy. Thus, the need of further training focusing on adult education theory and critical pedagogy became evident. In addition, teaching strategies beneficial for adult emergent readers were identified (e.g., creating associations, using technology, employing repetition, peer/group work, instructor support, and use of the native language). A conceptual map of findings, as well as implications, relevance, and contributions of the study are provided.

I. TEACHING ESOL ADULT EMERGENT READERS

I don't come from an educational background. I don't have my teaching certificate, so I might not have that skill set to sit down with an adult who doesn't know how to read in their own language and teach them how to read in another language. I can teach myself how to discover tools to teach them how to read, let's say in English, but if I don't have that skill set, I'm going to go out and find it versus maybe someone else that doesn't have that motivation...(Linda, TESOL Instructor)

Just because they come with a different set of challenges, or slightly different challenges than adult learners who have first language literacy, it benefits both the learner and the instructor to have training...It's really hard to work with adult learners who are not literate...There are multiple layers there. (Sarah, TESOL Instructor)

The previous excerpts come from informal interviews with TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) instructors conducted during the summer of 2018 as part of an assignment for a Ph.D. research course. These instructors spoke about the need for TESOL teachers to have training in teaching adults who are learning to read for the first time in an additional language, rather than in their native language. Because many TESOL instructors have not been trained in working with these learners, this study focuses on the experiences and perceptions that TESOL instructors have of these students and the impact these perceptions have on their teaching practice. I became interested in this question through my own early experiences as a TESOL instructor to adults in a community-based program.

Motivation to Conduct the Study

I began my career as a TESOL instructor to adults in 1991 with an undergraduate student job as a conversation leader for the English Language and Orientation Program at Louisiana State University. In adult TESOL in the United States, teachers typically work with a wide variety of languages and cultures in the same classroom. As a Spanish major, I had my own experiences in learning a foreign language but had not yet been educated in the art and science of language teaching. As I advanced to a graduate student in linguistics, I held various jobs in the area of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) including that of an instructor for refugee services for the local Catholic diocese.

By the time I started that position, I had taken classes in teaching foreign language and English as a second language (ESL) methods, but I was surprised to find myself ill-prepared for teaching learners in my beginning level class. This particular class was made up of one family of six students who had immigrated to the United States from Vietnam. One of the learners was a woman in her sixties who was unable to read or write at all in both her native language and in English. I was at a loss as to how to begin teaching her to read and even how to teach her to speak English without using print as a tool. The other class members were able to use the printed materials that I offered in class and to take notes on what we were learning, but this woman could not. I ended up relying on one of the other learners, who had a higher level of both spoken and written English, to basically teach this woman for me. I was glad when the term ended because I felt completely ineffective in instructing her.

The gap in my preparation as an instructor caused me to reflect on myself as a learner. I had learned to read in first grade and progressively over my life have come to rely more and more on printed material, writing, and note taking as fundamental tools for learning. As a student of the Spanish language, I relied heavily on my ability to write to take notes and process information in both Spanish and English. As an instructor, I had not given much thought to the idea that some adult learners would not have native language literacy to use as a tool when learning ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages).

As I continued my education and gained more experience in TESOL, I learned methods and techniques for working with true beginner students. However, I never received instruction in graduate school or in professional development in any of my jobs on instructing learners who had low literacy levels in their native language to read in English. Low or limited literacy may mean that the student's native language culture does not have a print literacy, that the learner has not yet mastered reading, or that the learner's reading ability is minimal (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010). Through an M.A. in linguistics and 14 years of experience in TESOL, I was never required or even offered the opportunity to receive education or training in working with learners with low levels of native language literacy.

In 2008, I decided to become certified as a bilingual elementary school teacher and eventually, in 2012, as a reading specialist in the state of Texas. It was during this training that I became aware of the massive amount of existent data about teaching children to read for the first time. This caused me to wonder what research had been done on teaching an adult to read for the first time in an additional language. As I began to

look for information in this area, I also began to question whether or not other TESOL instructors had a similar lack of training in working with these adult emergent readers (Bigelow & Vinogradov, 2011) as I did, and if so, how they were instructing these adult emergent readers in their classrooms. This was the beginning of the journey that makes up the pages that follow for this dissertation.

Problem Statement

Adult literacy is an issue of concern in the state of Texas (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012). According to the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 19% of Texans ages 16 and older lack “basic prose literacy skills” (National Center for Education Studies, 2003), including those with limited English skills. Texas is one of the top five states in the U. S. in receiving immigrants (White et al., 2015). The American Immigration Council’s (2017) analysis of the 2015 U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey reports that 17% of the population of Texas is comprised of immigrants with at least 59% of those immigrants being from Hispanic countries. The high percentage of Hispanic immigrants to Texas is significant in regard to literacy in the state because 63% of Hispanic immigrants in the United States are at below-basic literacy levels in English (Richwine, 2017). These learners are limited to “simple vocabulary and sentence comprehension” (Richwine, 2017, p. 3). Furthermore, according to the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Interagency Literacy Council Report (2012) asserts that “Texas’ current literacy system is fractured and uncoordinated and its components do not interact with each other in a coherent fashion” (p. 12).

Adult emergent readers have needs that are largely not being taken into consideration by current TESOL instructor preparation and professional development

programs in the United States (Vinogradov, 2012). While the topic of adult ESOL emergent readers is now being addressed, to a degree, through conferences and workshops, these one-time presentations are not adequate training (Burt et al., 2008; Center for Adult English Language Acquisition Network, 2010; Sherman et al., 2006). Instructors need to be able to discuss research and classroom practices with other TESOL instructors (Burt et al., 2008; Vinogradov, 2012). For example, Vinogradov (2013a) and Perry and Vinogradov (2016) have created study circle guides for the Adult Basic Education Teaching and Learning Advancement System in Minnesota for working with ESOL emergent readers, but there is no evidence in the literature of these study circles being used in Central Texas. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education offers a course on teaching ESOL to adult emergent readers through The Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) website (<https://courses.lincs.ed.gov/>). This website does have a discussion board that includes open exchange of ideas on all related topics but relies on individual motivation to post about the particular course on emergent readers, and posting is not required for receiving the course certificate.

In Texas, a high percentage of the immigrant population needs literacy education. Additionally, the Immigration Policy Institute (2016) reports that 37.3% of Mexican-born immigrants over the age of 25 have less than a ninth-grade education and 34.3% of immigrants born in El Salvador have less than a ninth-grade education. This is important in Texas because 59.4% of Texas immigrants are from these two countries (American Immigration Council, 2017). Furthermore, according to 2019 U.S. Census data, 11.4 % of Hispanic people 25 and older in the United States have a sixth grade or lower education level and 4.2% have a fourth grade or lower education level (United States Census

Bureau, 2020). Therefore, among these learners alone, there are likely to be adult emergent readers, and this does not consider the many other immigrants who come to Texas. While immigration trends are subject to change over time, and Texas shows a trend of greater diversity among immigrants in the future (White et al., 2015), the needs of current adult immigrants should not be ignored. When their needs are not considered in the ESOL classroom, these learners are marginalized, which may result in their abandoning their studies (Lukes, 2009). If this happens, then not only is the individual learner disregarded, but the literacy level in the state fails to improve.

The fractured literacy system in Texas and the high level of need for literacy instruction along with the general lack of preparation of TESOL instructors to work specifically with adult emergent readers raises the question of how instructors in Texas are envisioning the needs of these learners and how this influences their teaching practices. Adult emergent readers enter the learning context from a variety of starting points. Some may have little to no experience in a classroom due to interrupted formal education (McLaughlin et al., 2008; Wrigley, 2013; Young-Scholten, 2015). Others may have attended school but were not successful in attaining literacy (Vinogradov, 2008). Still others of these learners may have unidentified learning disabilities (Wrigley, 2013). For these reasons, adult emergent readers may have different needs than learners who have achieved strong first language literacy.

Concurrent with this situation, many TESOL instructors in community-based programs have had little to no training for working with adult emergent readers (Bigelow & Vinogradov, 2011; Farrelly, 2013, 2017; Vinogradov & Liden, 2009). These instructors must decide how to best teach these learners based on their current

knowledge. Because they may not have had training in working with adult emergent readers, they may be unaware of their differing needs in the classroom and rely on their own experiences and perceptions to meet the needs of these learners. This question becomes even more compelling when considering community-based programs where instructors may be largely volunteers and may have little to no training in teaching adult ESOL learners at all. This study strives to discover how TESOL instructors in Central Texas currently perceive adult emergent readers and how these perceptions affect what they do to serve their needs.

Terminology Choice

There are many different acronyms and terms for referring to the field of TESOL (see Appendices A and B). I have chosen to use the widely recognized terms TESOL and ESOL in place of the more specific English as a second language (ESL) because English may not be the learner's second language. Adult learners may be bilingual or even multilingual before beginning to acquire English (Pettitt & Tarone, 2015). Therefore, TESOL and ESOL are more accurate terms. By the same logic, I also refer to English as an additional language rather than a second language (Webster & Lu, 2012). The reader should understand TESOL and ESOL in this dissertation to refer to adults learning English in the United States, an English dominant country.

Research Questions

In order to examine both the perceptions and actions of TESOL instructors who work with adult emergent readers in community-based programs, the research questions for this study are as follow:

1. What are the experiences of TESOL instructors teaching adult emergent readers?

2. What do they perceive as the needs of adult emergent readers learning ESOL?
3. How do these perceptions impact their teaching practices?
4. How do they approach teaching when the learners are adult emergent readers?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to document the experiences and teaching practices of TESOL instructors serving adult emergent readers in community-based programs.

Another goal is to examine the instructor-perceived needs of these students in relation to the decisions they make in the classroom. This study aims to add to the body of literature on best practices for teaching adult ESOL emergent readers and on professional development and TESOL training. Study findings can be used to provide recommendations on best teaching practices, as well as implications for community-based education programs to better serve the needs of adult ESOL emergent readers. This information can be shared with educators, institutions, graduate students and researchers to develop approaches to improve literacy levels in the state of Texas.

Significance of Study

Failure to address the needs of adult ESOL emergent readers implies high costs for the learner, TESOL instructors who serve these students, and society as a whole. By not addressing this issue, instructors and programs neglect the needs of these learners and provide ineffective instruction. Not meeting learner needs can lead to student attrition, resulting in a large population of students who want and need literacy instruction not being reached (Lukes, 2009). Failure to provide instruction to ESOL emergent readers has far reaching consequences for both the individual and the larger society. Low literacy levels can keep emergent readers in low-paying jobs which do not provide healthcare

benefits (Miller et al., 2010; Ntiri, 2009). Insufficient healthcare can result in a poorer quality of life and lack of access to health literacy (McDonald & Shenkman, 2018). The larger society is affected by some of its members lacking healthcare, through their greater reliance on public healthcare services coupled with a poor level of health for those members (McDonald & Shenkman, 2018).

Additionally, low literacy levels can limit people's choices about where to live due to resultant low pay (Tshabangu-Soko & Caron, 2011) and/or a reliance on the native language community for linguistic support. Parents may be unable to assist their children with homework or participate in social activities that require literacy skills (Miller et al., 2010; Ntiri, 2013). Furthermore, low literacy levels may affect the individual's participation in civic activities, such as voting by limiting their access to information about candidates and platforms, leaving them to rely on advertisements and word of mouth endorsements rather than in-depth written pieces (Kaplan & Venezky, 1994). In summary, nobody benefits from denying education to a segment of our population that could otherwise be thriving, contributing members of society.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses a critical pedagogy framework to analyze how the perceptions and practices of TESOL instructors interact when planning and teaching adult emergent readers. Critical pedagogy originates from a radical philosophy of education (Elias & Merriam, 2005; Melrose, et al., 2015; Zinn, 2004). Zinn (2004) describes radical education as being, "used to combat social, political, and economic oppression within society" (p. 47). Likewise, critical pedagogy stems from the belief that education should be based on the principles of justice and equality with the alleviation of oppression and

suffering as its goal (Kincheloe, 2008). It is an emancipatory pedagogy that strives to equip literacy learners with the ability to “read the world” and gain understanding of their socio-political position in it (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Critical pedagogy is a democratic pedagogy both in interaction with learners and in preparation of the learner to participate in a democratic society (Freire, 1970, 1998). The most prominent early theorist of critical pedagogy was Freire. However, since the inception of his theory, various authors have contributed ideas on critical pedagogy and democratic education (Giroux, 2011; Kincheloe, 2008; Shor, 1980; Wink, 2005). This section describes the framework for this study which draws on the works of these authors and combines the concepts of praxis, learner autonomy, focus on real-life issues, dialogism, and reciprocal learning in order to create a recipe for democratic teaching. The recipe is, of course, a metaphor to bring together the main concepts supporting the study.

Democratic Education

Democratic education models democracy and teaches learners how to participate in a democratic society. Freire explains that self-development leads to more democracy, and conversely, “The less people are asked about what they want, about their expectations, the less democracy we have” (Horton & Freire, 1990, pp. 145-146). Furthermore, Kincheloe (2003) describes democratic education as including “the free, participatory process of making meaning and creating values” (p. 178). For Kincheloe, knowledge about the world is socially constructed, and there are unlimited valid curricula for teaching content. In addition, Kincheloe explains that democratic education sincerely considers social justice and inequality issues as well as alternative world views. In the words of Lindeman (1926), “We learn to be free when we know what we desire freedom

for and what stands in the way of our desire” (p.71). Democratic education provides learners with the opportunity to discover their personal aspirations and barriers to this freedom.

In the state of Texas, adult ESOL is overseen by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Texas Senate Bill 307 required TWC to “monitor and evaluate the educational and employment outcomes of students who participate in AEL programs” (Texas Workforce Commission, 2017, p. 14). In TWC’s (2016) strategic plan, the goal for adult education and literacy is “to support increases in employment, post-secondary education and training transition, skill gains, and secondary completion through demonstrated approaches that integrate system services and leverage community partnerships” (p. 7). This is at odds with democratic education because the focus of this goal is on benefiting the workforce; however, employment may not be the goal of all individual adult ESOL learners. TWC further states that programs can provide evidence that they are meeting TWC’s goal by (1) aligning instruction to the Adult Education and Literacy Content Standards, (2) providing counseling for learners for transitioning to postsecondary education or the workforce, or (3) including ESOL instruction as part of a Career Pathways program (Texas Workforce Commission, 2017, p. 39). In other words, two of the three acceptable methods of proof that programs are working toward TWC’s goal are based directly on postsecondary education or employment. The third method, based on the content standards, is, in reality, also based on postsecondary and workforce goals. This is the case because the English as a Second Language Content Standards and Benchmarks were created with postsecondary education and workplace training in mind. Furthermore, these standards were reviewed focusing on industry needs (TWC, n.d., 20

pp. 67-68). Such a strong focus on workforce goals can limit the freedom of students who are not learning English solely for employment purposes. TWC's mandated focus on postsecondary and employment goals can restrict learners' choice in their own education and thus, limit democracy in the ESOL classroom.

Praxis

An element which is central to critical pedagogy, and to this study, is praxis (Freire, 1970; Kincheloe, 2003; Wink, 2005). Wink (2005) describes praxis as “ the constant reciprocity of our theory and practice. Theory building and critical reflection inform our practice and our action, and our practice and action inform our theory building and critical reflection” (p. 50). In other words, reflection and action are in a constantly renewing cycle of adaptation to new knowledge and experiences from practice. What we learn is valuable and helps us create hypotheses that guide our future practice. Kincheloe (2003) considers theory and practice to be inseparable: “We must understand theoretical notions in terms of their relationship to the lived world, not simply as objects of abstract contemplation” (p. 43). TESOL instructors teaching adult emergent readers in community-based programs need to engage in praxis in order to best meet the learners' needs. They need to research and reflect on the literature that is available on teaching adult emergent readers. For Freire (1998), research is an important cycle for learning what one does not know to also share it with others. However, because training and information about adult ESOL emergent readers is still sparse, praxis is a primary source through which TESOL instructors can learn and grow in regard to teaching them.

Learner Autonomy and Critical Consciousness

According to Freire (1998), teaching is about giving learners the opportunity to construct knowledge. Teaching is not about transferring knowledge from the teacher to the student. Freire derides this “banking” concept of education that treats students as empty accounts to be filled with the teacher’s information (Freire, 1970); rather, he describes the democratic educator as, “insisting on the critical capacity, curiosity, and autonomy of the learner” (Freire, 1998, p. 33). This pedagogy of autonomy should focus on experiences that allow the learners to freely make decisions and take responsibility for their own learning (Freire, 1998, p. 99). Another way of saying this is that the instructor’s job is not to fill learners with information that they lack but rather to inspire learners to seek out that which they need or desire to grow and create the life they envision for themselves. In the classroom, learners may make decisions about what content to learn, or they may make choices about how to learn. For example, they might choose the type of learning activity they complete to best suit their own learning style.

To be autonomous, learners need critical consciousness (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1992). Language learners need to be able to analyze what they read to understand the deeper meaning behind the text in terms of existing power relations in society (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1992). To be critically conscious, language learners need to understand that multiple factors affect who has power and who does not, such as economic privilege, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and physical ability (Kincheloe, 2008). Through critical consciousness, learners understand their own position in relation to power and make informed decisions about their education and life choices. The adult

emergent reader should be given opportunities to develop critical consciousness through critical thinking and partner with the teacher in designing their literacy path.

Focus on Real-Life Issues

Freire (1998) promotes respecting and valuing the lived experiences that learners bring to the educational setting; he believes the educator should strive to connect learning to the realities of the learners' lives. He suggests starting with students' real-life struggles against oppressive circumstances and teaching content that can help learners change their realities for the better (Freire 1970). Similarly, Giroux (2011), explains that the importance of learning an additional language "has to be tied to its relevance as an empowering, emancipatory, and democratic function" (p. 179). Adult emergent readers bring rich and varied life experiences into the classroom. These experiences can serve as a starting point for meaningful literacy learning. Becoming literate can aid adult emergent readers in learning about their positionality in society and can be a tool for their self-empowerment and emancipation.

Dialogism and Reciprocal Learning

As a means of respecting the learner's autonomy and life experiences, a critical classroom should be centered on dialogue (Freire, 1970). Shor (1992, p. 85) posits that an empowering teacher talks with students rather than at them, and he describes educational dialogue as both student-centered and teacher-directed. Likewise, Freire (1997) sees dialogism as creating an environment where dialogue, that includes critical thinking, can take place as part of the democratic teacher's responsibility. Freire (1998) stresses that it is important for the instructor to listen to what learners have to say rather than simply imposing authoritarian views on them. To this end, he emphasizes the significance of

silence on the part of the instructor, stating “silence makes it possible for the speaker who is really committed to the experience of communication rather than the simple transmission of information to hear the question, the doubt, the creativity of the person who is listening. Without this, communication withers” (Freire, 1998, p. 104). Thus, listening to the learner is a crucial part of dialogue and reciprocal learning. Within this notion, Freire (1998) considers the student and the teacher as both subject to the same transformative learning process of “construction and reconstruction” (p. 33). In this way, learning is a reciprocal process for the student and teacher. In other words, both the teacher and student are learning and teaching during the educative process. In the ESOL classroom, adult emergent readers can benefit from dialogue that respects the knowledge they bring to the learning context and that helps them develop critical thinking which they can bring to their understanding of text. The instructor also benefits by learning about the learners’ culture and circumstances.

A Recipe for Democratic Teaching

To better understand the study framework, I utilize a recipe for vegetable soup as a metaphor (see Figure 1). This recipe has a personal meaning to me as a vegan and as a language instructor who has faced the challenge of teaching adult emergent readers. The pot represents the classroom or physical space where the soup is made. Democratic teaching is the spoon that stirs, or guides, the ingredients of the soup. Praxis is the broth that permeates and gives flavor to all of the other ingredients in the pot. Praxis holds the dish together, making it a soup rather than a bowl of unrelated foods. Learner autonomy, critical consciousness, focus on real-life issues, dialogism and reciprocal learning are ingredients without which the soup cannot be both rich and nourishing. To be a gourmet

creation rather than an ‘all but the kitchen sink’ after thought, all of these ingredients must work together in unison with each one complementing the others. Of course, the instructor is the chef that creates the dish deciding on quantities and combinations that allow the soup to have its best flavor.

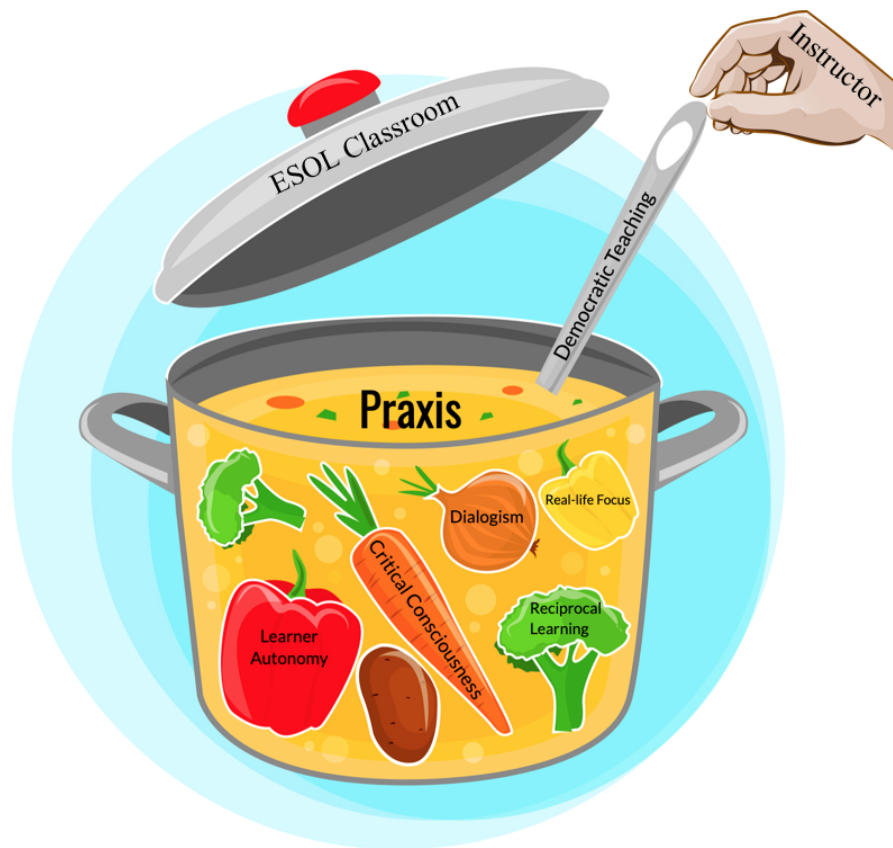


Figure 1 A Recipe for Democratic Teaching

Adult emergent readers can benefit from recognition of their autonomy, engaging in dialogue and critical thinking, and having instructors who participate in praxis, including critical thinking and research to create an effective learning environment. Adult emergent readers may come to the ESOL classroom from oppressive contexts (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Brumback, 2014). They may also face oppressive conditions in the United States due to their low literacy level or factors such as race or religion. As

immigrants to a new country, it is important for them to understand how learning can affect their present lives to plan for the future they want to create.

Texas is home to many immigrants. Among these immigrants are adult emergent readers. These students need instruction that meets their learning needs so that they remain in literacy programs and are able to meet their educational goals. Doing so allows them to have better employment opportunities and more meaningful social interactions in a new country. While the body of research on these learners is starting to grow, there is still much that needs to be done. Many TESOL instructors are still struggling with encountering the best methods for teaching adult emergent readers. TESOL instructors in community-based programs frequently do not have specialized education or training in teaching these learners.

Dissertation Roadmap

This qualitative dissertation study is divided into six chapters. Chapter I sets the context for the dissertation study. It describes the problem statement, presents the research questions, and explains the theoretical framework. Next, Chapter II presents a review of the current literature as related to the instruction of adult ESOL emergent readers. Then, Chapter III provides the details concerning the methods and study design. Following that, Chapters IV and V present study findings. Finally, Chapter VI provides conclusions on what was learned from the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This qualitative layered case study examined the experiences and perceptions of TESOL (Teaching English to Speaker of Other Languages) instructors working with emergent readers in community-based programs in Central Texas. Arranged by themes, this chapter highlights the literature related to this topic and discusses the existing gaps. The main themes discussed in this chapter are community-based ESOL programs, literacy, low literacy in adult ESOL, adult ESOL emergent readers, needs of adult ESOL emergent readers, instructional practices for adult emergent readers, and instructor preparation for working with adult emergent readers.

Community-Based ESOL Programs

According to Texas Governmental Code § 535.001 (2009), community-based organization “means a nonprofit corporation or association that is located in close proximity to the population the organization serves.” In addition, Galbraith (1995) defines community-based education as

an educational process by which individuals (in this case adults) become more competent in their skills, attitudes, and concepts in an effort to live in and gain more control over local aspects of their communities through democratic participation. (p. 7)

The pursuit of competence may be in any area in which the individual wants to improve, for example: computer skills, personal finances, or gardening. In a qualitative study on the social value of community-based adult education, Neville et al. (2014) found that it has benefits for individuals, families, communities, and the larger society. Learners in their study reported better self-image, placing greater importance on learning, and

experiencing the classroom as a context for social contact. Neville et al. (2014) discovered that this impact on the individual extended out to the learner's family by making learning the norm and placing higher importance on children staying in school, which could serve to end cycles of poverty within families. Neville et al. (2014) describe impacts on the community, as well, in the form of greater community engagement. They also found that community-based education helped those from outside the community integrate into the community. The Neville et al. (2014) study also discusses impacts of community-based education on the larger society. Participants in the study shared that they were more willing to vote in elections and lobby for community needs due to what they had learned in community-based classes. Barriers to participation in community education were also uncovered by the study. These were primarily financial limitations and previous negative experience with education.

In terms of English to Speakers of Other Languages, community-based organizations provide language instruction to learners who may not be able to attend other institutions due to cost, family obligations, work schedule, or location (Neville et al., 2014; Snell, 2013). According to Snell (2013), community-based ESOL programs are "inadequately staffed, underfunded, and under-represented in TESOL research" (p. 7). The author goes on to explain that most research is based in universities and funding for graduate students to teach is provided for graduate assistantships rather than for positions in community-based programs. She also states that in Indiana, government-funded community-based ESOL programs only hire those with K-12 teaching certification and thus eliminate instructors highly qualified to teach ESOL to adults in this context.

Clearly, community-based education offers benefits to learners and more broadly to society as a whole. It provides a place that all ESOL learners can attend, especially when they are unable to enroll in institutions of higher learning. The gap in research on community-based ESOL programs presents important questions on how to support these programs so that they can best support the communities with which they work.

What is Literacy?

Much disagreement exists over the definition of literacy. In addition, the term has expanded over time to include a variety of disciplines. A simple search of the term *literacy* results in various types: financial literacy, health literacy, print literacy, art literacy, visualization literacy, digital literacy, and more. The current dissertation study uses Frankel et al.'s (2016) definition of literacy as a point of departure: “We define literacy *as the process of using reading, writing, and oral language to extract, construct, integrate, and critique meaning through interaction and involvement with multimodal texts in the context of socially situated practices*” (p. 7). Literacy is more than simply reading and writing words. It cannot be disconnected from the world that we live in. Likewise, Freire (1970) states: “Insofar as language is impossible without thought, and language and thought are impossible without the world to which they refer, the human word is more than mere vocabulary—it is word-and-action” (p. 212). Not disregarding the importance of an expanded definition, for the current study, the term literacy was narrowed to refer specifically to print literacy and the processes involved in beginning to acquire print literacy.

What is Meant by Low Literacy in Adult ESOL?

Adult ESOL students who have low literacy levels are referred to by various terminology in the literature, such as ESL literacy, literacy-level, and Low Educated Second Language and Literacy for Adults (LESLLA). Recently, LESLLA has been changed to Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (www.leslla.org). However, for the most part, a common taxonomy based on Halverson and Haynes (1982) can be found in the literature to describe adult ESOL learners with low levels of native language literacy (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Burt et al., 2003; Florez & Terrill, 2003; Wrigley, 2013). *Preliterate* learners are those who come from cultures that do not have print literacy. Wrigley (2013) states that preliterate means “coming from a language that has no history of reading and writing and literacy is not universally taught; having no access to literacy education and no concept that print carries meaning” (p. 2). In other words, the opportunity to learn to read and write is not available to these learners and is not seen as necessary. *Nonliterate* learners come from a culture that has print literacy but are not yet print-literate themselves. Burt et al. (2003) report that this is often due to poverty. *Semiliterate* learners have the concept that print carries meaning, but they have extremely limited ability to read or write themselves due to lack of schooling or other factors (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010).

In place of the term semiliterate, Wrigley (2013) describes learners in terms of their literacy skills in the first language (L1) and the second language (L2). The author specifies that learners may have limited literacy in L1, limited literacy in L2, or limited literacy in L1 and L2. In this last category, she explains that while learners have some literacy skills in each of the two languages, they “are not sufficiently literate in any

language to fully participate in a society where print literacy is ubiquitous and expected” (Wrigley, 2013, p. 3). The author asserts that most learners with low literacy levels in adult education programs fit into this category. They may be able to read at some level, but they cannot perform all of the tasks they want or need to do that require literacy, for example, completing job applications or studying a driver’s license manual.

While all of the aforementioned terminology is descriptive and useful in distinguishing between learners’ literacy levels, each of these focuses on what the learner lacks in terms of being literate. In contrast, for the purpose of this dissertation, learners with limited literacy are referred to as adult emergent readers. In a review of current research, Bigelow and Vinogradov (2011, p. 121) assert that the term emergent reader conveys the idea of becoming literate. Therefore, using the term adult emergent reader focuses on adding a skill to the learner’s life rather than on the absence of that skill.

Who Are Adult ESOL Emergent Readers?

Adult emergent readers in the ESOL classroom are a diverse group within a diverse group of learners. They are any immigrants regardless of legal status (e.g., documented, undocumented, refugee, asylee) who do not know how to read, or read only minimally, in their native languages and who are learning to read for the first time in English. According to Vinogradov (2013c), these learners are experiencing “a great deal of upheaval as they adjust to a new country and city, find work and schools, and take care of daily personal and family needs” (pp. 14-15). In her policy article on educating Latino immigrant adults, Lukes (2009) states:

Adult ESL programs serve a diverse array of immigrant students, including young adults, parents, and senior citizens. These students may

be formally educated, with post-secondary degrees up through doctoral level; have only a few years of primary school; have never attended school; have attended and dropped out (or been counseled out) of high school in the U.S. or in their native country; or be immigrant youth who entered the U.S. at school age but chose never to enroll in school. (p. 8)

ESOL programs are by nature diverse in the ages, cultures, languages, and educational background of their participants. Adult emergent readers add to this diversity because they do not share with their classmates the common experience of learning to read in a native language. This makes meeting the needs of all students, including emergent readers, more complicated for the instructor.

The subsections that follow first describe a group of learners that is likely to include adult emergent readers, those with interrupted formal education. Next, the strengths of adult emergent readers are highlighted.

Interrupted Formal Education

Many adult emergent readers have experienced interrupted formal education (McLaughlin et al., 2008; Wrigley, 2013; Young-Scholten, 2015). For a variety of reasons these learners did not consistently attend formal schooling when they were children. Therefore, they were not taught to read as young students. Reasons for interrupted formal education include coming from a preliterate culture, lack of access to school, economic struggles, civil unrest, or learning difficulties (Wrigley, 2013). While any immigrant may have been denied educational opportunity that resulted in not learning to read, the literature focuses on two groups of learners that are likely to have experienced interrupted

formal education: refugee learners and migrant worker learners (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; McLaughlin, et al., 2008).

Refugee Learners

Adult emergent readers who have emigrated to English dominant countries as refugees face a variety of challenges. According to Bigelow and Schwarz (2010),

Such political circumstances as civil war, genocide and famine cause the closing of schools, internal displacement, forced migration and, thus, limited and interrupted formal schooling. In refugee camps, education is often impossible or continually interrupted. (p. 2).

Living under imposed and stressful circumstances may create a lack of educational opportunity that leads to learners not receiving reading instruction. Bigelow and Schwarz (2010) also explain that refugees frequently must wait for long periods of time in poor conditions before being able to resettle in another country and begin their studies.

Additionally, in a master's thesis qualitative study on teaching adult ESOL emergent readers in a Somali refugee camp in Kenya, Brumback (2014) asserts that learners may have been denied educational opportunities previously due to gender bias. Brumback (2014) also reports other challenges that the learners faced, such as uncorrected vision problems due to lack of access to healthcare and having to be absent frequently due to the schedule of life in the camp.

Migrant Worker Learners

Adult emergent readers need not be refugees in order to have experienced interrupted schooling. Needing to work due to poverty can also be a factor for

adult emergent readers. For example, migrant workers leave their home countries and travel to foreign lands in order to work. In their description of a university-based outreach and education program, McLaughlin et al. (2008) explain that most migrant farmworkers are from Mexico and have a low level of education with the average grade level completed being sixth grade. They also point out that in addition to not being compulsory, “secondary school involves fees and long-distance travel for many in rural and impoverished communities” (McLaughlin et al., 2008 p. 40). However, these authors caution that in spite of the average level of school completion, “many Mexican college graduates have engaged in agricultural labor in the United States, and many Mexican children do not attend or drop out of elementary school due to poverty and migration” (p. 41). In other words, there is diversity within this population, as well.

It is not safe to assume, however, that all adult ESOL emergent readers have experienced interrupted education. As Vinogradov (2008) points out in a theoretical article on adult emergent readers, “they may have had a great deal of school experiences either in the U.S. or at home, but without a great deal of success” (p. 8). However, she does not elaborate on why this might be. In the literature on ESOL adult emergent readers, several authors mentioned learning difficulties or disabilities (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Burt et al., 2003; Wrigley, 2013), but none elaborated on the topic.

Strengths of Adult Emergent Readers

In spite of the multiple characteristics that certainly present challenges for working with adult emergent readers in the ESOL classroom, some authors also focus on the strengths that these students bring to the learning context (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004;

Vinogradov, 2008; Wrigley, 2013) which can be seen in their oral language abilities and their coping skills.

Oral Language

Through a survey of the research, Tarone et al. (2009) conclude that adult emergent readers have oral processing strengths, specifically in rhyming, phoneme discrimination and acquiring new words. However, it should be noted that this may not be true for adult emergent readers with certain learning disabilities. Furthermore, Pettitt and Tarone (2015) state, “low-literate learners may be skilled oral communicators—drawing upon wide lexical variety, vernacular forms, and pragmatic competence in order to accomplish their communicative goals—and skilled at navigating life in a print-based society” (p. 35). In fact, the participant in their mixed methods longitudinal study on adult emergent readers, Roba, was multilingual, speaking seven languages (Pettitt & Tarone, 2015). Based on their research with adult emergent readers from Somalia, Bigelow and Tarone (2004) discuss additional strengths of preliterate learners including the ability to memorize significant quantities of information and to transmit that information orally without the use of notes. The authors go on to describe a Somali herdsman being able to remember not only the names, but the “habits, and social preferences of 200 camels” (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004, p. 693). Similarly, Vinogradov (2008) observes that the advanced English oral skills of some adult emergent readers can result in their being assigned to higher level ESOL classes without program staff realizing that their literacy skills are not equally as high until later.

Coping Skills

According to Wrigley (2013), adult emergent readers may also have developed coping skills as a result of their lack of literacy:

Adult immigrants bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience acquired through survival and transition from one life to another. In spite of their limited language and literacy skills, they have managed to forge networks that help them obtain and keep jobs, secure housing for their families, and enroll their children in school. Many are able to navigate complex immigration systems and find their way to new destinations relying on knowledge and strategies that are not dependent on the ability to read and write. (p. 3)

While there may be a tendency to view adult emergent readers as disadvantaged, they may exhibit many strengths in the absence of print. Many of these learners have had to employ great creativity in order to navigate a print-based society. Bearing this in mind can help the TESOL instructor identify adult emergent readers in their learning contexts.

What Are the Needs of Adult Emergent Readers?

This section discusses the needs of adult emergent readers in a language classroom setting. Outlined below are factors that the TESOL instructor must consider when working with adult emergent readers: identification of adult emergent readers, transferring of reading skills, learning in a classroom, and the role of first language literacy instruction.

Identification of Adult Emergent Readers

It might seem, with the previously mentioned characteristics, that it would be easy to identify adult emergent readers in an adult ESOL classroom, but that is not usually the

case. These students lack visibility and may not be noticed. Johnston (2013) points out that adult emergent readers are likely to be a minority in the adult ESOL classroom, and instructors may not have a system in place to identify them or know why they lack literacy. This brings up the question of how many of these students are not identified and silently drop out of class. More research into this area is needed. Unfortunately, when TESOL instructors are able to identify adult emergent readers, they may have nothing in place to serve them as a result. As Johnston (2013) notes, instructors may find it difficult to locate appropriate materials for adult emergent readers, as most commercial materials are not produced with them in mind. These materials may start at a level that is too high for emergent readers or may progress too rapidly.

Transfer of Reading Skills

A primary challenge that adult emergent readers face is lack of opportunity to transfer native language reading skills to the target language, or the new language they are learning (August, 2006; Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Thieves, 2012). August (2006) explains that if learners have a higher level of literacy in their native language, they will be able to transfer higher-order thinking skills used in reading to the second language (L2). However, if emergent readers have literacy skills below fourth grade level, they will be unable to do this. August (2006) concludes that these higher-order skills need to be taught in the L2 which translates into the learner needing more time to learn to read in the L2.

Two language learning concepts that give insight into the significance of transferring reading skills are: the developmental interdependence hypothesis and translanguaging. According to the developmental interdependence hypothesis (Alderson,

1984; Birch 2015), low literacy skills in the first language are linked to low literacy skills in the second language. In other words, reading difficulty is not based in a particular language but is a general difficulty with reading that will present itself across languages (Alderson, 1984; Birch 2015). In light of this theory, adult ESOL emergent readers would be expected to struggle to learn to read in English. The theory of translanguaging (García, 2009; Park & Valdez, 2018) aims to explain how language exists within the bilingual learner. The theory of translanguaging does not divide the learner's languages into separate autonomous systems. In translanguaging, all of the linguistic information that the learner has is treated as one system from which the learner chooses what is needed in order to communicate effectively (García, 2009; Park & Valdez, 2018). In this one system, adult emergent readers do not have information on reading and writing available to apply to the new language. Considering the developmental interdependence hypothesis and translanguaging, Thieves (2012) concludes that:

ESL Literacy adults who have limited or no literacy in their L1 will not be able to readily access a language operation such as reading and writing in English because they have not acquired it in their L1. They will benefit neither from an underlying database of linguistic knowledge and abilities that can help them perform well in either their L1 or English nor from the use of translanguaging to maximize learning. Furthermore, they will be unable to transfer basic reading and writing skills from their L1 and will generally have greater difficulty in becoming literate in English. (p. 21)

The inability to transfer this wealth of knowledge to reading in English places the adult emergent reader at a great disadvantage. The implication is that learning to read is a much more complicated process for those who do not have first language literacy.

Learning in a Classroom

Another factor that may cause adult ESOL emergent readers to struggle with learning English is lack of experience with the classroom environment (Brumback, 2014; Johnston, 2013; Perry, 2013). Lukes (2009, p. 8-9) describes an adult emergent reader in her class as needing to learn norms, behaviors, and expectations typical of the classroom in addition to how to hold a book and pencil. Brumback (2014) reports a similar experience:

Low-educated students with no experience in a formal education setting will be lacking familiarity with classroom routines. Students who are used to learning through rote memorization and oral repetition may have a difficult time understanding what is expected of them in a foreign language classroom where the correct response to How are you? is I am fine (not a repetition of How are you?). (p. 39)

This inexperience with the classroom setting places demands on learners with interrupted formal education that other learners do not face. They are required to learn skills for being in the classroom in order to access the language learning that they are seeking. For the instructor, this challenge is compounded by the diversity of educational backgrounds of the students enrolled in the same ESOL class. According to Johnston (2013), “A student who possesses a doctorate may be sitting next to a student who has never operated a pencil sharpener” (p. 21).

Obviously, the needs of these students vary greatly. A student who has a rich background of formal education will be ready to dive into language learning and may have little patience for learning classroom etiquette. Meanwhile, learners with little experience in formal education may be easily lost and frustrated by not knowing what is expected of them and not being able to anticipate classroom procedures and routines, which may contribute to a lack of self-confidence in the learning environment (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Vinogradov, 2008).

In addition, adult emergent readers may also find tasks involving fine motor skills challenging. Perry (2013) mentioned that some of her students struggled with tasks, such as using scissors. Likewise, Brumback (2014) found, “Students in the preliterate class struggled with writing because their fine motor skills were not well enough developed to hold a thin pen or pencil and write legibly within the lines” (p. 41). She suggests having students use crayons or markers, which are easier to control, before writing with pens and pencils. This challenge adds yet another layer of complexity to teaching literacy to adult ESOL emergent readers.

Role of First Language Literacy Instruction

Various researchers have found that instruction in native language literacy can facilitate adult emergent readers learning to read in English (Artieda, 2017; August, 2006; Brumback, 2014; Thievers, 2012). In a Spanish quantitative study of 140 bilingual adult learners of English as a foreign language, Artieda (2017) found that L1 reading comprehension was moderately correlated with L2 achievement for beginners. This was not so for intermediate learners. The researcher concludes that “L1 literacy acts as a threshold for academically disadvantaged learners, who may not be able to profit from

education in a second language until they have reached a minimum level of literacy in their L1” (Artieda, 2017, p. 174). She explains that beginners may need to close gaps in L1 before benefitting from additional L2 instruction. This author also found that the relationship between L1 literacy and L2 achievement can have long-term effects up to 20 or 30 years after formal education is completed.

Several other authors have asserted that instruction in L1 is beneficial for adult emergent readers (August, 2006; Brumback, 2014; Thieves, 2012). One of these authors, August (2006), proposes a three-level model of instruction for adult emergent readers, which includes L2 language skills, L1 language and reading skills, and L2 academic literacy skills. According to August (2006), more emphasis would need to be placed on L2 academic literacy skills with learners weaker in L1 due to the need to acquire these skills for the first time, rather than through transfer. Likewise, Brumback (2014) proposes teaching literacy skills in the learner’s L1. She states that starting with the familiar can help provide a base for learners to move more easily into the unfamiliar language. For example, phonological awareness and understanding of the alphabetic principle in their native languages, may aid adult emergent readers in learning to read in English.

Focusing on adult emergent readers’ identities, Thieves (2012) found that acquiring L1 literacy is important to adult emergent readers themselves. Some students participating in her study believed that L1 literacy would help them learn English. One Somali student expressed that having native language literacy would help with recognizing letters in English, thus indicating that some adult emergent readers see the importance of the transfer of reading skills onto the new language, which further adds credibility to the aforementioned research.

Instructional Practices for Adult Emergent Readers

This section discusses what knowledge base TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers need to have. It also highlights approaches and techniques for effective instruction with ESOL adult emergent readers and focuses on how instructor perception affects teaching.

Knowledge Base

Vinogradov and Linden (2009) have proposed the following 10 principles as a base of knowledge for LESLLA instructors: “the refugee/immigrant experience, types of literacy-level learners, literacy in childhood vs. adulthood, emergent readers, second language acquisition, key research, components of reading, balanced literacy, approaches to teaching literacy, and connections between first and second language literacies” (p. 135). In addition, these authors propose a set of skills as those that LESLLA instructors need in order to use this knowledge base to provide students with effective instruction. These skills include assessment, course design, and materials development.

Later, Vinogradov (2013c) proposed a model for LESLLA instructor knowledge. Her model is made up of four domains: adult learning, teaching, language and language acquisition, and immigrant and refugee experience, where early literacy instruction serves as a grounding layer. Because TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers are the only TESOL instructors that have to teach alphabetic print literacy from the very beginning, the author suggests that they should draw from the ample research on early literacy instruction for children.

Additionally, Vinogradov (2013c) emphasizes the need for TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers to be *adaptive experts*. Instructors may especially need to adapt

materials for use with ESOL adult emergent readers because not many commercial materials exist (Vinogradov, 2013c). Furthermore, TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers need to be able to navigate a complex context. According to the author,

The LESLLA teacher wears many hats; she is a teacher, a resettlement worker, an adult learning expert, and a language instructor. These four areas of expertise all interact with her critical role as reading specialist, as early reading instruction is at the core of LESLLA education. (Vinogradov, 2013c, p. 21)

To say the least, the knowledge base of the TESOL instructor of adult emergent readers should be broad. Unfortunately, many of these instructors are asked to do so much with so little preparation. The very complexity of this teaching context calls for a wealth of research. However, empirical evidence as to the effectiveness of a particular knowledge base is still lacking.

Approaches and Techniques

There are different approaches and techniques for teaching adult ESOL emergent readers. Drawing on the research of various authors, in their book on teaching learners with limited formal education, Freeman et al. (2002) described four keys to success for adolescent English learners, which may apply to adult emergent readers as well:

Key 1: Engage students in challenging, theme-based curriculum to develop academic concepts.

Key 2: Draw on students' background—their experiences, cultures, and languages.

Key 3: Organize collaborative activities and scaffold instruction to build students' academic English proficiency.

Key 4 Create confident students who value school and value themselves as learners. (p. 52-57)

According to the authors, the first key is important because when educators have high expectations for their learners, they demonstrate their belief in the students' potential. When learners believe that their teachers see their potential, they are better able to see that potential in themselves (Freeman et al., 2002). The second key refers to using the learners' lived experiences as a foundation for teaching them what they need to learn (Freeman et al., 2002). The third key focuses on learners working together so that the strengths of one support the weaknesses of the other and vice versa. This third key also includes the necessity of providing supports for the learner and gradually taking them away as the learner moves toward independence (Freeman et al., 2002). The authors describe the final key as being a result of implementing the first three keys. Students gain confidence through instruction that is challenging, engaging, relevant, and supportive (Freeman et al., 2002). In addition, many elements of these keys are present in later literature specifically about ESOL adult emergent readers.

Likewise, in a literature review about motivating adult emergent readers, Severinsen et al. (2019) came to some similar conclusions. The authors suggested (1) integrating learners' experiences into the content, (2) getting to know students, (3) teaching learning strategies, (4) having learners collaborate, and (5) praising the students' effort. It should be noted, however, that these findings did not come from research done directly with adult emergent readers. Instead, the conclusions were extrapolated from research done with similar populations.

While there is an overall lack of information on the second language acquisition of adult emergent readers (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004; Marrapodi, 2013), some research has been done. Making real-world connections in learning (Condelli et al., 2002) is prominent in the literature. Additionally, in a discussion of their previous study (Condelli et al., 2002), Condelli and Wrigley (2006) identify three areas that are beneficial to emergent readers: “connection to the outside world, use of the student’s native language for clarification in instruction and varied practice and interaction” (p. 126). These areas are echoed in later research by others as discussed in the forthcoming pages.

Another primary finding in the literature is on the benefits of teaching adult ESOL emergent readers with a whole-part-whole approach, which combines bottom-up and top-down teaching methods. Birch (2015) describes the bottom-up flow of information and the top-down flow of information. A bottom-up flow starts with the smaller parts of language and moves up to meaning making. A phonics approach would be a bottom-up approach. A top-down flow begins with meaning and works down. A whole language approach would be top-down (Birch, 2015). A whole-part-whole approach combines a bottom-up flow with a top-down flow. The instructor teaches lower-level enabling skills, such as correspondence between letters and sounds and sounding out words, along with higher-level whole language skills that include meaningful tasks (Trupke-Bastida & Poulos, 2007; Vinogradov, 2008).

In a study comparing pre- and post-tests of emergent readers receiving whole-part-whole instruction, Trupke-Bastida and Poulos (2007) assert that adult emergent readers need to focus on phonemic awareness and decoding skills, which require the learner to be able to recognize letters, understand that letters represent sounds, be able to

produce those sound accordingly, be able to blend sounds into words, and recognize the resulting word. These authors found that a whole-part-whole reading intervention was beneficial for adult emergent readers, specifically non-literate learners. Similarly, Vinogradov (2008) also promotes a whole-part-whole approach to literacy instruction. The author stresses the importance of background knowledge for instructing adult emergent readers, especially older learners. Vinogradov (2008) states:

Building reading in emergent readers requires instruction that is both top-down and bottom-up. We cannot expect pre-literate students to learn to read within the vacuum of a de-contextualized lesson, nor can we expect these students to acquire alphabetic knowledge by osmosis, without deliberate attention paid to symbols and sounds. (p. 3)

In other words, adult emergent readers need context and connections to their lives to make meaning from text, and they need the skills to decode the words that comprise text. Otherwise, they will not be able to access the necessary connections for making meaning.

Based on existent literature and experience in the field, Vinogradov (2008) proposes five principles for instructing literacy to adult emergent readers: (1) Keep it in context, (2) Go up and down the ladder, (3) Provide a buffet of learning opportunities, (4) Tap into strengths, and (5) Nurture learners' confidence. The author explains keeping learning in context as using the rich life experiences of adult emergent readers as a base for learning new material. Instruction is delivered in a context that has meaning for the learners. She describes going up and down the ladder as providing learners with beneficial whole-part-whole instruction as was discussed previously. Vinogradov relays that providing a buffet of learning, or activities from different learning modes, allows

students to choose activities that are compatible with their learning preferences. She explains that tapping into strengths refers to starting from where the learner feels confident and knowledgeable and building from there. Finally, the author states that nurturing learners' confidence implies establishing routines that allow the learner to anticipate what happens during a lesson and allowing time for pleasure reading at the learners' independent level. Additionally, for building learner confidence, Vinogradov (2008) encourages educators to give adult emergent readers more time to learn new skills and stresses the importance of repetition when teaching them. "In fact, consider dividing your class time daily with one-half or even two-thirds of the day devoted to re-activating schema, review, and re-visiting material, and only one-half to one-third devoted to new material" (Vinogradov, 2008, pp. 8-9). The author's recommendation stresses the importance of additional practice in lessons for adult emergent readers. She cautions, however, against repetition and prefers providing students with different tasks related to the same material to build students' confidence by helping them be successful.

Focusing on a different approach, Condelli et al. (2010) examined the effects of using systematic, direct, sequential, multi-sensory instruction with ESOL learners in reading. They found that adult emergent readers scored higher on decoding activities after the treatment but determined that the improvement may have been coincidental. They did not find any impact on adult emergent readers in the other areas assessed. More research is needed in this area.

Marrapodi (2013) did a task analysis to discover which methods worked best with adult emergent readers. She learned that using a phonics approach was not optimal for adult emergent readers who lacked visual literacy and awareness of English phonemes.

Marrapodi also concluded that teaching sight words was problematic for learners who did not have awareness that printed words carried meaning. One approach that she considered beneficial with adult emergent readers was the Language Experience Approach (Bell & Dy, 1984; Holt, 1995; Nessel & Dixon, 2008), where the learners tell a story that the instructor writes down, and then learning activities are based on that text. Marrapodi (2013) found that learners were more engaged and that, “The language experience approach provides shared experiences of meaning-making with personal, emotional connection for the learner” (p. 16). This supports the importance of making a real-world connection, which Condelli et al. (2006) and Vinogradov (2008, 2016) both mention.

More recently, in a study examining which practices TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers could adapt from K-2 literacy instruction, Vinogradov (2016) concluded that several early literacy practices could be beneficial for use with adult emergent readers. Vinogradov divides these into four themes: (1) organizing literacy instruction, (2) integrating math, (3) responding to literature, and (4) fostering independent learning. (1) Organizing literacy instruction included establishing routines such as a morning message to let students know what would be covered in the day’s lesson and a Reader’s Workshop format where lesson began and ended with familiar routines. (2) Integrating math included adding numeracy to literacy instruction, such as doing surveys with the class and asking which answer had more and which answer had less. (3) Responding to literature included encouraging students to make connections from their lives to the texts being read, and (4) fostering independent learning involved

offering choices in the lesson, having independent reading time and establishing common names for different parts of the lesson to aid in carrying out these independent activities.

As do other researchers, Larrotta (2019) emphasizes the importance of connecting literacy to the students' lived experiences. She describes using "dialogue and storytelling as bridges to move from oral language to print" (p. 33). The author explains that using topics that are meaningful to adult emergent readers can motivate their participation in reading activities, such as comparing and contrasting, and how using student selected artifacts can inspire authentic writing. Larrotta also recommends using a journal as a source of producing authentic writing and practicing writing fluency. She discusses focusing on the students' strengths and building from what they bring to the classroom. The author emphasizes the importance of having materials available in the classroom that provide tactile and visual input for ESOL adult emergent readers, such as photographs, video cameras, markers, large paper and crossword puzzles. Finally, Larrotta (2019) outlined the following recommendations for moving students from oral language to print,

- (1) Be flexible and create opportunities to learn from your students.
- (2) Allow students to shine and be the center of the teaching-learning process.
- (3) Listen and reflect on what literacy activity to do next to capture your students' attention.
- (4) Pick readings that bring to life the cultural flavors and traditions of your students.
- (5) Read more on how adults with low literacy skills learn. (p. 33)

In these recommendations, the author focuses on reciprocal learning as promoted by Freire (1998). Additionally, she emphasizes enhancing learning by respecting and valuing

who students are and the life they have lived. This theme is recurring throughout the literature.

Instructor Perceptions

Instructor perceptions towards learners play a role in students' success in the classroom (García & Guerra, 2004; Mellom et al., 2017). Instructors may see their students' cultural background as a strength and a means of enhancing their learning potential (Larrotta & Serrano, 2012; Nelson & Guerra, 2013) or they may view their students through a deficit thinking model (García & Guerra, 2004; Valencia, 1997). Deficit thinking can be contrasted with perceptions of students' *funds of knowledge* or "strategic and cultural resources...that households contain," (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992).

According to Valencia (1997), the deficit thinking model asserts that students fail in school due to something they lack internally. He explains that this way of thinking places blame on the students for their not learning and oppresses the learners. When talking about culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, García and Guerra (2004) state that deficit thinking is present at all levels of society and that educators reflect this mindset. The authors claim that if teachers perceive their students as having deficits, this can cause them to lower expectations for students. In their qualitative study on the beliefs teachers have about CLD students, Nelson and Guerra (2013) suggest that "the vast majority of educators, including educational leaders, may hold deficit beliefs about culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students and often have insufficient cultural knowledge to recognize and respond to culture clashes" (p. 88). Nelson and Guerra (2013) did find, however, that those with more cultural knowledge

voiced fewer examples of deficit thinking. When they did respond with deficit thinking, their comments were not as severe. The work of these authors indicates that learning about the culture of students could be an important step in reducing deficit thinking in educators.

Deficit thinking has a negative impact on adult ESOL emergent readers. In Kaur's (2016) ethnographic study of adult former Syrian refugees and literacy practices, the author expresses that deficit-based discourse "serves only to further marginalize those who have already survived so much suffering inflicted on them by violence asserting groups" (p. 36). Learners who have survived oppressive situations certainly do not benefit from their instructors treating them as if they are not adequate as students.

Likewise, Vinogradov (2008) contends that deficit thinking is prevalent in teachers and researchers of emergent readers. Vinogradov (2008) explains that these teachers and researchers,

define emergent readers in terms of what they lack: formal schooling, L1 literacy, print awareness, etc... While these learners may not have the same approach to learning as those socialized in modern, literate societies, they are of course no less capable or intelligent, and in fact, they may have skills that literate students do not. (p. 6)

TESOL instructors of adults have a choice whether to focus on what emergent readers cannot do or to focus on and build from the strengths that they bring in their abilities and rich life experiences.

Pearl (1997) contrasts deficit thinking with democratic multicultural education. He describes the point of departure of democratic multicultural education as "shared

common understanding from which different cultures emerge as spokes,” and states that democratic multicultural education “equips all students with the capacity to be informed, competent citizens in a society with diverse populations and diverse interests” (p. 221). Contrarily, Pearl (1997) describes deficit thinking as a means for “a justified *unlevel* playing field” (p. 214). Pearl explains that deficit thinking is used to legitimize unequal access to resources for those with and without deficits.

In summary, if educators view their students, whether children or adults, through a deficit lens, then they will not feel compelled to take responsibility for providing them with the type of learning that they need to succeed. Alternatively, if teachers focus on students’ funds of knowledge, or the strengths that they already have and can use to make learning more effective, students, such as adult emergent readers can be more successful.

Are TESOL Instructors Prepared to Teach Adult Emergent Readers?

Many instructors of adult emergent readers lack adequate training for teaching these students (Bigelow & Vinogradov, 2011; Farrelly, 2013, 2017; Vinogradov & Liden, 2009). In addition, there is a lack of research on instructor preparation and professional development for those who teach ESOL adult emergent readers (Vinogradov, 2013c). According to Vinogradov and Liden (2009), adult TESOL instructors have a wide range of educational and training backgrounds. Some are volunteers with little to no training in teaching ESOL. Others are certified as K-12 teachers. Still others hold graduate degrees and TESOL teaching certificates. This further adds to the diversity and complexity of the field. Furthermore, Vinogradov and Liden (2009) have found that instruction for adult emergent readers is not commonly included in graduate programs for TESOL instructors.

In addition, it is unlikely that TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers will have their own experience of learning to read as an adult from which to draw (Vinogradov, 2013c).

In a mixed-methods study, Faez and Valeo (2012) surveyed 115 instructors with TESOL accreditation. All participants were in their first three years of teaching. The participants identified their practicum experience as contributing most to their readiness for actual teaching. Because many TESOL instructors in community-based programs lack any training for teaching ESOL, TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers in community-based programs are unlikely to have participated in a practicum. It is worth noting that Faez and Veleo's study was limited by being based on the participants self-report regarding their preparedness (Vinogradov, 2013c).

In a qualitative case study on the preparation of TESOL instructors to work with refugee learners, Perry and Hart (2012) concluded that instructor preparation was severely inconsistent and that instructors felt unprepared for their assignments in spite of any training they had been given. In a qualitative case study on a volunteer adult TESOL instructor for African refugees in a community-based program, Perry (2013) found that while her participant, Carolyn, had many attributes of a qualified teacher and a background as a school librarian, she felt unprepared to teach literacy to ESOL adult emergent readers with the 12 or so hours of training the literacy center had provided her.

In a qualitative case study of two TESOL instructors to adult emergent readers, Farrelly (2014), reports that both participants were unclear as to what their students' goals were. The instructors based what they did in the classroom on their own perceptions of the students' goal. In addition, the instructors experienced a contradiction between what they experienced to be working with the learners and how they believed

they were supposed to be teaching. For example, their teacher preparation taught them to use collaborative learning activities, but the instructors did not find that these activities were successful with their learners (Farrelly, 2014).

Research has been conducted on effective methods of professional development for TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers by Vinogradov (2013a, 2013b, 2016) and more recently by Farrelly (2017), but there is still much more to know (Farrelly, 2017). Vinogradov (2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2016) studied the effect of using study circles with TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers. “Study circles are small learning groups of practitioners, usually 8 to 12 teachers, who meet to discuss issues of relevance to their classroom practice” (Vinogradov, 2012, p. 34). Vinogradov (2012) reports that the interactive nature of study circles allowed the participants to experience a sense of commitment to the group even though they started out not knowing each other. The researcher also found that the study circle allowed the instructors to share ideas, techniques and resources for teaching with each other. This interaction helped teachers to feel less isolated professionally. Study groups can be particularly helpful considering the lack of training TESOL instructors have for working with adult emergent readers. According to Farrelly (2017),

Most teachers arrive to the LESLLA classroom with previous L2 teacher preparation, yet they are often discovering that much of what they deemed successful with adults who had formal schooling and first language (L1) literacy is not necessarily effective in the LESLLA classroom. (p. 41)

Because instructor preparation programs do not specifically address the needs of adult emergent readers and new instructors may find that they are not prepared to design

instruction to meet the needs of these students, study groups serve as a means of professional development and support for instructors of adult emergent readers.

In light of this disparity between instructor preparation and the reality of the ESOL classroom, Farrelly (2017) studied the effect of TESOL instructors participating in a professional learning community to reflect on research about and their practice with adult emergent readers. Farrelly (2017) found that this reflection allowed instructors to validate what they were already doing well and to engage in praxis to adapt research-validated methods to their teaching contexts.

With the goal of improving professional development for TESOL instructors of emergent readers, Vinogradov and Liden (2009) created a half-day training workshop for LESLLA instructors based on their proposed knowledge base. However, they note that this is just the beginning and that “lack of adequate training for LESLLA instructors is real and severe” (Vinogradov & Liden, 2009, p. 133).

In order to discover what TESOL instructors of adult preliterate students were doing in the classroom, Crevecoeur (2011) conducted a survey and focus group to determine which of a set of research-based instructional practices were being used by these instructors in Florida. There were 17 instructors who participated in the survey. Crevecoeur (2011) found that 82.35% of instructors used the Language Experience Approach, 88.23% used the learner’s native language in explanations, 19.04% participated in active learning in the form of field trips, 30.95% used manipulatives, 30.95% used discussions and 82.23% used environmental print as a learning tool with students. This study does provide some insight into where these instructors’ practice meets the research. However, the size of the study was small, and the education and

training background of the participants is not known. In addition, the study focused specifically on instructors of students who were preliterate and excluded other emergent readers.

A study by Colliander et al. (2018) examined teachers' actions in the classroom, how they responded to learners' actions, and how their conceptions of the learners related to these actions. The authors found that instructors' actions were interlaced with learners' actions and their own perceptions of the learners. Colliander et al. (2018, p. 316) relay that teachers (1) initiated and negotiated general learning activities, (2) made efforts to get the students to understand words and other symbols, (3) facilitated participation outside the teaching and learning community, and (4) negotiated acceptable behavior of the students. The researchers report that teacher-student interaction dictated how instructors taught, in spite of the fact that they were under a national curriculum. They explain that students were able to negotiate learning activities with the instructors. The authors also found that instructors used a variety of artifacts to increase the learner's understanding. Furthermore, Colliander et al. (2018) relate that the teachers connected the lessons to life outside of school to give it context. In addition, they affirm that the teachers used repetition of sounds and words and routine questions, as they believed this was helpful to students. The researchers also described the instructors as adapting to the students' needs by allowing students to use their native languages and to have influence on learning activities.

It can be seen that the teachers in Colliander et al. (2018) applied some of the instructional techniques indicated by the literature previously discussed in this chapter, namely: using artifacts to help students understand meaning, allowing the use of the

native language in the classroom, connecting learning to context, using routines, and considering the learners' needs and preferences. Because this study took place under a national system of education for immigrants in Sweden where all participants were described as being accredited to teach in the Swedish educational system, it does not offer much insight into community-based education in the United States.

Gap in the Literature

Through a review of the existent literature on adult ESOL emergent readers, I have identified deep gaps in the research. We know that adult emergent readers are present in many ESOL classrooms, but there is very little data on their instructors. Gaps in the literature can be divided into four categories: community-based programs, second language acquisition, instructor preparation, and instructor practice and perceptions. First of all, there is very little research on any area of community-based ESOL programs, with more research being university-based (Snell, 2013). Secondly, the literature is sparse on second language acquisition of adult ESOL emergent readers (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004; Marrapodi, 2013). Thirdly, there are only a few studies in the area of instructor preparation and professional development for TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers. This research is primarily limited to study circles (Vinogradov, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2016) and professional learning communities (Farrelly, 2017). Furthermore, there is some theoretical research on a knowledge base for TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers, but empirical evidence is lacking (Vinogradov, 2013c; Vinogradov & Liden, 20009). Finally, there is insufficient research on what TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers do in the classroom and how they perceive the learners and their needs. The few studies that do exist, are limited by number of participants and may only include

a subset of adult emergent readers (Colliander et al., 2018; Crevecoeur, 2011). More importantly, research is needed on how TESOL instructors identify adult emergent readers in their classrooms and the teaching strategies they use to address the learning needs of these adults. In summary, more research needs to be done in all areas related to ESOL adult emergent readers. When focusing on TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers, the need for research stands out particularly in regard to community-based programs.

Considering the gaps in the literature, the current dissertation study focuses on TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers in community-based programs. This dissertation has two primary goals. The first is to document the experiences and teaching practices of TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers in community-based programs. The second is to examine the perceptions these instructors have of their learners' needs and how this affects the instructional decisions that they make in the classroom. In other words, the study is an examination of their praxis. The purpose is to contribute to closing the gaps in the literature on best practices in teaching ESOL adult emergent readers and on TESOL training and professional development. Sharing this information with community-based programs can lead to improvements in meeting the needs of their adult ESOL emergent readers. Ultimately, making the results of this dissertation study available to TESOL educators, programs and researchers in general can lead to improved Texas literacy.

III. METHODS AND STUDY DESIGN

This qualitative case study examines the perceptions and praxis of TESOL instructors in community-based programs in Central Texas in relation to the learning needs of adult emergent readers. The study aims to document three areas: (1) TESOL instructors' experiences teaching adult emergent readers, (2) the instructors' perceptions of adult emergent readers, and (3) their praxis working with adult emergent readers. Study findings have the potential to inform the training and professional development needs of TESOL instructors serving adult emergent readers. The research questions guiding this dissertation include:

1. What are the experiences of TESOL instructors teaching adult emergent readers?
2. What do they perceive as the needs of adult emergent readers learning ESOL?
3. How do these perceptions impact their teaching practices?
4. How do they approach teaching when the learners are adult emergent readers?

This chapter outlines the study design and the processes for data collection and analysis. It is organized under the following sections: research approach, case study, site selection, participant selection, data collection sources, data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and looking forward. The charts in Appendix C demonstrate how research questions and data collection were aligned in the study.

Research Approach

Qualitative research is concerned with meaning and how people make sense of life experiences (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2016). In particular, Merriam (1998) states that qualitative research "helps us to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible" (p. 5). In other

words, the research takes place in the context of the participants' lives as they go about living them (Patton, 2015). Unlike a quantitative experiment that aims to determine the effects of an applied treatment, qualitative research is concerned with making a detailed description of a real-life context (Merriam, 1998). In this study, for example, instructor and classroom observations serve as data collection activities to interact and document TESOL practitioners' praxis.

In addition, Merriam (1998) describes qualitative research as being constructivist in nature: rather than there being one objective reality, "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (p. 6). Merriam describes the role of the researcher as seeking to understand the participants' constructed realities. Therefore, in this study, interviews and classroom observations are supporting data collection strategies for learning about TESOL instructors' teaching practices and their perception of the learning needs of adult emergent readers.

Qualitative research design should be flexible enough to allow for what Patton (2015) calls unanticipated consequences, or allowing your research to follow unexpected events to see where they lead. Merriam concurs with Patton and states: "Ideally, for example, the design of a qualitative study is emergent and flexible, responsive to changing conditions of the study in progress (Merriam, 1998, p. 8). As a researcher, I was attentive to following the advice provided by these two authors and was open to listening carefully to the study participants to report what they had to say. I was also open to documenting the study participants' praxis as it unfolded instead of just aiming to answer the research questions that I set for the study. The research questions were a point of

departure to document the larger phenomenon of authentic teaching practices to instruct ESOL adult emergent readers.

Similarly, Yin (2016, p. 13) acknowledges the need for flexibility while defining three objectives on which to base qualitative research, namely, (1) transparency, (2) methodic-ness, and (3) adherence to evidence. Yin states that researchers need to be transparent in their description of how they conduct research. This is necessary so that others can consider the evidence that was used to reach conclusions and provide support or criticism for those claims. This dissertation study aims to be transparent through detailed description of the data collection and analysis processes. To this effect, Yin (2016) points out that following a defined set of procedures can guard against carelessness in the work. In relation to adherence to evidence, Yin emphasizes the need to found research on the explicit data collected and that conclusions should be based on this data. For this dissertation, excerpts from participants' interview responses and field notes from class observations serve as evidence when reporting study findings.

Case Study

This study is a qualitative layered case study, and aiming “to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest. The analysis process results in a product: a case study” (Patton, 2015, p. 1031). In a layered case study, the researcher investigates patterns across cases (Patton, 2015). Having four instructors as participants in the study, recruiting them from three different programs, and collecting data from a variety of sources were important decisions in the design of this dissertation. Each participant and program represent a different layer to explore unique intersections and overlaps as displayed in Figure 2 below.

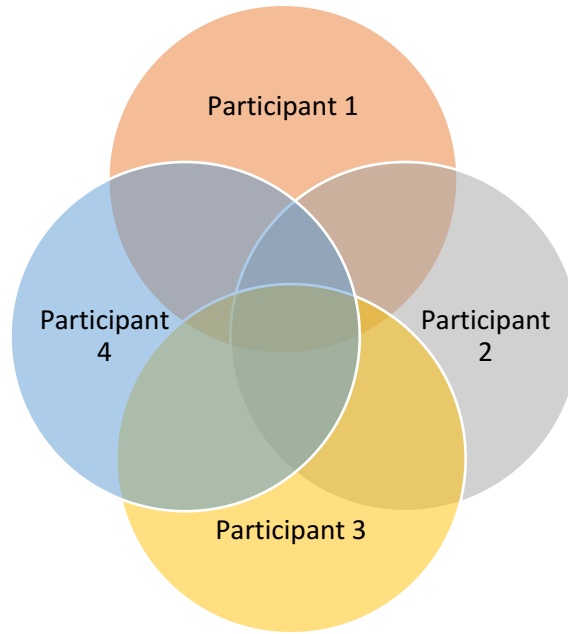


Figure 2 Layered Case Study

Furthermore, Yin (2018, p. 12) proposes that case studies should fulfill three conditions: (1) answering how and why questions, (2) controlling behavioral events is not necessary, and (3) focusing on contemporary events, or the recent past and the present. Thus, this dissertation study examines how TESOL instructors' perceptions translate into action. Additionally, the study aims to describe the instructors' classroom practices while teaching adult emergent readers.

Study Setting and Participants

Community-based programs are free to attend or offer courses at a low cost (Snell, 2013). They are frequently housed in churches, libraries, or schools. Funding may come from private donors or may be from government grants. Some staff may be paid, but many, or all, instructors are likely to be volunteers. For this dissertation, study participants came from three separate community-based programs. The three sites were located in Central Texas, offered ESOL classes to adults, and included a faith-based

organization, a non-profit education institute, and a non-profit community-based organization. The three programs were low cost or free for students to attend. A total of four TESOL instructors volunteered to participate in the study. All of them were teaching classes conducted face-to-face with adult ESOL learners.

Participants for the study were recruited following a criterion-based sampling approach (Patton, 2015). To become a study participant, the instructors were required to have: (1) three years or more experience teaching adult ESOL learners, (2) experience teaching adult ESOL emergent readers, (3) one or more adult emergent readers in the ESOL classes they were teaching at the time, (4) been teaching a group of learners in a face-to-face modality rather than online. Study participants were recruited through the use of an informative flyer that was distributed through the three community-based ESOL programs (see Appendix D). After the instructors were identified, I contacted them by email to explain, in more detail, what the study was about, the time commitment, and my need to observe them teaching, as well as to inform them that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary.

Participant Identity and Confidentiality

All participants in this study have been given a pseudonym according to a distinct professional characteristic that emerged from interviews, observations, and conversations with them. However, this is not to say that the other participants lacked the characteristics not assigned to them, nor is it an attempt to reduce the participants to the chosen characteristic. Rather, the pseudonyms are simply a way to protect the identity of the participants. Strict confidentiality is important in this case because of the limited number of instructors and programs that serve adult ESOL emergent readers in Central Texas.

Using participants' first names or linking them to very specific details related to their professional lives and demographics would make it easy to identify who they are. In addition, singular gender identifying personal pronouns (e.g., he or she) have been omitted. In place of participant names, the following pseudonyms have been employed: the Technologist, the Pragmatist, the Linguist, and the Humanist. The rationale behind these pseudonyms will become evident in the narratives shared in the following chapter.

Participant Demographics

The participants in this study belong to the following age groups: 30-40, 40-50 and 60+. There were two female and two male TESOL instructors. They identified themselves as White, White/Caucasian and Asian American/Vietnamese American (see Table 1). The participating instructors were all long-term residents of Texas, from being native Texans to residing in the state for 37 years. The least time any of the participants had lived in Texas was 11 years with a three-year gap abroad.

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Age Range	40-50	60+	30-40	30-40
Highest Degree	Bachelor's	PhD	Master's	Master's
Major	Early Childhood Education	Applied Linguistics	Language and Literacy	TESOL
Adult ESOL Teaching Experience	7 years	40 years	3.5 years	9 years
Experience in Childhood Education	Early Childhood Education	N/A	High School	Elementary through High School
Number of Emergent Readers Taught at Time of Study	5	2	8	3

Their highest educational level ranged from bachelor's to doctoral degrees in early childhood education, applied linguistics, language and literacy, and TESOL. They had from three and a half to 40 years of experience in teaching ESOL to adult learners. Three of the four participants had experience in childhood education, ranging from early childhood through high school levels. The instructors included three paid employees and one volunteer instructor. Two had taught English as a foreign language abroad in

Argentina, Mexico, and Taiwan. One participant had been a consultant in China, and one had served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mexico.

Data Collection Sources

Data for this study includes several sources to provide a deep understanding of each instructor's perceptions and how they relate to their actions in the teaching and learning context. Yin (2018) states that using multiple sources of information makes the researcher's case more compelling in demonstrating where different lines of inquiry meet. In this study, data collection includes Q sort, conversational interviews, classroom observations, documents and artifacts, and the research journal (see Table 2).

Q Sample and Q Sort

The Q-sort data collection strategy used for the dissertation is one of the steps utilized in Q methodology, which uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to study subjectivity and opinion in a systematic way (Brown, 1993). As described by Brown (1993) and Van Excel and De Graaf (2005), the focus of Q methodology is on the opinions or perceptions of the participants. To that end, Q methodology involves ranking a set of statements called the Q sample according to the level of agreement or disagreement of the participant. Brown (1993) explains that the quantitative part of Q methodology focuses on correlations among different respondents and the statements, and the qualitative part of Q methodology focuses on the opinions about the statements and the perceptions and beliefs that lead to those opinions.

Table 2*Data Collection Sources*

Q Sort	Conversational Interviews	Classroom Observations	Documents and Artifacts	Research Journal
One 60-75-minute session including Q sort and follow up conversation with each participant	Two individual 45-minute interviews for each participant, one before lesson observations and one afterwards	Two complete lesson observations between 45 minutes and 1 hour each for each participant	Lesson plans collected during the first interview. Collect and/or photograph other documents and artifacts at classroom observations	Descriptive and reflective journal entries made during and after each data collection encounter
Perceptions and narratives	Lived experiences teaching ESOL emergent readers and perceptions about these learners' needs	Field notes and observations about the teachers' practices	Additional data to gain understanding of context and enhance meaning	Facts, field notes, reflections, and preliminary analysis of study findings as they unfold
Document the instructors' beliefs and perceptions about teaching adult ESOL emergent readers	Gather demographic information, document instructors' experiences and perceptions, and inquire about their praxis	Document practice of instructors when teaching adult ESOL emergent readers	Prompt memory, document and better understand all components of instructors' lesson	Record and process facts and non-verbal information collected throughout the implementation of the study to plan next steps in data collection and analysis
Q-sort grid, photos, and audio recordings	Audio recording and field notes in research journal	Field notes using an observation protocol typed on a laptop	Photographs or photocopies	Handwritten notes in a journal and laptop

This dissertation study uses an adaptation of Q methodology, consisting only of its qualitative elements, which include a Q sort and a follow up conversation. Because the Q sort is a tool for activating thinking about the instructors' perceptions on the learning

needs of adult ESOL emergent readers, the conversation took place immediately after participants were finished with the Q-sort exercise. Combining the Q sort with a conversation about the activity resulted in richer data for analysis. For this dissertation, the Q sample was made of 23 statements extracted from relevant literature and my professional experience teaching ESOL learners for 14 years (see Appendix E). These statements were tested for clarity and relevance during the pilot study.

The study participants were presented with the Q-sample statement to sort according to how much they agreed/disagreed with them. Each statement was printed on a separate notecard and lettered for reference. The instructions to help the participants understand how to perform the Q sort appear in Appendix F; these instructions are an adaptation from the work of Van Exel and De Graaf (2005). The 23 statements in the Q sample relate to adult ESOL emergent readers and their learning needs. The participants completed the Q sort individually. Once they were finished sorting the statements and placing them in the grid provided (see Appendix G), the participants and I engaged in a conversation (see Appendix H) about the decisions they made when placing the statements at either end of the grid (most agree/most disagree).

Summarizing, the instructions for the Q-sort exercise included: first the participants divided the statements into three piles: agree, disagree, and neutral. Then, they tallied the number of statements in each of the three piles to make sure all statements had been sorted. After this they recorded the letter assigned to each statement on the Q-sort grid. Next, the participants chose the two statements with which they most strongly agreed and placed them on the outer right spaces on the Q-sort grid. Then, they chose the next three statements with which they most agreed and placed them in the three spaces

next to the statements already on the grid. After that, the participants followed the same procedure for the disagree pile. Finally, they placed the remaining statements in the center spaces to indicate neutrality.

After placing all statements on the grid, participants were given the opportunity to rearrange statements to better reflect their views. When participants were satisfied with their responses, they recorded the corresponding letters in the spaces on the Q-sort grid. Following the Q sort, participants took part in conversations where they elaborated on the decisions they made and explained why they felt strongly about the items and their placement on the grid. Neutral statements were included in the conversation to clarify contradictory information from participants or if something seemed interesting enough to bring it to their attention.

Conversational Interviews

In this study, the interviews were not limited by the questions prepared in advance. Instead, the participants were able to follow the flow of the conversation and data were collected in a fluid manner. Merriam (1998) asserts, “Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” (p. 72). Merriam suggests interviewing as an effective means of collecting data in case study research. Conversational interviews use open-ended questions and take the form of a conversation (Patton, 2015). Each of the participants completed two 45-minute face-to-face interviews.

The first interview took place at the beginning of the study and before the first classroom observation. This interview focused on (1) demographic information, (2) a discussion on issues related to emergent readers (3) the needs of adult ESOL emergent

readers, and (3) current experiences teaching adult ESOL emergent readers (see Appendix I).

The second interview was held after the classroom observations had been conducted, either immediately after the second observation or later that same day. This interview centered around the observed lessons and included questions about (1) lesson highlights, (2) presenting new topics to adult ESOL emergent readers, and (3) actions taken specifically to help adult emergent readers. Other related questions came from data gathered during the class observations and focused on specific events that happened during the observed lessons (see Appendix J). Both interviews were audio recorded to ensure accurate documentation of what was said.

Classroom Observations

Each TESOL instructor was observed for two full lessons (45 to 60 minutes). Observations were made on separate days. Merriam (1998) reminds us that observations are a useful source of information in a case study because they provide first-hand data and do not rely on a participant's memory and recounting the event. Merriam further explains that observations allow the researcher to collect data in the field or the participant's real-world context and record it in real time.

In this dissertation study, the focus of the observations was to document best practices to teach adult ESOL emergent readers, including classroom activities throughout the different parts of the lesson, instructor presentations, instructor actions and responses, and learner actions and responses. An observation protocol was used (see Appendix K) and notes were taken on a laptop computer. The observation protocol was based on the research questions and the theoretical framework of the study. The protocol

had a section for a diagram of the physical layout of the classroom, including where the instructor and the students were positioned. Also included in the protocol were sections for recording descriptive notes based on the research questions and reflective notes based on the theoretical framework of the study. As explained before, I used relevant events recorded during class observations to conduct the second interview with the TESOL instructors participating in the study.

Documents and Artifacts

Obtaining documents and physical objects, or artifacts, is a non-intrusive method of data collection that does not rely on the cooperation of human participants to the extent that interviewing and observing do (Merriam, 1998). Various types of documents are present in the teaching environment such as lesson plans, worksheets and other handouts, writing on the whiteboard or chalkboard, anchor charts and other posters hung in the classroom. Artifacts may include real objects that the teacher brings to the classroom to enhance the lesson. Lesson plans were collected, when available, in advance of the classroom observations and treated as documents. Any materials provided by the instructor were photographed or photocopied, including, lesson plans, readings, handouts, classroom charts, posters, and whiteboard writing. Even though a few artifacts were collected, they were not enough to use as a separate data source, and I did not report them in the findings.

Research Journal

The research journal serves two purposes: to capture study field notes and to provide a space for reflection and preliminary analysis of data collection and study implementation. To this effect, Borg (2001) sees journaling as beneficial to the researcher

as both a process and a product. As a process, the research journal can help the investigator with finding solutions to problems, dealing with emotions, keeping a record of events, planning and acting, monitoring his or her progress, developing ideas and organizing thinking. As a product, this journal can serve as a means of saving ideas for future research, documentation of plans and achievements, a detailed record of events and procedures, a representation of thought processes, an account of the researcher's growth over time, confirmation of progress, and sources of inspiration for future ideas.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 118-119) describe field notes as the researcher's detailed written notes on experiences and thoughts that are a result of data collection and reflection on data. For example, note taking during the interviews allowed for the notation of impressions and other aspects of the interview that could not be captured through audio recording, such as facial expressions and gestures that may affect the meaning of what was said. Bogdan and Biklen (2007, pp. 120-124) assert that there are two types of field notes: descriptive and reflective. They explain that descriptive field notes are used to (1) create portraits of participants, (2) record dialogue, (3) describe the physical setting, (4) provide accounts of specific events, (5) describe activities, and (6) record the observer's behavior. On the other hand, reflective field notes document the researcher's reflection on (1) analysis, (2) method, (3) ethical dilemmas, (4) the observer's state of mind, and (5) clarifications (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 123-124). Because reflective notes provide documentation of how the research study develops, they are crucial across all data collection and data analysis stages of this dissertation study. In summary, taking field notes in a research journal aids in working through any problems that arise during the research process, and to document the general course of the

investigation. Keeping a journal allowed me to obtain a more comprehensive view of my study, thus providing for more accurate findings.

In this study, I used a research journal to record observations and to plan. During data collection, I took notes on the participants' responses, including impressions that could not be captured on the voice recordings. The journal was a valuable space to collect questions that arose during observations and interviews, as well as during data analysis. It was also used to summarize findings and to make conclusions about those findings. Additionally, scheduling for the Q-sort activities, interviews, and observations were kept in the journal. Finally, the research journal provided a place to plan for and organize my writing.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis requires the researcher to make sense out of a large amount of data (Patton, 2015). During the implementation of the study, data collection and analysis was simultaneous, with analysis taking place as soon as possible after data gathering (Merriam, 1998). In this dissertation study, data were analyzed using both inductive and deductive analysis processes. In qualitative research, inductive analysis examines the data to determine whether new explanations, concepts and theories can be formed (Patton, 2015, p. 1043). Inductive analysis was used to examine the data for recurring patterns and themes. During this analysis, I was open to listening to the data to be able to discover new possible answers to the research questions. Conversely, deductive analysis was used to ascertain whether or not the data support preestablished explanations and theories (Patton, 2015, p. 1043). Thus, deductive analysis was most appropriate for analyzing the

data in light of the theoretical framework for this study, which was based on concepts related to critical pedagogy and democratic education.

In addition, the overall approach for data analysis was based on Yin's (2016) five phases of analysis, which consist of: (1) compiling the data, (2) disassembling the data, (3) reassembling the data, (4) interpreting the data, and (5) concluding (see Figure 3). According to Yin, this cycle is non-linear, and the researcher will revisit the different phases multiple times.

The first phase of the cycle, compiling the data, consisted of gathering all of the data collected and organizing them in a useful manner. After being ordered, the data must be reviewed, including reading over textual data and listening to recorded data again, considering the research questions and making any new observations. Because of the iterative nature of data analysis, analytic memos helped to go back and forth between phases to keep track of ideas for analysis.

In the second phase the data was disassembled and broken down into codes. This included in vivo coding (as described by Saldaña, 2016), or using exact words from the data as codes in order to assign descriptive codes. The data were re-coded into category codes. This coding prepared the data for the analysis in the third phase.

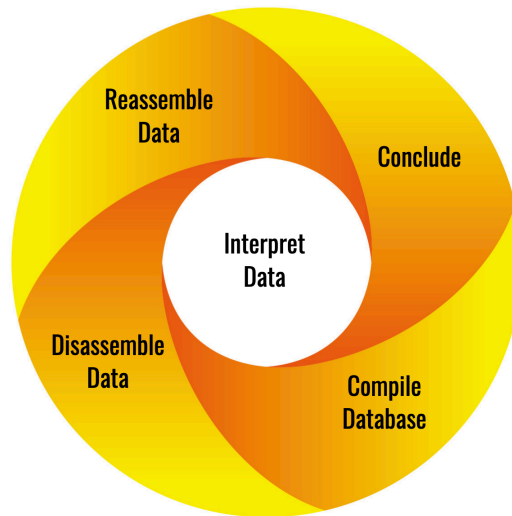


Figure 3 Adaptation of Yin's (2016) Five Phases of Analysis

The primary objective of the third phase, reassembling the data, was to find patterns in the data. In this phase, inductive and deductive analysis were helpful in determining patterns, categories, and themes to report study findings. During inductive analysis, the codes from the second phase were examined to see which ones recurred across the four participants' data. Then, these codes were combined into categories. A second round of analysis was helpful in reducing the data into six prevalent categories, which were then grouped under three broad themes. During deductive analysis, to analyze the data through the lens of critical pedagogy, the data were coded according to the following predetermined tenets of democratic education: real-life focus, critical consciousness, dialogism, learner autonomy, reciprocal learning, and praxis (Freire, 1970; 1998; Kincheloe, 2003; Shor, 1992; Wink, 2005). Then, the codes were examined to determine which ones recurred across the four participants' data.

As illustrated in chapter five of this dissertation, in the fourth phase, interpreting, the researcher brings meaning to the data and makes connections to existent literature.

For the fifth and last phase, concluding, the researcher draws conclusions on what was learned from conducting the study. Yin (2016) states, “A conclusion is an overarching statement or series of statements that raises the interpretation of a study to a higher conceptual level or broader set of ideas” (p. 235). With the goal of reaching this higher level of ideas, I drew conclusions and created a conceptual map to illustrate study findings in chapter six.

In addition to following the steps suggested by Yin (2016), I utilized a qualitative research software (MAXQDA) to compile, sort, and organize data collected from implementing the study. After converting all data into text and obtaining the transcription of the audio recorded material, I uploaded these data to MAXQDA. Both interview transcripts and class observation notes were uploaded into the software as Microsoft Word documents. Because MAXQDA allows the user to move easily between text, codes, and memos (Saillard, 2011), the software allowed me to retrieve all excerpts from across a single participant’s data or across all of the participants’ data for a single code or group of codes, which facilitated data analysis. Another useful function of the software was to be able to attach memos to data I had already coded.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the level of confidence a reader can have in the study design and findings. The work of researchers such as Guba (1981), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Shenton (2004) are helpful to explain the measures I have taken to ensure trustworthiness. In particular, Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability are important to ensure the trustworthiness of a study.

Credibility has to do with how truthful the study is perceived to be (Guba, 1981) or how accurately it represents the case under study. Transferability refers to providing enough details about study implementation and design so that readers in similar contexts may find applications to their own contexts. Confirmability has to do with establishing that the study findings come from the ideas of the study participants rather than preconceived notions of the researcher. Finally, dependability has to do with consistency of results in relation to the data collected in the study.

For this dissertation, the methods and study design are explained in detail as to allow for transparency and transferability of the design to other similar settings. Performing both inductive and deductive analysis allowed for a more cohesive and comprehensive data analysis to be faithful to the study findings. Meaningful examples and narratives provided by study participants are used to support claims on study findings and add authenticity to the narrative. Providing detailed description and rich information of the work and perspectives of the four TESOL instructors allows other teachers and researchers to use the information they find relevant. Using different data sources (e.g., Q sort, interviews, observations, and documents) strengthens the dependability for consistency of the study results reported in the dissertation. Collecting a variety of data and the frequency of data collection in a systematic manner adds to the study reliability. Selecting meaningful examples of narratives from two interviews rather than only one in addition to the conversation after the Q sort, adds to confirmability. Including two classroom observations and positioning them between the two interviews contributes to credibility by allowing for instructors to comment on what was observed. Lastly, I made sure that this study adhered to the rules of ethical research.

Ethical Considerations

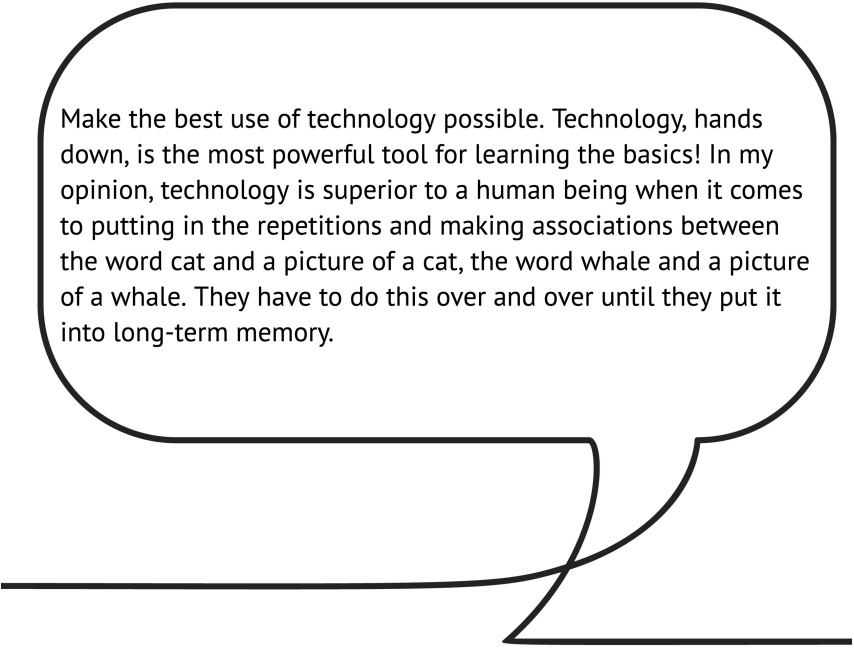
Some measures to conduct a study that is ethical include obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, ensuring that participation is voluntary, collecting participant consent, protecting the identity of study participants, and securing the data (Domenech Rodriguez et al., 2017). To ensure that this study was ethical, I obtained IRB approval from Texas State University; I provided participants with all the information about the study in advance of presenting the consent form. I have done my best to protect their identities and to clarify their rights and the voluntary nature of the study. Appendix L describes the study consent form that was shared with the participants.

Ensuring confidentiality and protecting the identity of study participants and organizations were important ethical considerations. As explained before, participants were assigned pseudonyms and identifying information is reported in aggregate form, and the organizations where they worked have not been named. Finally, all electronic participant data has been password protected to provide secure storage.

IV. STUDY PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS

The present chapter describes the study participants in relation to their teaching experiences and perceptions of adult ESOL emergent readers. The analysis of the instructors' perceptions about these learners puts together the data collected for the study (e.g., Q-sort exercise results and follow-up conversation, individual interviews, and classroom observations). Each of the instructors' narratives includes meaningful vignettes of their responses throughout the implementation of the study.

The Technologist



Make the best use of technology possible. Technology, hands down, is the most powerful tool for learning the basics! In my opinion, technology is superior to a human being when it comes to putting in the repetitions and making associations between the word cat and a picture of a cat, the word whale and a picture of a whale. They have to do this over and over until they put it into long-term memory.

The vignette above illustrates the importance that technology held in the Technologist's instruction. This participant emphasized using educational mobile applications, especially for memorizing and drilling. At the time of the implementation of the study, the Technologist had been teaching adult ESOL emergent readers for three and a half years.

This instructor depicted adult ESOL emergent readers as adults who had not learned to read and write due to power struggles in their home countries and interrupted formal education. The participant characterized the needs of these emergent readers as difficult to know:

Most of the students who can't read and write in their first language come from third world countries, frequently war-torn countries. There's usually a huge imbalance between the genders and inequality between different classes. There are often people not allowing certain other people to read or write for power reasons. I'm not trying to make a political statement at all. I'm just saying this is what I've noticed... Women from certain countries were told that it is not okay that they continue school. It is not okay that they speak back. It is not okay that they are equal to x, y and z in society. They learn only the basics of reading and writing, and then, they're designated to the home. I can't say I'm an expert on other cultures, but that's what they've told me. Those are serious gaps in education!

The Technologist was reluctant to identify the needs of emergent readers. This participant said that expressing one's needs was an advanced cognitive ability and explained that not all people were capable of such expression. By the same token, the instructor asserted that beginning-level learners might be unable to state their own needs in English:

In terms of actually saying what their needs are, how do I actually get inside of their heads? That's not something I have the capability of doing. It is not even that they're articulating it because they can't! I have found that articulating needs is a high metacognitive ability. People who are extremely aware of themselves

and have reflected constantly might be able to tell you what their needs are. I would argue that many people when they sit down to talk to another human being and they're distressed, they don't actually know what they need. They're trying to talk to someone else to gain some insight into what they need. So, that question is a really tough one!

In spite of reiterating the difficulty of knowing what someone's needs were, it became evident with the quotation above that the technologist was at least aware of adult emergent readers' need to establish communication and converse with others. In addition, the participant identified further learning needs of adult emergent readers throughout the data, as will be discussed later.

The Technologist attributed the success of adult ESOL emergent readers predominantly to how much effort they were willing to put into their studies. An important factor for success for the Technologist was the student's motivation for learning and curiosity about the language:

The students who end up doing really well, in spite of having low literacy, are practicing every day. They practice Quizlet. They come to class. Even if they're late to class or can't come to school because of their health problems, eventually, you can tell that they're at least looking at YouTube. They're curious about how to start to dissect even one page a day. They're always interacting with that skill in some way! Students, who tend not to do as well have some poor habits. There's no consistency; there's a lack of routine. There's a lot of blaming going on, and there's not a lot of self-efficacy.

This narrative exemplified the Technologist’s views on the importance of good study habits and daily practice for making progress in language learning. The participant emphasized the role of consistency in helping learners be successful.

The Technologist’s Perceptions About Adult Emergent Readers

In the Q-sort results, examining the statements that this instructor placed in the Most Agree category, the Technologist demonstrated an awareness of learning differences between adult emergent readers and learners with strong native language literacy skills (see Table 3). This instructor placed importance on making connections in language learning, as well. These connections might be entirely linguistic or be links between learning and the student’s actual life. During the conversation that took place after the Q sort, the responses provided by this participant showed coherence with the statements in the category for Most Agree.

Table 3

The Technologist’s Q-Sort Data, Most Agree

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs. • The literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in ESOL. • Using learner generated texts can be beneficial when teaching adult ESOL learners who cannot yet read in their first language. • It is essential for adult ESOL learners who lack literacy in their native language to learn the connections between letters and sounds. • Making real-world connections is a must to support adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy when they are learning to read in English.

The Technologist discussed the statements largely in terms of learners making associations, the belief in teaching the building blocks of language first, and the idea of separating learners into language proficiency levels for instruction.

The Technologist agreed that adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs. This participant was of the opinion that having a class of students at a similar English level would aid in keeping the students in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), or the range of skills that the learner can execute with support but not yet independently:

When the instructor is only teaching beginners and the instructor is very mindful about breaking everything down, there's no skipping over concepts. When there's a mixed class, there's a lot of skipping around, and this gets people, especially beginners, out of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. It becomes overwhelming! Whereas if you have students who are grouped around the same level, and they're helping each other and the material is broken down, the instructor has no temptation to tilt towards more advanced techniques. If there isn't that tilt, then, the instructor is more mindful of what needs to be happening. Most people are in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development because they're not being fire hosed. They actually feel like they can see each other's progress, which is in itself very satisfying.

In this statement, the Technologist showed concern that mixed-level classes could lead to the instructor teaching material out of a *logical sequence* or *skipping around* which would result in students with lower English proficiency being flooded with information,

or *fire hosed*. Additionally, during the Q sort conversation, when asked what a curriculum for adult ESOL emergent readers should contain, the Technologist suggested the curriculum begin with two weeks of phonics instruction and include: 3000 high frequency words in English, practice with the learning application Quizlet, making associations between vocabulary words and pictures of objects, possibly with software, and focusing on repetition and drilling of vocabulary. In the Technologist's words,

I believe they should be on some software where there's a lot of clicking. There's a lot of repetition; there's a lot of drilling. This is where some people may really disagree with me, but I do believe that in beginning stages of learning something, putting in the reps really does matter. Some people say learning always has to be in context. I agree that if you put things in context, it'll stick better. However, sometimes if you give someone four whole sentences and you say, well, it's in context, they don't even know what those words mean, and they don't know how they're conjugated. They don't even have the basic building blocks! Then, that might actually be more of a disaster... I really do believe that they need to know the basic building blocks. Then, they start to connect those building blocks, and then they can start to see things in context.

Here, the Technologist's emphasis on building a base for language learning could be seen. The participant focuses on constructing the language from the bottom up.

Furthermore, the Technologist gave curriculum suggestions and a description of actual lessons for adult ESOL emergent readers when interviewed. The curriculum would include,

*The 3000 most common words in English that are going to be tested over and over again, any software program that's solid, which goes over the different domains like what you do at a restaurant, reading short stories, colors, animals, and things like that. They need to be using that software **every single day**. Having a lab class would be very good, as well...I would also like them to have a speaking class, a conversational class with scripts that they can read from, and then after that, they can have partial scripts that they have to fill in. When they get more advanced, then they can have topics, but it's got to be scaffolded from the bottom up. Have them write basic sentences from day one; give them sentence stems...In the general classes, I also have them do phonics every single day, phonics, Quizlet, Kahoot, Quizzes, pre-learned vocabulary, and then a story. Then, they have to write something.*

The Technologist was able to implement some of these curriculum suggestions into classroom instruction. The participant included phonics in both of the observed lessons. In addition, the learners spent approximately 20 minutes on Quizlet, or both Quizlet and Quizzes, practicing vocabulary. In one case, use of the application was to pre-teach vocabulary for a text they would be reading afterward.

On a different note, the Technologist agreed that the literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in English. This instructor defined literacy as knowing something deeply and spoke about transferring literacy skills from one language to another:

If it's the case that their literacy is very, very low in their first language, then they're learning the concept for the first time if they're encountering it in a second

language. They don't even have the associations there in the first language. Then, it takes that extra amount of time for them to build those associations for the second language, as well. If they have literacy in the first language, they've already made those associations which means less time for having to do those associations with a second language or third language and so on.

The participant emphasized making associations; forming connections in learning was a recurring theme in the Technologist's discourse.

On a related topic, the Technologist agreed with the statement that using learner generated texts can be beneficial when teaching adult ESOL learners who cannot yet read in their first language. This participant focused on the benefits of students saying something and then seeing it typed out on a monitor screen. The Technologist believed that using learner generated text was beneficial,

if the student is saying something, and they see an association between me typing it out on the screen, and I'm saying it and then drawing a picture of the story that they're telling. I'd say generally speaking, as long as they can see that certain letters are being associated with certain words that they're both saying and seeing, it's beneficial. The only thing I'd be concerned about is how much of that would be used in class. Actually, I don't know if it would even be a good use of time to do a lot of that each day rather than having them do repetition on associating pictures with particular words.

In spite of agreeing that using learner created text was beneficial, the Technologist's statement showed some reservations. The instructor questioned how much time should be

dedicated to such tasks and expressed a preference for focusing on repetition of associating pictures with words.

Agreeing that it is essential for adult ESOL learners who lack literacy in their native language to learn the connections between letters and sounds, the Technologist affirmed that having letter-sound correspondence was necessary for sounding out words. The Technologist articulated, “Anytime that you're associating things with one another, and they're building up to become a connected system, that's always better for learning, **always.**”

Additionally, the Technologist agreed that making real-world connections is a must to support adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy when they are learning to read in English. The Technologist described real world in terms of having relevance to the learner’s daily struggles and interactions. Again, this instructor emphasized the learner making associations. The Technologist asserted, “If you can integrate something that they're trying to figure out in the real world with what they're learning in class, then the brain just wires certain synapses more strongly and that makes learning that much more powerful.” In an interview, the Technologist gave the following example:

If I introduce a new topic, I'll think about it ahead of time. I have a lot of parents, especially mothers in my class, so it is relevant to what they would like to know. I just take 10 minutes to present the topic, then, they end up writing about it.

In fact, in the first observed lesson, the Technologist included a reading about child development and linked the text to how learners interact with children who are having a difficult day and how this type of interaction applies to adults. In the second observed

lesson, the Technologist used a text about a Muslim immigrant's experiences. The reading was preceded by a discussion of different religions, and some learners made connections by identifying themselves with those religions.

While not placing the statement that ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time feel more confident in a class of all emergent readers in the top five, in the conversation after the Q sort, the Technologist expressed such strong agreement with the statement as to warrant inclusion here. According to the Technologist,

*I can't emphasize this one enough! I actually am very **adamant** about this one because people then say, you need to be grouped in with all these different levels because there's a whole bunch of diversity. There's a whole bunch of different ideas, and you can learn from all of it. That doesn't guarantee that we're actually going to be in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. Also, trying to learn from someone who is way too advanced or way too below gets either into being fire hosed, which is being overwhelmed, or getting bored because the person is too far below one's level.*

The participant's ideas were consistent with previous statements at the beginning of this section about having a separate curriculum for adult emergent readers. This instructor favored a homogeneous class over a heterogeneous class in terms of language proficiency level, at least for beginning level learners.

The Technologist's statements in the Most Disagree category focused on several issues (see Table 4). The instructor spoke about assessment practices, the use of the native language, adult emergent readers self-reporting their native language literacy status, learner success, and the differences between first and second language literacy

learning. During the conversation that took place after the Q sort, the responses provided by this participant showed coherence with the statements in the category for Most Disagree.

Table 4
The Technologist's Q-Sort Data, Most Disagree

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regardless of their native language literacy level, adult ESOL learners can be assessed using the same methods.• Only English should be spoken in the adult ESOL classroom no matter who the students are.• Adult ESOL students who cannot yet read in their first language report this to their instructors.• Adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English.• Learning to read in a first language and in a second language are basically the same.
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First, the Technologist discussed the need for different assessment practices for adult emergent readers. Then, the instructor reiterated the importance of making associations in language learning when discussing the use of the native language in the classroom. The instructor spoke about learners' reluctance to share their status as adult emergent readers with their teachers. Additionally, the Technologist explained that, while challenging, adult ESOL emergent readers could be successful in learning a new language. Finally, the participant spoke about the difference between learning a first and second language in terms of exposure to the language in childhood.

First, the Technologist disagreed with the statement that regardless of their native language literacy level, adult ESOL learners can be assessed using the same methods.

The instructor explained that the parameters would need to change for students who had significant gaps in their education compared to classmates who did not have those gaps:

All things being equal, two people coming from the same country with no learning disabilities in either and one had a gap of say 10 years of education, and the other had zero gaps of education, generally speaking, I would say that is a substantial difference, and therefore the parameters would have to change.

The participant clearly recognized that interrupted formal education had an effect on learners. However, no specific suggestions were discussed in relation to alternate forms of assessment for adult emergent readers.

Regarding the use of the native language, the Technologist disagreed that only English should be spoken in the adult ESOL classroom no matter who the students are. The participant spoke about the importance of making associations between the native language and the target language. This instructor shared using Google Translate in the classroom with learners. The Technologist described translating information into various languages to help learners understand:

Now in terms of the classroom, you have Google Translate on the board where you type something in English, and then on the right side, you show Arabic for the Arabic students and Chinese for the Chinese students. You switch between different languages, so they can understand. If the instructor happens to know Spanish, Chinese or Arabic, and he says it, the learner can start to associate the English word with the Arabic word or the Japanese word or whatever it might be. I'm going to go back to the idea that we learn through association. This is actually how synapses wire together and become stronger together!

The Technologist used Google Translate in the two classroom observations. In both the first and second observation, the instructor translated the directions for the activities in Google Translate, displaying them on a monitor screen. Additionally, in the first observed class, during a civics lesson, the participant displayed a translation of a text under study into the learners' native languages. On the subsequent observation, the Technologist used Google Translate to translate a question asked to the class related to the reading text. In an interview, the Technologist specified the logic for deciding which language to display:

I start off with how many students of a certain population are in class first, and then after that it just naturally follows. One student will say, "I don't understand," so then I just accommodate the request of the student who says, "Please, switch it to this language."

In addition to using Google Translate, in both of the observed lessons, the Technologist gave some instructions and asked some questions in Spanish, and learners spoke their native languages to each other at times during the lesson without reproach.

Regarding the identification of emergent readers, the Technologist disagreed that Adult ESOL students who cannot yet read in their first language report this to their instructors. In the participant's experience, some learners share this information and others do not, but none shared it directly. The instructor believed that learners may feel shame over not being able to read and write in their native language. Furthermore, the Technologist noted that beginning level students may not have the language skills to disclose information on their native language literacy level in English:

Usually the teacher has to end up figuring out which student has low literacy or cannot write in their own language because there's a lot of shame associated with it. We'll be looking at a translation in Farsi, or Burmese, whatever it might be. I'll give the instructions, and then I notice they actually still don't know what to do, whereas the other students who are literate in the first language do know what to do!...Then you have Quizlet, which is between two different languages, and they still can't write...You can see it in their handwriting as well. If they're trying to write Farsi, and then you find that they actually are very unfamiliar with the strokes, this is a very good indicator that they may lack literacy or may have a very low level of literacy in their first language. I have noticed almost none tell me. Part of it might be because they actually don't know how to tell me! How are they going to tell me if they can't communicate it? If they can't translate it? Also, there's the shame factor, and usually it's another student who ends up telling me, "She never finished elementary school." They'll just tell another student in their home language, but it has never actually been the student, him or herself who will tell me.

For the Technologist, use of the native language played a role in helping identify emergent readers in the classroom. The instructor spoke about discovering who was an emergent reader through the learner's confusion about what to do in class when other learners knew what to do and in spite of the fact that the instructions were displayed on Google Translate in the learner's native language.

At the same time, the Technologist disagreed that Adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English. The

participant described adult emergent readers as having challenges but still having the ability to be successful.

I don't know the full neuroscientific and developmental research. I'm not an expert in that, but based on what little I know, there is a critical learning period where if someone, even as an adult, tries to learn a language and they're very dedicated, they're still going to have somewhat of an accent, or they might have some quirks in very subtle nuanced aspects....After the critical stage there are differences, but that doesn't mean they can't communicate. That doesn't mean that they can't write, that they can't learn to read enough to be able to do a job...I don't think that adults are hopeless, but this is the part that's a little bit dark, and maybe a little bit pessimistic. The literature is pretty clear that the brain is not nearly as plastic. Adults have to put in concerted effort to actually open up those pathways to make it plastic with BDNF, and it takes a lot of effort. It is actually in many ways physically painful because the brain is burning glucose like crazy! Because of that it can feel very humiliating, and a lot of adults focus on status, etc. I don't think it's so much that they have little chance. They actually have anywhere from a moderate to a decent chance. It's just that maybe as adults we're not so open to some things, and we tend to judge based on certain things. However, if the person has a head injury or if the person has an IQ of 80 or below, then I would say regardless of whether they're learning ESOL or anything, that's a person who's barely able to read or write and that tends to be, from what I understand, quite stable across the lifetime.

In this narrative, the Technologist expressed concern that language learning may be more difficult for adults due to lack of brain plasticity. This participant acknowledged, as well, that adults may have other learning differences that affect acquisition of a new language.

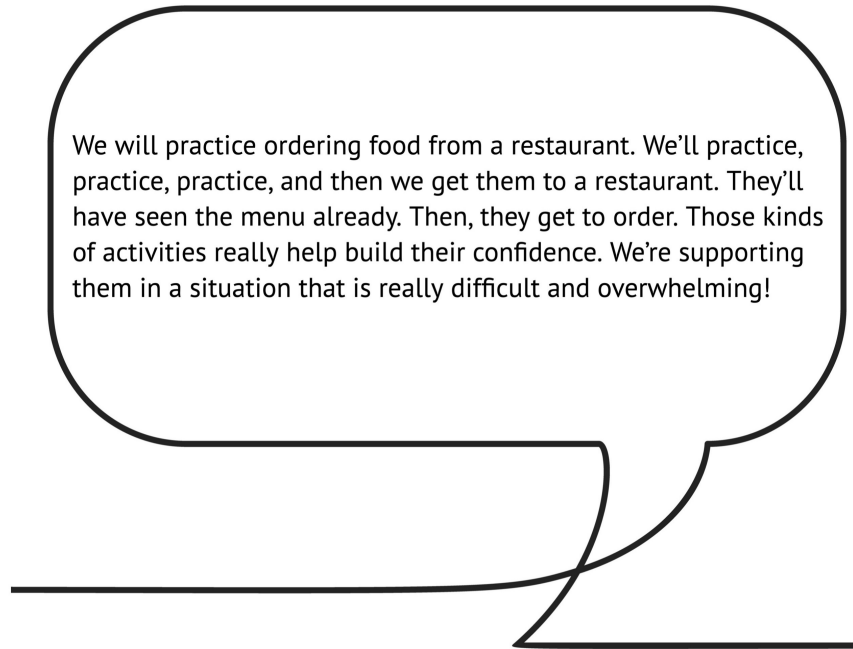
Finally, the Technologist disagreed that learning to read in a first language and in a second language are basically the same. While not focusing specifically on print literacy, this participant contrasted learning the first language, with parental correction and ample input in the environment, to learning a second language. The Technologist explained,

Learning a first language you have that time with your parents when you are corrected. Your parents think it's cute whenever you make a mistake, and you have tons of exposure in that native tongue. All of the media that you watch is in the native tongue. Whereas when you're learning your second language, you don't necessarily have that parental time. Even if you do it quite young, one language is being spoken more than the other.

Overall, the perceptions of the Technologist were linked to beliefs about how languages are learned, how languages interact with each other, and instructional practices. The participant focused heavily on the importance of making associations when learning and extending this to connections between linguistic elements in a single language, between two separate languages, and between language and the world. In the Technologist's experience, use of mobile applications and software led to more effective instruction for adult emergent readers. In addition, translation, using software such as Google Translate was not to be avoided in the classroom but was a manner of creating

associations between the native language and the new language, thus, strengthening learning.

The Pragmatist



The above excerpt illustrates why the participant has been named the Pragmatist. A prominent element of the instructor's teaching was focusing on practical applications of learning in real-world contexts. The Pragmatist had been teaching adult ESOL emergent readers for seven years.

In December, we'll go to the HEB grocery store where they'll pull coupons off the shelf, and I'll explain what they mean. That really helps them in their real-world experiences, building their confidence to go to HEB and ask for help! Before they go to HEB, a lot of the students say that they never use coupons because they don't understand what they mean, and then afterwards, they feel really good about it and they use the coupons, or they'll use the bulk aisle where none of them

know how to weigh items. We go and have them get something, weigh it, punch in the numbers, and print out the label, all those little things that you think are so simple. We do it naturally, but it's very overwhelming or intimidating to somebody that is an English language learner!

In the above example, the Pragmatist spoke about connecting learning in the classroom to real world tasks and taking this learning out into the real-world for learners to practice.

The instructor emphasized practical application as a goal of language learning.

In addition, the Pragmatist portrayed adult emergent readers as having both strengths and challenges in learning, as needing a low-stress classroom environment, and as possibly experiencing interrupted formal education:

*Being an emergent reader affects them in many ways. One, they just don't have the schema for how to learn in a classroom setting. They're used to figuring out a way to cope by using the verbal skills that they have but not in writing. The amount of written words that they see can be overwhelming, and it possibly causes them to be frustrated or stressed out in the classroom...The biggest concern for me is making sure that their stress level in the classroom is not high, making them feel at ease about whatever it is that we're doing. That is a **really high** priority for me, making sure that they feel comfortable and know that they don't have to feel anxious about what they're doing and helping them feel supported...Many of them come in already feeling stupid or that they are less than, especially if they went to school and then left. One of my students who is in level three now talked a lot about having to wear the dunce cap! Those students can already feel prepared for failure in our classrooms.*

The Pragmatist spoke about creating a classroom that lowered learners' stress levels. The instructor revisited this point various times during the interviews. For the participant, it was a priority to support students and make them feel comfortable in the classroom.

The Pragmatist found that some of the adult emergent readers in class had experienced interrupted formal education. In the words of this participant,

My low-literacy learners are students that come from cultures where they're exposed to print in school, but if they don't attend school then they are not getting exposed to it. That doesn't mean that their culture doesn't have print. Maybe they were working or didn't have access to school, or it just wasn't available to them.

In this quotation, the Pragmatist clarified that although adult emergent readers may have come from a country with print literacy, they may not have had access to education. The participant spoke about teaching students from cultures with print literacy who had never gone to school as children or who discontinued their education at some point in the primary grades.

The Pragmatist's Perceptions About Adult Emergent Readers

In the Q sort results, examining the statements that this instructor placed in the Most Agree category, the Pragmatist focused on differences that adult emergent readers had in comparison to their peers with stronger native language literacy levels (see Table 5). During the conversation that took place after the Q sort, the responses provided by this participant showed coherence with the statements in the category for Most Agree.

Table 5

The Pragmatist's Q-Sort Data, Most Agree

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs.• It is difficult to find materials to use with adult ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time.• Instructing adult ESOL learners to read in their native language can help them learn to read in English.• The literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in ESOL.• ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time feel more confident in a class of all emergent readers.

The perceptions of the participant leaned toward a more homogeneous grouping of these learners through a separate curriculum and classes, including native language literacy instruction. Moreover, the instructor believed that it was difficult to find materials for use with adult emergent readers, thus, implying that they would benefit from different materials than are used with other learners.

The Pragmatist agreed that adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs. This idea was rooted in the notion that teaching native language literacy to adult emergent readers could help them learn to read in English. In the words of the Pragmatist,

I feel like learning to read in their first language is much more beneficial before they start learning to read in another language. In my classroom, one of the things I struggle most with is when I have students with low native language

literacy levels that come in, and I'm writing on the board and all of these letters and numbers are just a big jumble! It's very overwhelming to them!

With regard to the comment above about writing on the board, the Pragmatist did use different colored markers to try to draw attention to the pertinent sections of the writing to make it more comprehensible for the students in the observed lessons. In relation to the curriculum, beyond native language literacy instruction, the Pragmatist offered the suggestion of using images in language instruction for adult emergent readers, stating, “Having those visuals of the image and the word together would be really helpful.”

Additionally, the Pragmatist agreed that it is difficult to find materials to use with adult ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time. This participant found that even the activities in beginning level English textbooks were too difficult for the adult emergent readers. The Pragmatist commented,

They would benefit from having more basic level literacy activities. It is not as common to find those in our books. Even the most basic English is still very advanced for somebody who has no literacy at all.

Furthermore, in an interview, the participant commented, “I don't have a lot of resources to really help them outside of what we just do in our natural classroom.” The Pragmatist did use worksheet pages from the textbook to practice time and schedules and the location of objects.

As mentioned previously, the Pragmatist agreed that instructing adult ESOL learners to read in their native language can help them learn to read in English. This agreement was based on the observation that students who had completed high school in their native countries learned faster than students with interrupted formal education.

Being able to pull them out and do some literacy activities in their native language would be very beneficial. It would support them in our English classroom where there is a lot of writing and reading, so that when they see all these letters and numbers, it doesn't overwhelm them! We would like to pilot that with students...as we get adult emergent readers in our program, we would like to get them working on an online learning program.

The Pragmatist did not claim to do any first language reading instruction with students, however, nor did the participant exhibit this type of instruction in the observed lessons. Rather, the instructor expressed the desire to have students working on native language literacy with a specific online learning program. The use of this language learning program had not yet been implemented in the Pragmatist's program; however, there were plans to do so in the future.

On a related topic, the Pragmatist agreed that the literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in English. The participant contrasted adult emergent readers and peers with higher literacy levels:

It's very easy to see with students who have gone through high school in their country and students who have been in school for a long time who are highly educated in their language. They learn so much faster in English than the other students who maybe made it through third grade or fourth grade. Many times students who didn't make it very far in school don't really think they can! They feel insecure in the classroom, so they're already lacking in confidence. The ones who finished school are very confident. Plus, they know how to learn, and those skills transfer to learning a new language or learning anything.

The Pragmatist's comments focused on emergent readers with interrupted formal education. The participant mentioned that learners who finished school not only had good literacy skills to transfer to English reading, but they also had knowledge of learning in a classroom, which gave them greater confidence as learners.

Likewise, the Pragmatist was in agreement that ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time feel more confident in a class of all emergent readers. The instructor explained that in such a class, the learners would feel less embarrassed and would be more likely to participate in classroom activities. The Pragmatist has observed the following with learners in class:

I noticed with my emergent readers that they are not as quick to answer because they are not sure about the answer. They can get frustrated very easily because the level of our instruction is a little bit higher than where they should probably be, so they tend to not participate as much.

Again, the Pragmatist emphasized the potential for emergent readers to get discouraged in class because even the lowest level courses began with concepts that were too advanced for these learners. This instructor linked this to the students' participation level which could ultimately affect their success with learning the language.

In the most disagree category, the Pragmatist centered on adult emergent readers' potential for success and the strengths they bring to the learning context (see Table 6). The instructor placed the responsibility for the learners' success on the teacher rather than on the students. During the conversation that took place after the Q sort, the responses provided by this participant showed coherence with the statements in the category for Most Disagree.

Table 6

The Pragmatist's Q-Sort Data, Most Disagree

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult ESOL students who are learning to read for the first time are responsible for their own success.• Learning to read in a first language and in a second language are basically the same.• Adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English.• Adult ESOL students who lack native language literacy bring more weaknesses than strengths to the classroom.• Adult ESOL students who cannot yet read in their first language report this to their instructors.

The Pragmatist differentiated between learning to read in a first and second language. Additionally, the participant pointed out that adult emergent readers did not self-identify. Overall, the participant demonstrated the belief that for adult emergent readers, learning English was different than it was for other learners. However, adult emergent readers, although possibly less confident, brought strengths to the classroom and could be successful in learning the language with the appropriate support.

First, the Pragmatist disagreed that adult ESOL students who are learning to read for the first time are responsible for their own success. The participant preferred to place the responsibility for student success in the classroom on the instructor rather than on the learners. The Pragmatist asserted,

*It's the **teacher's job** to make sure that emergent readers feel comfortable in the classroom, and it's the teacher's job to make sure that we're supporting them on*

their level. They're not responsible for whether they are successful in the classroom.

As seen in other excerpts, the Pragmatist emphasized affective concerns, which have to do with the learners' emotional needs in the classroom. The participant identified both learning and making the student feel secure as the instructor's responsibilities. One way that the Pragmatist described supporting students was through the use of the learners' native language:

Giving them a little bit of support in the native language sometimes helps them feel like they understand what's going on, especially right at the very beginning. They understand the expectations in the classroom, and so supporting them sometimes is not a terrible thing.

The Pragmatist viewed native language use as a tool for helping students feel secure. The participant identified clarifying classroom expectations as a particular use of the native language.

In addition, the Pragmatist disagreed that learning to read in a first language and in a second language are basically the same. Rather than discussing the transfer of reading skills, the Pragmatist linked the difference to vocabulary knowledge in oral language at the moment of learning to read and write in English:

When you learn to read in your first language, you have the vocabulary, and most of the time, you're young and you pick it up naturally. It's a lot easier because you have the context of your first language, which is stronger. Learning to read in a new language is very different because you don't have that bank of vocabulary, especially in the beginning level.

The participant acknowledged the importance of oral language in learning to read. Furthermore, the Pragmatist specified that learning to read in the first language is not typically done in adulthood.

At the same time, the Pragmatist disagreed that adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English. While the instructor did see adult emergent readers as being at a disadvantage, this was not linked to a lack of ability to learn the new language, but rather to a lack of resources for teaching adult emergent readers:

They're definitely at a disadvantage, but I don't think that blanket statement is true. It depends on the support that they are able to receive and the time that they have to dedicate to it. They're maybe less likely to be successful just because of our resources to support them but not because of their ability to be able to learn to read in their language and in a new language.

The Pragmatist professed that students' success was linked to the support that they received in addition to the time they had to dedicate to their learning. This is consistent with the previously discussed belief that the onus of responsibility for learning was on the instructor rather than on the adult emergent reader.

Another statement with which the Pragmatist disagreed was that adult ESOL learners who lack native language literacy bring more weaknesses than strengths to the classroom. Again, granting that adult emergent readers were at a disadvantage, the Pragmatist believed that this disadvantage was not based on their strengths and weaknesses.

I disagree with that because they are at a disadvantage, but that doesn't have anything to do with their strengths or weaknesses as learners. They may have had many life experiences that have helped them. To me if you've gone through childhood into adulthood without learning to read, you've got some major coping skills that people who are literate probably do not have! There are some strengths that other students may not have.

The participant called attention to the fact that adult emergent readers may have had to develop skills for figuring out how to complete tasks that typically involved literacy, such as filling out applications, without having the necessary literacy level. The instructor found that through learning alternate ways of navigating these tasks, adult ESOL emergent readers may possess strengths that others do not.

One last statement that the Pragmatist disagreed with was that adult ESOL students who cannot yet read in their first language report this to their instructors. The Pragmatist had never experienced a student self-reporting being an adult emergent reader:

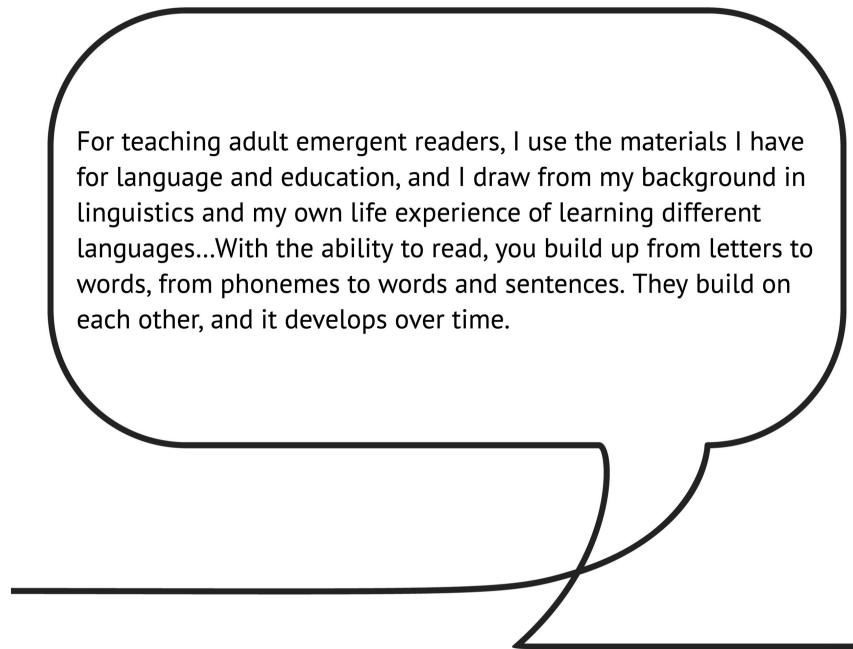
I've never had a student tell me they couldn't read. A lot of times, we find out when they need help with the application form, even though sometimes, they will bring somebody in to help them with the application when they're registering. You find out in class when you ask them to read something and they can't. A lot of times it's really just observation, which is something that as an adult learning center we're sensitive to because that happens. You just have to get adapted to catching those things.

Here, the participant clarified that usually adults who struggled with native language literacy were identified through observation in the classroom. However, sometimes at

registration for the classes adult emergent readers were identified because the application was printed in both Spanish and English. Learners who needed help with the application in their native language could then be identified, and this information was passed on to the instructor.

In summary, the Pragmatist perceived adult ESOL emergent readers to have the tendency to get overwhelmed and feel stressed in the classroom due to approaching learning with lower confidence. The participant considered reducing learners' stress level as a top priority. In spite of these affective concerns, the instructor had confidence that adult emergent readers could be successful in language learning and felt that it was the responsibility of the instructor to ensure this success. With regard to instruction, the Pragmatist favored learning that connected language to its use in real-world contexts and described implementing learning activities that brought students out into the natural context where they would use the language.

The Linguist



For teaching adult emergent readers, I use the materials I have for language and education, and I draw from my background in linguistics and my own life experience of learning different languages...With the ability to read, you build up from letters to words, from phonemes to words and sentences. They build on each other, and it develops over time.

This instructor has been named the Linguist because of an expressed strong link between linguistic knowledge and teaching practice. In the words of the participant, “That's how I explain language to students; it's a pattern.” The Linguist has taught adult ESOL emergent readers for over six years.

This instructor indicated that adult ESOL emergent readers have both challenges and the potential to be very motivated to learn. The Linguist depicted adult emergent readers as being grateful for the opportunity to improve their life conditions. The instructor expressed that the students’ mindset can contribute to their own effort:

People are so friendly and determined because learning English is their gateway! If they're escaping poverty or war, you're a significant figure in their life for a time. They really cherish you, and it's a very warm environment. I feel quite blessed to help them! And so, if someone had an impoverished childhood and

*didn't get to learn to read and write, and they're fleeing for their lives, they **really** want to be here. They're happy to be here and they're going to try.*

In spite of this motivation, the Linguist spoke about emergent readers needing more time to learn, even up to a decade. Based on the participant's workplace, the Linguist believed that if adult emergent readers remained in the ESOL program long enough, they would be successful in learning the language:

Every student that's come here as an emergent reader, if they've stayed here long enough, they've made tremendous progress with language. That's rewarding as an ESL teacher! I guess my concern is with the system, that we're placing a goal on graduation. If that doesn't happen, that may be perceived as a failure.

That worries me because from a language viewpoint, the bulk of the students can learn enough over time to eventually become successful, but it might take somebody eight years. I don't want to announce that in class. "If you want to graduate, you'll just be coming here and going to a community college over the course of eight to 10 years." People here are so supportive. It's a wonderful place, but that's my general concern with students that have really low English proficiency. I do believe being an emergent reader in your L1 contributes to that. It takes longer, probably. My fear is that what might be tremendous progress language-wise, might be looked at by focusing on the fact that they haven't graduated because it just takes so long.

The Linguist was concerned about emergent readers needing more time to learn from two different perspectives. The participant did not wish to discourage learners by sharing this

viewpoint nor did the instructor want the program to deem learners as having failed due to an extended length of study.

The Linguist's Perceptions about Adult Emergent Readers

In the Q-sort results, examining the statements that this instructor placed in the Most Agree category, the Linguist centered on the learner's instructional needs, affective needs, and educational background (see Table 7). During the conversation that took place after the Q sort, the responses provided by this participant showed coherence with the statements in the category for Most Agree.

Table 7

The Linguist's Q-Sort Data, Most Agree

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is essential for adult ESOL learners who lack literacy in their native language to learn the connections between letters and sounds.• The literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in ESOL.• Adults who cannot yet read or write in their native language are less confident learners.• Adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs.• Adult ESOL students who lack first language literacy have had their education interrupted in their youth.

The participant placed importance on adult ESOL emergent readers learning letter-sound correspondence and was concerned over their confidence level as learners. The participant believed that adult emergent readers may come from different educational backgrounds than learners with higher native language literacy levels.

First, the participant agreed that it is essential for adult ESOL learners who lack literacy in their native language to learn the connections between letters and sounds. The Linguist asserted that the learner needed to be able to associate letters with their corresponding sound in order to decode words and read:

My understanding of literacy is the ability to read, and if people don't have any knowledge of that, then they have to learn how to sound words out and make a connection that this image that they're seeing represents a sound or multiple sounds, as it is in English...When I studied Spanish, I already knew the alphabet, and so I could learn to read very quickly, but when I studied Chinese, because they use characters, I had no idea how to read them! I could see a picture and to me, it was a picture, but I had no idea how to say it. I had to have someone point that out to me, and so I had to learn from memory.

The Linguist distinguished between learning an alphabetic language and a non-alphabetic language. The participant explained that having native language literacy in an alphabetic language made it easier to learn to read in English.

On a related note, the Linguist agreed that the literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in ESOL. The Linguist shared a contrast between a learner who had interrupted formal education and one who did not:

*I can think of two students, one who is still here and one who left. It was **really upsetting** when she left, but she said it was too hard. She'd been here over a year and a half in the same cohort, and everyone loved her. She had a third-grade education in her home country. Then, one of our students from a Spanish*

speaking country was in high school in the pre-nursing program, and she emigrated here. She just breezed through everything! When I've had examples like that of numerous students over the years, seeing them in my class and hearing their educational background, either they tell me or a colleague does, and you realize the students who have had a formal education in their home country definitely have an advantage because it transfers.

In this vignette, the Linguist spoke about the learners' ability to transfer reading skills from the native language to the new language. The emergent reader, who did not have reading skills to transfer, dropped out of the program because she perceived it as too difficult.

Along similar lines, the Linguist agreed that adults who cannot yet read or write in their native language are less confident learners. The Linguist referred to the previously mentioned student who dropped out of the program, saying that she tended to express self-criticism and frustration during her studies. The instructor expressed that the design of the program itself might add to a lack of confidence in some adult emergent readers and lower-level learners in general:

It can be pretty advanced and challenging! Students will pick up elements, but if over the course of a term, they keep getting 50% on tests and then fail, and then come back and repeat, it can be very defeating to them. It can affect their mentality, but not for everyone.

The Linguist spoke various times about the program design not being ideal for adult emergent readers. This was reflected in the participant's agreement with the statement that follows.

The Linguist agreed that adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate literacy curriculum focusing on their needs. Referring to the current program where the Linguist worked, the participant believed that the beginning classes started at a level that was too high for adult emergent readers. The participant explained that adult ESOL emergent readers could benefit from a curriculum that allowed them to start with learning the alphabet, letter-sound correspondence and how to sound out words:

My big goal to address the needs of emergent readers was to recruit a volunteer organization because I have felt overwhelmed, to be honest, and can't always reach them in my class, which was always disheartening to me! And we've discussed, as a school, getting a computer program. A colleague mentioned a program that is for adults. It has a basic level where it starts out with the alphabet, so they get a chance to review the alphabet and practice. Then, with another teacher in a smaller setting, they can work on those skills. My observation was that in a class of eight students up to twenty, I started out my newcomers with a simple sentence like subject and verb and then simple present, and that's well above alphabet level! Since we only have a certain amount of time and space and capacity, that was how I proposed to best support these people. It was like creating an environment where they could go practice and then practice certain skills with me.

In a later interview, the Linguist described a curriculum specifically for adult ESOL emergent readers as including practice with the alphabet, letter-sound correspondence, vocabulary and listening skills. In the words of the Linguist,

I'd start with the alphabet, making sound associations with each letter, and then, learning to write them, as well. I like them to write out things because it builds pathways in the brain. I would include listening activities, using computer programs, something where they're able to hear the words and start making associations with the sounds and the written word, and lots of images, obviously, since they're adults. I'm certain they know what milk is and what a car is. They just might not be able to read it on a page. If you had lots of images, I'm certain they could! They probably even have some basic spoken English vocabulary if they've lived here a while, so I would make associations between what they know orally and the written word.

Finally, the Linguist agreed that adult ESOL students who lack first language literacy have had their education interrupted in their youth. The participant portrayed adult emergent readers as having had their education interrupted because of economics, moving, becoming a parent or civil unrest in the home country:

This is just from discussion of students here. Because it's an adult population, the vast majority of people I've met with interrupted education were older. That had to do with economics, moving, becoming a mom, or of course, with our students from Afghanistan, the Taliban and things.

The Linguist gave the example of Spanish speaking learners who may have been born in Mexico but grew up in Texas and attended through elementary school in the U.S. This instructor described these learners as having higher oral communication skills but still having difficulty reading over fifth grade level:

Since we're here in Texas, there's the border culture in the valley, and a handful of students end up in my class. They might have been born in Mexico, but they grew up in Texas. They went to elementary school up through fifth grade, so in my ESL class they can do a lot! They're advanced in my class but still don't have everything and need a lot of support. Then, you realize that they only finished elementary school in the U.S. Middle school work is way too hard for them; they would still need to review all of that content.

Here, the Linguist highlighted the contrast in abilities that certain learners had between spoken and written language skills. Some learners were even considered advanced in oral language but still were struggling with literacy.

Furthermore, in an interview, the Linguist spoke about working with a specific learner who had interrupted formal education. The instructor identified where the student displayed knowledge and where he had difficulties:

One of my afternoon students had up through sixth grade, so he knows his alphabet and knows the idea of writing out something. It's just the level of reading and a lot of the grammar skills that are hard for him.

The Linguist indicated that the learner had a certain level of literacy skills from his early education, so the instructor did not have to start by teaching the alphabet. However, the student still had difficulty with literacy because the interruption in his education precluded his exposure to more advanced reading skills and grammar concepts.

On the disagreement side of the Q-sort exercise, the Linguist's perceptions centered on first versus second language reading differences and learner differences (see Table 8). The instructor distinguished between learning to read in a first versus a second

language, especially in regard to oral language. During the conversation that took place after the Q sort, the responses provided by this participant showed coherence with the statements in the category for Most Disagree, with one exception.

Table 8

The Linguist's Q-Sort Data, Most Disagree

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English.• ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time feel more confident in a class of all emergent readers.• Adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language may learn to read more quickly than other students.• Learning to read in a first language and in a second language are basically the same.• It is easy to identify adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language.

In the area of learner differences, the participant believed that adult emergent readers were not easy to identify and that they needed more time to learn to read. However, given that time, the instructor felt adult emergent readers could, in fact, be successful in learning English. While recognizing differences between adult emergent readers and their peers with higher literacy skills, the Linguist cautioned against having separate classes for those learners. In the participant's opinion, a separate class could lower the student's confidence level by labeling the learner. This is probably contradictory to participant's agreement that adult emergent readers would benefit from a separate curriculum.

First, the Linguist disagreed that adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English:

With patience and time someone can do most anything like learn to read a children's book or maybe even read a newspaper, with support, if they're dedicated enough. My years at this school have really opened me up to people's life journeys and the time it takes to do things! That's where it gets into individual student choice because I've seen enough students who, if they keep trying, they can do it. However, some give up because of work, family, or disappointment. It is possible. It just takes time.

Here, as in other segments of the data, the Linguist focused on instructors and the learners themselves being patient and allowing for the possibly extended time it takes for emergent readers to learn. Furthermore, the Linguist gave an example of learner perseverance. The participant spoke about a specific student who had experienced success in learning:

She's been here a long time, and she has really progressed! She's probably the second Afghani lady that I've worked with. It must work with her life to be able come here and study. She left for a time and has been back this year. She failed the first time and then the second time around she passed my class. I didn't do anything special. She just keeps working! She slowly writes things out and slowly answers. I don't know that she uses a dictionary, but she's able to use her phone. She types slowly, but she's able to really get a lot of the grammar techniques.

The Linguist pointed out that the ESOL program must work with the learner's schedule and life conditions, such as family obligations. This allowed the learner to dedicate the necessary time needed to be successful.

However, the Linguist disagreed that ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time feel more confident in a class of all emergent readers. The Linguist maintained that in a sheltered group, having a class of all emergent readers might boost the confidence of some learners, but grouping low-level students together might also diminish their confidence by virtue of their being designated as low-level students. The Linguist suggested the computer lab as an option for building learners' confidence:

The whole purpose of the computer lab is to give people a lot more support and a lot more time to really nurture their language acquisition, so they can feel more confident in a sheltered space and then go immerse themselves and do better.

The Linguist presented an alternative to a homogenous class of all emergent readers. The instructor suggested using a computer lab to tailor instruction to learners' needs without calling attention to their language level.

Concerning the speed of literary learning, the Linguist disagreed that adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language may learn to read more quickly than other students. This instructor contended that lacking native language literacy was not a learning advantage:

Especially if they're older, I don't think it gives somebody an advantage to have low literacy in their own language unless they are a uniquely talented person! I don't think for a typical student, having no concept of the fact that spoken words relate to written words really helps them in a classroom.

In this excerpt, the Linguist expressed the belief that learning to read in a second language is facilitated by the transfer reading skills over from the native language. This corresponds to the Linguist's position that native language literacy level affects reading in a new language.

The Linguist also disagreed that learning to read in a first language and in a second language are basically the same. The instructor asserted that learning to read in a new language put a double burden on the learner:

Especially with adult learners, if they can already speak in their language, they have an association with certain sounds. So, not only are they learning a new language that they can't understand, but they have to learn how letters represent those sounds and ideas.

The participant reiterated here the importance of learning letter-sound correspondence. In addition, the Linguist spoke to the connection between oral language and reading.

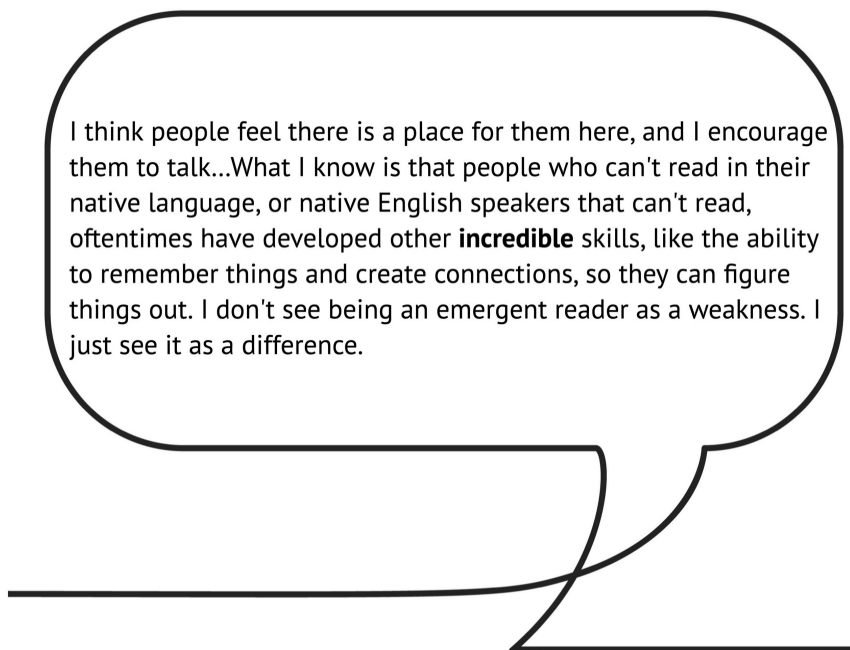
Finally, the Linguist disagreed that it is easy to identify adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language. The participant did not ask learners about their educational background but rather learned about them over time through interaction and by talking to support staff who worked with the learners, as well. The Linguist explained,

I know a little bit of Arabic, but if you put an Arabic test in front of me, I couldn't do anything. This just means that I can't read it. It doesn't mean I haven't been educated in English. If you found somebody in the U.S. that had only finished elementary school, and you gave us an Arabic test, we'd both do the same because we both couldn't read it.

With this statement, the Linguist pointed out the difficulty of properly assessing learners' proficiency in native language literacy. The instructor believed that assessing them in English would not provide accurate data.

Overall, the Linguist drew on experiences working with language learners and personal experiences with language learning to comment on Q-sort statements and answer interview questions. The participant focused on the role of student persistence and effort in learning in conjunction with instruction that included viewing language as a pattern of structures, letter-sound correspondence, making associations, and ample time for learners to be successful. The Linguist's focus on specific examples indicated that the instructor reflected not only on language structures, but on teaching, students, and personal experience to help make sense of the teaching context. The participant sought solutions for better serving adult emergent readers, namely incorporating volunteers in the classroom, and giving students access to a computer lab for language practice.

The Humanist



I think people feel there is a place for them here, and I encourage them to talk...What I know is that people who can't read in their native language, or native English speakers that can't read, oftentimes have developed other **incredible** skills, like the ability to remember things and create connections, so they can figure things out. I don't see being an emergent reader as a weakness. I just see it as a difference.

As illustrated in the vignette above, the participant has been deemed the Humanist because of an interest in learning about students' lives, making them feel safe in class, and valuing what they bring to the learning context. The Humanist had ample experience teaching ESOL to adult learners. However, the participant had only taught two classes with adult emergent readers.

Instead of taking a deficit view, the Humanist focused on emergent readers as having differences rather than weaknesses. The instructor focused on abilities that adult ESOL emergent readers may have developed to survive in a literate society while having low literacy levels:

They don't bring more weaknesses to the classroom. They bring more differences.

People who have low literacy have some amazing abilities. They have some amazing strengths. I don't see that it's a disability in that way.

However, the participant did express that being an emergent reader makes English literacy learning more challenging. The instructor equated reading and writing well in the native language with the ability to learn to read and write well in the new language:

If somebody already reads well in Spanish, they will read well in English, and if they are already having difficulty reading in Spanish, they're going to correspondingly have difficulty reading in English...My guess is that the students that are having difficulty writing in English are also having difficulty in their native language.

The Humanist believed that native language literacy skills transfer to a new language.

The participant revisited this idea several times throughout our conversations.

Additionally, the Humanist viewed adult ESOL emergent readers as needing the support of a safe environment in the classroom. The instructor spoke about not embarrassing the learner or putting them on the spot several times during the interviews:

It's more about being sensitive to not embarrassing them. Not making people read out loud if they're uncomfortable doing that, not sitting and waiting for an answer from somebody that obviously can't read the question or do the activity...They need not to feel less than, that they're at a different level. They shouldn't feel like they can't come or that they can't contribute!

Here, the Humanist placed importance on the affective climate of the classroom. The quote is consistent with the participant's observed lessons; the emergent reader present was participatory and conversational.

The Humanist's Perceptions about Adult Emergent Readers

In the Q-sort results, examining the statements that this instructor placed in the Most Agree category, the Humanist believed that adult ESOL emergent readers had different needs than their more literate peers, including learning under a separate curriculum, native language reading instruction, and phonics instruction (see Table 9). During the conversation that took place after the Q sort, the responses provided by this participant showed coherence with the statements in the category for Most Agree.

Table 9

The Humanist's Q-Sort Data, Most Agree

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making real-world connections is a must to support adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy when they are learning to read in English.• Instructing adult ESOL learners to read in their native language can help them learn to read in English.• Adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs.• It is essential for adult ESOL learners who lack literacy in their native language to learn the connections between letters and sounds.• The literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in ESOL.

The participant believed that native language literacy level had an impact on learning to read in a new language. In addition, the Humanist found it important to connect learning to the student's real life.

First, the Humanist agreed that making real-world connections is a must to support adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy when they are learning to

read in English. Speaking about an emergent reader, the participant commented, “I know he’s a painter and whenever he starts talking about his business, he just lights up!” The Humanist explained,

I just feel anytime you're working with people that are learning the second language, there needs to be that strong connection! If someone has two things that they're working on, both the literacy and learning the new language, the more that you can make good connections with the real world, the better it will be for the student and the easier it will be to make those connections.

Likewise, the Humanist spoke about the power of real-world connections to motivate students to work harder to communicate. In the experience of this instructor,

There's a purpose in language, and that's to communicate with other people. If my students want to tell me something badly enough, they will work, and they'll struggle to make me understand! If it's something that affects them in their lives, they are more apt to push themselves.

In support of these statements, the Humanist made real-world connections to learning in the observed lessons. The instructor had learners write sentences about their real experiences of what happened the day before and asked questions that related to the learners’ country of origin or their current work lives. For example, in a lesson on shopping, the Humanist asked an adult emergent reader, who is a painter by profession, where he shops for paint.

Additionally, the Humanist agreed that instructing adult ESOL learners to read in their native language can help them learn to read in English. The participant spoke about

the transfer of language skills onto the new language. When asked what skills would transfer, the Humanist relayed the following:

The phonics, the sounds of language, the sounds of letters, those kinds of things. Especially with a Spanish speaker, where it's one for one with their alphabet, if you taught them how to read in their own language first, those skills would be transferable to English.

In an interview, the Humanist expressed the opinion that both English and native language literacy could be learned simultaneously. The participant clarified that it was not necessary to teach the learner literacy in the native language first:

They could do it simultaneously. I think they would progress in both areas faster if you did it in conjunction, if they were learning to read and write while studying English at the same time. That's possible.

While the Humanist strongly supported native language literacy instruction, the participant was not able to include this in class. The instructor did not discuss the logistics of how this might be done.

Furthermore, the Humanist agreed that adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs. The Humanist held that common teaching methods focused on the written word in order to teach learners, such as writing on the whiteboard:

Thinking about the students that I've had, that have low literacy, it just seems like there's such a struggle! So much of the language teaching that we do is based on reading and writing. When I introduce a topic, I'm always using a lot of writing. If there was a different way to teach students that have low literacy, that could be

beneficial. Maybe it is not so reading focused. There are certainly ways that people learn English even though they don't read English, but if there are people that want to learn, the speed at which they would learn would be increased if they learned to read. Our classes, for sure, are so literacy focused! We do conversational things, but explanations that I do are written.

While not identifying particular techniques, this participant thought that instructional methods that did not rely as much on the learner reading would be beneficial for adult emergent readers. The Humanist did not make particular suggestions for a curriculum specifically for adult emergent readers, but the participant did mention the importance of phonics as can be seen in the instructor's agreement with the next statement.

The Humanist agreed that it is essential for adult ESOL learners who lack literacy in their native language to learn the connections between letters and sounds. The Humanist professed to be a believer in phonics instruction, especially for native Spanish speakers. The instructor found it beneficial to contrast the one to one correspondence of letters and sounds in Spanish to English where multiple sounds may be connected to one letter or group of letters:

I'm just a big believer in phonics, especially for Spanish speakers because the connection there is so direct! That's why written English can be so frustrating for Spanish speakers. In my class on Tuesday, they were learning "swollen knee". Of course they were saying swollen k-nee. I said okay, "No, we don't pronounce the K." Then we were doing should, and they were pronouncing it "Shou-l-d" which Spanish speakers oftentimes do. I said, "No, we don't pronounce the L." In

Spanish, you do pronounce everything. You see it; you pronounce it. That's why it would be beneficial.

In one of the observed lessons, The Humanist did incorporate phonics instruction. In the lesson, the instructor taught students to pronounce the unvoiced digraph “th” and the variations of the suffix “ed”.

Finally, the Humanist agreed that the literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in ESOL. Bringing this back to the transfer of reading skills, the participant summed up the point by saying,

I just have this underlying belief that reading is transferable if the alphabet is the same. I've never tried to learn a language that uses a different alphabet, so I don't know what it would be like in a different alphabet. With a Spanish speaker for example, I just innately believe that if that person can read in Spanish, those skills are transferable.

With this quotation, the Humanist focused on the transferability of reading skills between alphabetic languages. As seen previously, the participant revisited this point more than once in the data.

On the disagree side of the Q-sort grid, the Humanist focused on adult emergent readers having differences rather than weakness in learning, not disclosing their native language literacy status, and using the native language in the classroom (see Table 10). During the conversation that took place after the Q sort, the responses provided by this participant showed coherence with the statements in the category for Most Disagree.

Table 10

The Humanist's Q-Sort Data, Most Disagree

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult ESOL students who lack native language literacy bring more weaknesses than strengths to the classroom.• Adult ESOL students who cannot yet read in their first language report this to their instructors.• Only English should be spoken in the adult ESOL classroom no matter who the students are.• Adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language may learn to read more quickly than other students.• Adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English.

Even though the Humanist perceived adult emergent readers to need more time to learn to read than other learners, the instructor was optimistic about these students being successful language learners and believed that using the native language at times during lessons could help facilitate learning. Additionally, the Humanist believed that adult emergent readers did not self-report their literacy status to their instructors.

First, the Humanist disagreed that adult ESOL students who lack native language literacy bring more weaknesses than strengths to the classroom. As mentioned in the first part of this chapter, the participant focused on learner differences rather than weaknesses. This instructor maintained that adult emergent readers may have strengths that other learners do not have, such as the ability to remember information and create connections. In one of the interviews, the Humanist spoke about the abilities of one of the emergent readers in the class.

He's one of the farthest along in terms of understanding. His comprehension is good! He's like a typical English learner in some ways. He'll speak, and people can understand him. The grammar may not always be right, but people can understand him.

The Humanist noted that this learner was strong in oral language. With this quotation, the participant referred to the potential for adult emergent readers to be even more advanced than other learners in oral language.

Even so, the Humanist disagreed that adult ESOL students who cannot yet read in their first language report this to their instructors. The Humanist held that people are ashamed of having low literacy levels and are not eager to share this information. The participant claimed that no one in any class had ever self-reported that they were an adult emergent reader. The Humanist shared identifying adult emergent readers through observation. “For most people, it's a shame. They see it as a shortcoming, so they wouldn't tell. I've never had anybody tell me. I figured it out by myself.” In a different example, the Humanist described identifying an adult ESOL emergent reader by speaking to a program administrator:

It was obvious that when we did any reading or writing, she didn't participate. Initially, it made the other students irritated! They didn't say that, but there was lots of eye rolling and stuff like that. I went to talk to a program administrator, and she told me what the situation was. Then, I went back to the students when the emergent reader wasn't in the classroom, and I told them that she was learning to read and that there were times when I wasn't going to call on her. I'd ask her if she wanted to participate, and if she said no, then we would go

on. That was a good thing to do because the behavior towards her changed a lot! It was a really nice class. Once they understood, in fact, oftentimes they would help her. They would sit with her and the book, and they would, in their way, explain what was happening.

Here, the participant described trying to create a more accepting environment in the classroom. In the absence of a system for identifying students with low native language literacy levels, the instructor was able to learn more about the learner by consulting with the program administration. However, this information had to be requested rather than being automatically given to the instructor.

Additionally, the Humanist disagreed that only English should be spoken in the adult ESOL classroom no matter who the students are. The instructor found this idea old-fashioned. According to the Humanist, “We want to stay in the language as much as possible, but it's simply that sometimes explaining something in their native language just makes it that much faster, and people get it and move on.”

In fact, in the second observed lesson, learners were helping each other with vocabulary by saying the Spanish names of objects and the instructor translated the word *grinder* to Spanish when learners were having trouble understanding what a coffee grinder was. However, in an interview, the Humanist added that it is sometimes better for learners to be unaware of the instructor's knowledge of the native language:

I find that if they think I don't know their native language, they will struggle much harder to speak English. They will wait until I understand! Even if they have to ask somebody for a word in their native language, they will make sure that I understand it. It's an interesting thing!

The instructor viewed wanting to communicate and needing to do so through English as motivating for learners. Of course, this was not observed in the Humanist's lessons because the learners already knew that the instructor had some knowledge of Spanish.

Concerning the speed of literacy learning, the Humanist disagreed that adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language may learn to read more quickly than other students. When asked to elaborate on this statement, the participant went back to the concept of the transfer of language skills stating, "Back to my fundamental belief that the skill is transferable, if somebody can already read in Spanish, they're going to learn to read more quickly in English than a student that can't yet read in Spanish."

Finally, the Humanist did not agree that adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English. The instructor stressed that,

Anybody has a good chance to learn if they want to, if they put forward effort and if they're in a situation where they have a good teacher and a good curriculum...I think anyone can learn. I probably wouldn't be a teacher if I didn't believe!

Simply stated, this final sentence showed the participant's sense of optimism regarding adult emergent readers' success with literacy.

Overall, the Humanist's perceptions centered around a view of language as communication and learning as connected to the real-world. The participant emphasized phonics instruction and creating a safe environment for emergent readers in the classroom, seeing a separate curriculum and native language literacy instruction as beneficial for these learners. The instructor believed strongly in the potential for success

of all learners and saw adult emergent readers as having strengths in learning, while recognizing their challenges as well.

V. EMERGENT THEMES

The main goal of this qualitative case study was to document the perceptions and praxis of TESOL instructors in community-based programs in Central Texas in relation to the learning needs of adult emergent readers. The study findings presented in this chapter followed two approaches to data analysis, inductive and deductive analysis (Patton, 2015). Inductive analysis was used to look at the data while being open to discovering new possible answers to the research questions. In a like manner, deductive analysis was used to examine the data through the lens of the study theoretical framework. This chapter is divided into four sections: (1) Q-sort commonalities, (2) Study findings from inductive analysis, (3) Democratic education: study findings from deductive analysis, and (4) Connections to the literature.

Q-Sort Commonalities

At the time when the ESOL instructors participated in the Q-sort exercise, they divided statements related to their perceptions of adult emergent readers into three categories: Most Agree, Most Disagree, and Neutral. This activity was followed by a conversation centered around the statements with which they most agreed and most disagreed. This section will examine the instructors' common perceptions in relation to their Q sort responses (see Appendices M and N). Presented first is an examination of the most agreed with statements across all of the participants' Q-sort data. Then, the same will be done for the statements in the most disagreed with category.

Statements Reflecting Instructors' Perceptions in the Most Agree Category

There were three statements with which most participants agreed (see Table 11). These statements were centered around the ideas of learner differences and learner needs.

Table 11

Q-Sort Data Array for Most Agreed with Statements

Statement	Technologist	Pragmatist	Linguist	Humanist
The literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in ESOL.	X	X	X	X
Adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs.	X	X	X	X
It is essential for adult ESOL learners who lack literacy in their native language to learn the connections between letters and sounds.	X		X	X

All four instructors believed that adult emergent readers had different learning needs and most of them identified a particular aspect of reading instruction as being essential. These statements of common agreement were consistent with each other, thus showing coherence of thought.

First, the instructors agreed that the literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in ESOL. Three of the participants based their agreement on emergent readers' lack of the ability to transfer native language reading skills to the new language. The following representative vignette by the Linguist sums up this idea:

Reading is a skill. I've been teaching now for many, many years at different levels, and I've come to see it as a skill and an ability. If a person can already read in their native language, then, they transfer those skills. At least within an ESOL classroom, where literacy is part of the component, it will definitely affect their ability to learn!

Rather than speaking about the transfer of reading skills, the Pragmatist, focused more on learners with interrupted formal education not having skills to transfer on learning how to learn and on their lack of confidence. Likewise, the Linguist shared the view that adult emergent readers were less confident learners. This instructor spoke about a student with interrupted formal education who frequently criticized her own abilities as a learner.

Secondly, all of the instructors agreed that adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs. However, they did not describe a common curriculum. Two of the participants, the Technologist and the Linguist, focused on bottom up literacy skills. The Pragmatist mentioned native language literacy instruction and including visuals in lessons to link images and words, and the Humanist suggested using techniques for instruction that did not rely as much on reading.

Thirdly, three instructors agreed that it is essential for adult ESOL learners who lack literacy in their native language to learn the connections between letters and sounds, stating that this is necessary for decoding words. While not in the top five, the Pragmatist also agreed that learning the connection between letters and sounds was important when learning to read:

It's important for them to learn the sounds, but at the same time, when you're reading in English, a lot of what you're doing is not necessarily sounding out the words. Yes, it's important, but it could be confusing if they are just learning the sounds and aren't understanding the complexity of learning to read in English and all the different rules.

Interpreting the statement as excluding other types of reading instruction, the instructor emphasized that while necessary, letter-sound correspondence was not sufficient for learning to read.

In summary, the instructors placed great importance on the native language and the curriculum. They unanimously acknowledged that native language literacy level impacts reading in a new language. Furthermore, they collectively believed that adult emergent readers would benefit from a separate curriculum, and while they each had different ideas of what to include in the curriculum, all of the participants considered learning the connections between letters and sounds to be important.

Statements Reflecting Instructors' Perceptions in the Most Disagree Category

There were three statements with which most participants disagreed (see Table 12). These statements were centered around the learner and literacy learning.

Table 12

Q-Sort Data Array for Most Disagreed with Statements

Item	Technologist	Pragmatist	Linguist	Humanist
Adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English.	X	X	X	X
Adult ESOL students who cannot yet read in their first language report this to their instructors.	X	X		X
Learning to read in a first language and in a second language are basically the same.	X	X	X	

The instructors showed common disagreement with certain statements regarding the potential for learner success, first versus second language reading, and learner self-

reporting of emergent reader status. Although not closely related to each other, these statements of disagreement were neither inconsistent with each other, nor did they imply incoherence of thought.

All of the instructors disagreed that adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English. The Linguist expressed the sentiment of the instructors: “I’ll just keep working with students on these skills, and they’re moving forward. Some of them might take one term. Some of them might take three, but they’re learning along the way and practicing and engaging.” The Pragmatist, the Linguist, and the Humanist focused on the time and the effort that the student dedicated to learning as being a key for success. The Humanist mentioned the quality of the instructor and curriculum as being important, as well. At the same time, the Pragmatist and the Technologist were both of the opinion that adult emergent readers were at a disadvantage. For the Technologist, this had to do with their age, or more specifically, being adults. For the Pragmatist, their disadvantage had more to do with a lack of teaching resources tailored for these learners.

Three participants disagreed that adult ESOL students who cannot yet read in their first language report this to their instructors. The instructors overwhelmingly found the contrary to be true. The Pragmatist and the Humanist both acknowledged that no student had ever disclosed being an adult emergent reader to them directly, whereas the Technologist found that sometimes students do share this information with the instructor. While not in the top five, the Linguist did put the related statement that it is easy to identify adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language in the top five and mentioned that students do not self-report in the conversation following the Q sort.

The Linguist shared, “When I meet them, I don't ask them if they can read in their native language, and they don't necessarily come up and tell me. It's over time working with students that you start to observe things.” The Technologist and the Humanist attributed the lack of self-reporting to feelings of shame about not having native language literacy. Nevertheless, none of the participants had a specific system in place for identifying adult emergent readers in the classroom.

Next, three of the instructors disagreed that learning to read in a first language and in a second language were basically the same. Each participant referred to different factors when contrasting first and second language learning. The Technologist focused on the role of parental input when children learn the first language. The Pragmatist focused on oral language vocabulary as facilitating first language reading, and the Linguist emphasized the connection between oral language and phonemic awareness as aiding first language acquisition.

In summary, the instructors identified three misconceptions about literacy learning and adult emergent readers. Most of them felt strongly that learning to read in a first language was not the same as learning to read in a second language. In addition, in the experience of the instructors, adult emergent readers have the potential to be successful with quality instruction, time, and effort. However, all of them found that adult emergent readers are reluctant to disclose their native language literacy levels, possibly due to feeling embarrassed about this status. Instead, the instructors have used what they have learned through observation and praxis to identify these learners.

Study Findings from Inductive Analysis

Data analysis led to several emergent themes for this study. To make sense out of the data, they were broken down into codes according to their meaning. First, in vivo codes were assigned. Then the data were re-coded into categories. Next, the codes were examined to see which ones recurred across the four participants' data. Then, these codes were combined into categories. A second round of analysis was helpful in reducing the data into six prevalent categories. These categories were related to beliefs about literacy, instructor preparation and praxis, learner needs, learner success, planning for instruction, and teaching strategies. The six categories were then grouped under three broad themes according to their relationship to (1) the instructor, (2) the learner, or (3) curriculum and instruction (see Figure 4).

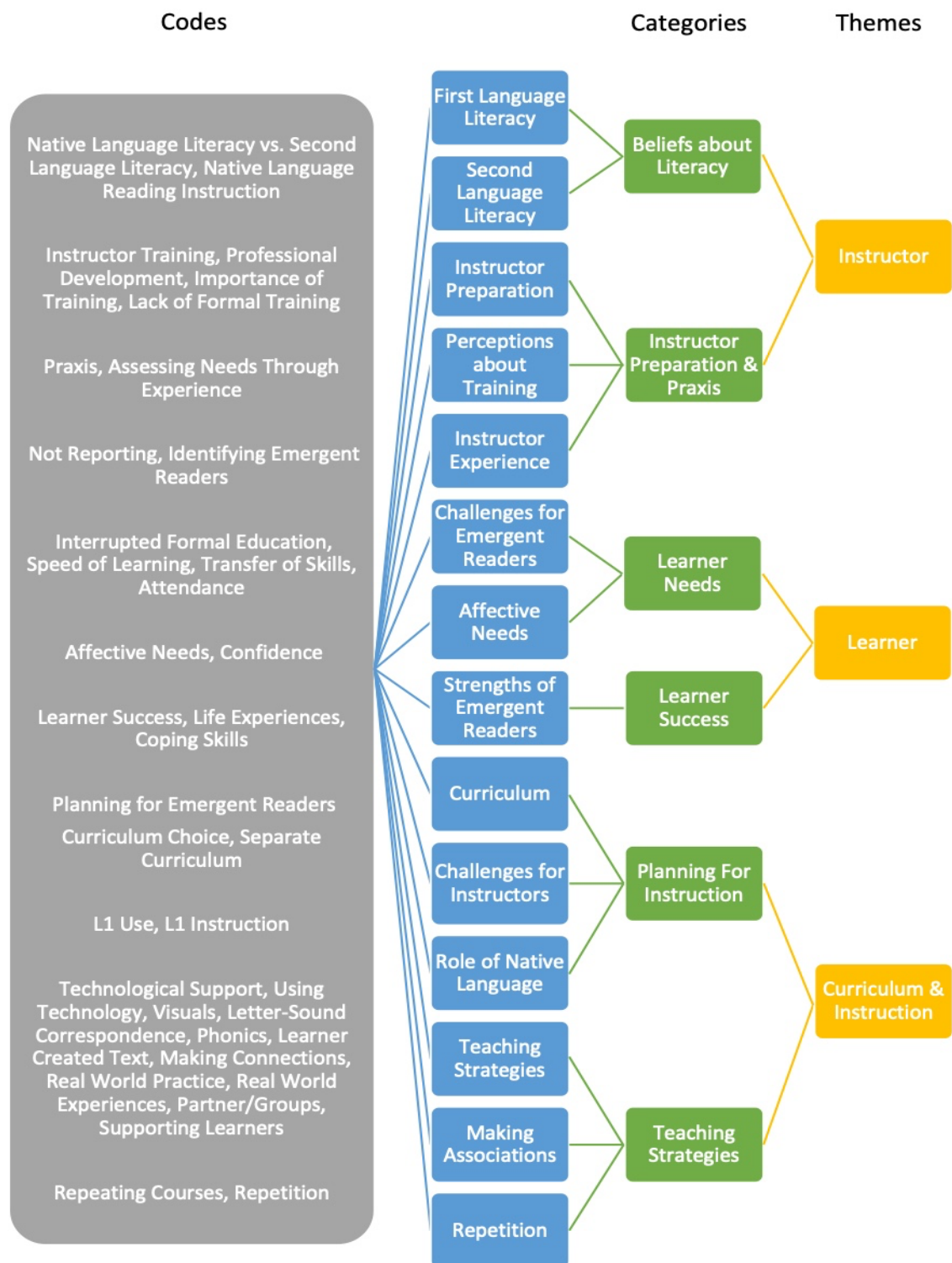


Figure 4 Coding Process

The Instructor

As illustrated in Figure 4, two categories of codes support “the instructor” as a larger theme, namely, beliefs about literacy and instructor preparation and praxis. This section describes each of these themes in light of the various sources of data collected from all of the instructors.

Beliefs About Literacy

As was evident in the Q-sort data, the participants held some common ideas about learning to read and the interaction between literacy in the native language and a new language. They distinguished between learning to read in a first and second language, seeing these as different processes. They also correlated native language literacy level to progress in learning to read in a new language, and when considering additional data from the Q-sort conversation, most of the instructors believed that teaching adult ESOL learners to read in their native language could help them learn to read in English. The words of the Humanist sum up this perspective:

If I found out that somebody could not yet read in Spanish and they asked me, “I want to learn how to read in English,” I guess my belief is I would teach them how to read in Spanish first.

The participants had divergent reasons for recommending native language literacy instruction, however. These included the transfer of schema for learning, learner confidence, the transfer of reading skills, and making associations between oral and written language.

Instructor Preparation and Praxis

None of the participants in the study had formal training on working with adult ESOL emergent readers in the programs that prepared them to teach English, no matter what their background in education was. They learned about teaching emergent readers through praxis and applying what they knew about instructing other ESOL learners, some of them drawing on experiences with K-12 education. In a representative statement, the Linguist explained,

They're really just techniques I've developed over time from general reading classes and that I've applied to the situation at hand. That's all informal, I guess, in taking theoretical knowledge and trying to adapt it in the way I feel is best.

However, most of the instructors, at some juncture in the study, expressed the desire to have more training or information on teaching these learners. Three of them specifically asked the me to share what knowledge I had on the topic after the study had been concluded, and I agreed to do this.

Similarly, the instructors relied on experience when it came to identifying emergent readers. All of the participants shared that adult emergent readers either rarely or never reported this status to their instructor. They primarily outlined identifying adult ESOL emergent readers through their behaviors in the classroom, such as lack of participation or extreme struggles with writing. Less frequently, the instructors specified that administrators, counselors or classmates had disclosed that learners were emergent readers. The words of the Linguist were illustrative of this point:

They don't say on the first day of class, "Oh, I only have this education level in my country." One, because they might not be able to say that, for the most part. I

don't normally ask them that. I just start to work with the level and see how people do on my materials and start to make observations. Then, I might ask questions about background over the course of the term.

Most of the instructors referred to specific learners as having either interrupted or no formal education, thus showing that they were ultimately able to learn about the students' educational background. However, none of the participants had a systematic method in place for identifying adult emergent readers in place. In fact, during an observed lesson, one instructor was not aware that a particular student in class was an adult emergent reader although another instructor in the same program had identified the student as such.

The Learner

In the process of coding the data, two categories of codes made up the larger theme for “the learner.” These themes centered around learner needs and success.

Learner Needs

The majority of the instructors explained that they assessed the needs of adult ESOL emergent readers through observation and by drawing on experience working with these students. Most of the instructors expressed the specific need to make learners feel secure and to build their confidence in the classroom by, for example, not calling extra attention to them during lessons. In a representative vignette the Humanist shared,

*I'm very conscious that I don't put them on the spot or that I call on them in a way that they would **have to** answer. I would never make them go to the board and write! I would be conscious that that would be really difficult for them and would be embarrassing.*

The instructors spoke about the affective, or emotional, needs of the learners. They were sensitive to creating a safe learning environment for students in the classroom.

Furthermore, in the Q-sort conversation, most of the participants expressed some degree of accord with the idea that a class composed solely of emergent readers would help learners to feel more confident, even if they did not place the statement in their top five. The Humanist explained,

That's why we divide students up by levels. There's a belief that people do better if they're not in competition with people that are at a different level and are constantly doing that comparing. My belief is that, yes, in a class where everybody was at that same level that might give them more confidence.

Two of the instructors spoke more about learners not comparing themselves to others while the other participant focused on adult emergent readers being overwhelmed in more mixed level classes.

On a related point, during the interviews, most of the instructors mentioned specific students that had dropped out of their programs either due to the difficulty of the curriculum or personal issues. In both of the observed lessons for one instructor, only one out of five emergent readers was present, and another instructor had had an emergent reader drop out of the class being observed. This poignant excerpt from the Linguist exemplified the issue:

I'm thinking of some of the students that I've worked with here. There was a lady who was really sad. She said she was going to quit and did. She was so sweet and wonderful! She was here for probably a year and a half or two years. A couple

times she cried; It was with the present perfect one time. She said, "This is too hard. I'm going to leave." She said bye and has never been back.

This narrative was illustrative of the instructors' awareness of the importance of addressing the needs of adult emergent readers in community-based programs. If learners' affective needs are not met or if the curriculum is not appropriate for them, they are likely to stop attending altogether.

Learner Success

The participants all expressed a belief that adult ESOL emergent readers could be successful in learning English. At the same time, most of the instructors agreed that these learners needed more time and effort than their peers to achieve their goals. Even so, two instructors focused on the strengths or coping skills, such as the ability to remember large quantities of information, that these learners have had to develop as a result of having a low literacy level in a literacy-based society. The other two focused on the students' perseverance, stating that if given enough time, adult ESOL emergent readers who were dedicated to their studies could make great gains in learning English. In an explanatory account, the Linguist shared, "I just try and be realistic with students. I tell them, 'You'll get there. It just takes time,' and I tell them, 'I spent eight years on Spanish,' and things like that."

Curriculum and Instruction

Coding the data it became evident that two categories made up for a larger theme, namely, curriculum and instruction. These categories were labeled as planning for instruction and teaching strategies.

Planning for Instruction

The majority of the instructors maintained that they did not plan specifically for the emergent readers in the class. In the revealing words of the Pragmatist,

I don't know if I do a very good job, honestly, of adapting to those needs. I try to use those multi-level classroom activities naturally. I try to use a lot of different methods of teaching the same thing, so people who are auditory learners get their needs met; people who are visual learners get their needs met. I don't know if I specifically adapt to those folks...I feel like everything we do is for emergent readers generally but not necessarily...The lessons are not necessarily specific to people who are emergent readers in their own language. They're all emergent readers in English! In that sense, they're all in the same boat.

In spite of not planning differently, the instructors demonstrated giving extra support to these learners during the lesson observations or spoke about supports that they typically gave these learners, such as using technology, giving emergent readers extra attention in the classroom, partnering or grouping them with more advanced students, reading aloud, slowing down, and limiting writing on the board. The Humanist disclosed,

I don't think I do a good job of this. I don't think I do anything different in preparation. I may, in the actual classroom. I may go back and spend time individually with the person to see where they're having difficulty, but I don't do any special work or assessment or anything like that.

In fact, two of the instructors spent extra time with adult emergent readers during the observed lessons. They assisted the learners with activities that involved reading or writing. In one case, the instructor provided modified handouts for an emergent reader.

Finally, all of the instructors recognized that adult emergent readers had different learning needs from peers with higher literacy levels. They agreed that emergent readers would benefit from a separate curriculum that focused specifically on their needs, although they were not able to implement this with their learners.

Teaching Strategies

The participants identified various teaching techniques that they used in their lessons. The instructors focused most heavily on having learners create associations, use educational technology, employ repetition, and work with partners or groups. They also mentioned the role of the native language in the classroom.

The theme of making connections or associations in learning was recurring throughout the entirety of the data. This descriptive statement by the Technologist represents the ideas expressed by the instructors:

Without knowing the association between letters and sounds, they wouldn't be able to phonetically sound words out. They wouldn't be able to visualize the word in their mind! They wouldn't be able to imagine the word whenever someone speaks. They wouldn't be able to read subtitles and then associate the audio of the movie with the subtitles they're reading. It all has to do with the associations!

All of the instructors spoke about the importance of learners making connections between English letters and sounds, with two of them speaking about the significance of phonics instruction specifically. Moreover, various participants mentioned making connections between sounds and words, spoken words and written words, spoken words and images, written words and images, and spoken and written words and objects. In fact, while not all grouped the idea in their top five, during the Q-sort conversation, three instructors

believed that making real world connections was essential for adult emergent readers learning to read in English.

Another strategy that all of the participants considered beneficial for adult emergent readers was the use of certain types of technology. Some of them recounted using learning applications in the classroom. One focused on use outside of the classroom. Two of the instructors mentioned using technology both inside and outside of the classroom. The Technologist gave this enthusiastic comment on the use of technology in the classroom:

*Break things down; use technology. I'm a big proponent of using technology! Quizlet is a lifesaver when it comes to learning vocabulary. It is extremely powerful! I do a lot of Kahoots. I do a lot of Quizzes, but Quizlet is, hands down, **the most powerful tool** I've ever used for learning a language.*

Besides the applications mentioned by the Technologist, other applications and software that participants used in the classroom were PowerPoint, internet videos, and Google Translate. The instructors also described using, or promoted the use of, mobile applications, language learning software programs, and an online native language literacy program outside of class to enhance learning.

Furthermore, three of the four participants stressed the importance of repetition in teaching adult ESOL emergent readers. They talked about the necessity of repeating what students were learning whether it be through drilling or providing learners with multiple activities on the same topic or grammar point. When talking about a lesson, in a representative vignette, the Pragmatist stated,

We repeat and repeat and repeat the things that we're working on, which is why today is just really all review. It's going to be repeating the same question over and over again, so that really sticks in their brain and gives them the opportunity to see it many, many times and say it many, many times!

Beyond repeated practice of the language, three of the four instructors spoke about the opportunity in their programs for learners to repeat entire courses before going to the next level, thus giving them more practice with content.

On the topic of supporting emergent readers in the classroom, while only half of the instructors spent extra time one-to-one with adult emergent readers during the observed lessons, all of the participants provided extra support for these learners through the use of partner and group work. The instructors formed partners and groups in a variety of ways. The Pragmatist provided an illustrative statement:

I think that what has really been most beneficial is using partners, and the higher-level students really enjoy helping... I do that with all my students, especially the ones who have no literacy. They always have a partner working with them and helping them because what I've noticed is that seeing a board full of words is very overwhelming. Seeing this worksheet is even overwhelming for them, and it can be frustrating. The partner will help them write down everything until they start to get the hang of writing and feel more like they can do it themselves. That's really what has helped the most.

Not all of the participants paired and grouped students by literacy level, and none of them paired by literacy level all the time. However, all of the instructors paired and grouped students by proximity either primarily or at least sometimes, hence, by default, allowing

learners to choose their own partners and groups. In addition, one participant favored using random pairing techniques. The Humanist described forming pairs with an odd number of students during an observed lesson:

When I was dividing up the groups, there were seven people in the class. I knew I was going to work with somebody, so I made a point of working with him [the emergent reader] because he was really lost on the comprehension piece. I was sitting over here when I was playing that recording, and he was really confused. So, I thought I would sit with him so that I could see if I could help him along through the next part.

The strategic pairing in this lesson allowed the instructor to provide extra support to the emergent reader directly. The participant used what appeared to be learner need to decide how to pair the students. Although each instructor had his or her own approach to forming partners and groups, this type of interaction was a significant part of all of their lessons.

Moreover, in the Q sort or in an interview, the participants unanimously expressed that there was a place for native language use during lessons. One instructor included the use of the native language to facilitate understanding as a more integral part of lessons through the use of Google Translate. However, most of the them allowed the native language to be spoken at times in the classroom for efficiency and to foster understanding. This included native language use by the instructors or by the learners.

Democratic Education: Study Findings from Deductive Analysis

To perform an analysis in light of the study's theoretical framework, critical pedagogy, the data were coded according to the following predetermined tenets of

democratic education: real-life focus, critical consciousness, dialogism, learner autonomy, reciprocal learning, and praxis (Freire, 1970; 1998; Kincheloe, 2003; Shor, 1992; Wink, 2005). Then, the codes were examined to see which ones recurred across the four participants' data. Evidence of real-life focus was most prevalent in the data. There was evidence, to varying degrees, of dialogism, reciprocal learning, and praxis, as well. However, there was very little evidence of critical consciousness or learner autonomy, which could be a reflection of constraints placed on instructors and programs through TWC's focus on workforce transition.

Real-life Focus

The strongest element of democratic education present in the data was a real-life focus or making a connection to learning and the student's real-life (Freire, 1970; 1998), which occurred in a variety of ways. In most cases, the tasks that learners completed did not simulate activities that they would do in real life, but rather contained content that could be applied in the learners' real life or content that connected to the learners' real life. This seemed to go hand in hand with the strong thread in the data on the importance the participants placed on making various types of associations or connections in learning, for example, the Humanist tended to connect the content to learners' jobs or home cultures. The Pragmatist was the one instructor who discussed taking the students' learning out into the real world and having learners apply the language in the actual context where it was needed. Largely, this real-life focus was more on daily tasks that students needed to perform, which may be due to the beginning level of the learners.

Dialogism

Dialogism (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1992) was present to some extent in the lessons that the participants taught. In all but one of the instructors' classes, students were seated in a fashion that facilitated communication with the whole group, u-shaped arrangement or table groups. In all of the observed lessons, students were free to ask questions or make comments at any time. The instructors all circulated around the classroom during learning activities checking on how students were doing, answering questions, and conversing about the activity. The majority of the instructors had open discussions about a topic during the lessons where students could comment freely.

Reciprocal Learning

Each of the instructors spoke of learning about the needs of adult ESOL emergent readers through experience working with them, and in this way, they described learning from the students. In fact, reciprocal learning (Freire, 1998) was directly observed in the Humanist's lessons. The participant frequently asked authentic follow-up questions about students' daily lives and their home cultures. Accordingly, when students did not understand the instructions given, the Humanist said, "Let me do a better job," and reexplained what learners were to do, thus showing evidence of participation in praxis regarding instruction.

Praxis

Finally, as mentioned before, all of the instructors spoke about learning to teach adult ESOL emergent readers through practice, which implies that they reflected on their experiences and adjusted instruction accordingly, thus engaging in praxis (Freire, 1970; Kincheloe, 2003; Wink, 2005). The Technologist spoke most directly about the use of

praxis. When asked about learning to teach adult emergent readers, the Technologist supplied a significant response:

Experience, observation, and experimentation, just doing the scientific method. You try one thing; it doesn't work. You try something else. Make a hypothesis and test it. I wish there were better guidance. Honestly, a lot of the stuff I found out there just wasn't that helpful. That's been my honest experience. I go to workshops; I read stuff online, and a lot of it isn't that helpful.

This statement reflects the instructor's frustration with the information and training opportunities that were available. The instructor relied on praxis but desired further guidance, as did the other instructors. That being said, the ability of the instructors to engage in praxis was limited because they were not familiar with research or theory related to teaching this group of learners.

In regard to the learners' praxis, there was not much evidence that the instructors taught students to reflect on their own learning to improve their practice. Two of the instructors did discuss practicing English outside of class, but there was no critical analysis involved as to what the students goals were and what particular type of practice would help them work toward those specific goals. In other words, the instructors did not delve deeply into the concept, thus missing the opportunity to engage students in reflection about their own learning, contrary to what democratic education indicates. Likewise, they also missed an opportunity to have students think critically about their own learning.

Critical Consciousness

There was not much evidence of the elements of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970; 1998) in the instructors' lessons. The Technologist did include a reading and follow up discussion about religious discrimination. In addition, though more loosely related to critical consciousness, the Humanist included a discussion about the difficulty of learning English, how they used the language at work, and the suggestion of extra free classes in the community. These last examples were moving in the direction of what the framework reflects, but they were still not strong examples. Overall, while there were some attempts to include critical consciousness in their lesson, the instructors, for the most part, missed opportunities to bring topics into the lessons that reflected the learners' struggles as immigrants living in the United States.

Learner Autonomy

While decision making did occur in each of the classrooms, from what was observed and discerned from the data, this did not involve learners making decisions about the curriculum or taking responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, learner autonomy (Freire, 1998) was not present in the observed lessons. All of the instructors followed a curriculum largely dictated by the textbook they were using. The autonomy that students had in regard to their learning was limited to choice within the learning activity itself, for example, forming sentences in writing or orally using the structure being taught but with the topic of their choice. Moreover, in all instructors' classes learners could choose where to sit, their partner or group, and what to share with the class. However, these were simply choices and did not constitute learner autonomy. Students were not deciding for themselves as adult learners what they should be learning.

In this way, they were not treated as equal to the instructor in the learning process, and they did not decide as a group on what problems they wanted to solve through their own learning as democratic education would indicate.

Connections to the Literature

While none of the participants had received specific professional development or training for teaching English to adult emergent readers (Perry, 2013; Perry & Hart, 2012; Vinogradov & Liden, 2009), many of the views and practices discussed and demonstrated by these experienced instructors were supported in the literature. Connections to existent research were made in the areas of theory and practice.

The Instructor

Regarding the participants' perceptions and practices relating to the instructor, the research supported their beliefs about literacy and corroborated their experience of not receiving professional development and training for instructing adult ESOL emergent readers specifically.

Beliefs About Literacy

The participants agreed with or expressed views about learning to read that were supported by research. These perspectives concerned differences in learning to read in the native language and a new language and the effect of native language literacy level and native language literacy instruction on learning to read in ESOL.

The majority of the instructors asserted that there were differences in learning to read in a native language compared to learning to read in a new language, which is consistent with the literature. Birch (2015) explains that learning to read in English as a second language may involve first language interference, gaps in knowledge of the

English language, and lack of English language processing strategies. Furthermore, Birch (2015) describes success in reading comprehension as being heavily dependent on vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, other research discusses the transfer of reading skills from the first language to the new language, which is not done when learning to read for the first time in a new language (August, 2006; Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Thieves, 2012).

All of the participants believed that native language reading level affected learning to read in English and most of the instructors focused on the inability to transfer literacy skills from one language to the other as the explanation. The participants' views on transfer of reading skills are supported by the literature (August, 2006; Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Thieves, 2012). Theoretically, the developmental interdependence hypothesis and the theory of translanguaging both support the view that reading difficulty will not be isolated to one language in people reading in two or more languages (Alderson, 1984; Birch, 2015). In a quantitative study, Artieda (2017) found a moderate correlation between native language reading comprehension and second language achievement for beginners, which, for the most part, is the population that the instructors taught.

During the Q-sort conversation, most of the participants expressed support for native language literacy instruction as well. However, the rationale for doing so was divergent among them. First of all, the Pragmatist spoke about the transfer of a schema for classroom learning and learner confidence. Along these same lines, Bigelow and Schwarz (2010) indicate that adult ESOL emergent readers can lose face due to their literacy status in a class with students who have strong native language literacy skills.

Secondly, the Humanist focused on reading skills, such as phonics and letter-sound correspondence. Likewise, the work of August (2006) and Brumback (2014) support teaching reading skills in the native language for adult emergent readers. Thirdly, the Linguist emphasized making associations between oral language and written language. In the literature, first language literacy instruction for beginning students is supported in the work of Artieda (2017), August (2006), Brumback (2014), and Thieves (2012).

Instructor Preparation and Praxis

It is common for ESOL instructors to lack adequate training for working with adult emergent readers (Bigelow & Vinogradov, 2011; Farrelly, 2013, 2017; Vinogradov & Liden, 2009), and the participants in this study were no exception. None of them had received training on working with this group of learners. Although the instructor with a master's degree in TESOL participated in a practicum that included migrant workers who were adult emergent readers, the instructor did not receive classes or particular instruction on teaching this population of learners. In light of the literature, this is not surprising (Vinogradov & Liden, 2009). However, it is worth noting that this participant was the only one who described differentiating instruction when planning for adult emergent readers.

Another experience the instructors shared, learners not disclosing emergent readers status, is reflected in the literature (Johnston, 2013), as well. As Johnston (2013) discussed, none of the instructors had a specific system in place for identifying adult emergent readers in the classroom. Because of this, it is possible that students were misidentified. In fact, two of the participants had identified a shared student differently.

Additionally, the instructors' description of the adult emergent readers in their classes having experienced interrupted formal education coincides with the literature (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; McLaughlin et al., 2008; Wrigley, 2013; Young-Scholten, 2015). The participants mentioned different reasons for learners not consistently attending school. These included lack of access to school, civil unrest, gender bias and migrant worker status (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Brumback, 2014; McLaughlin et al., 2008; Wrigley, 2013).

The Learner

Most of the participants assessed the needs of adult emergent readers through observation and experience working with this population of learners. In fact, most of them claimed that they did not plan differently for the emergent readers in their classes. Even so, they expressed some ideas about learner needs and learner success that were supported by the literature on adult emergent readers.

Learner Needs

The majority of the instructors emphasized building learners' confidence and lowering their stress levels in the classroom. In fact, Freeman, Freeman, and Mecuri (2002) include building confidence as one of their keys to success for working with adolescents with limited formal education. In addition, the literature supports the idea that adult ESOL emergent readers can feel less confident in classes with learners who have greater levels of formal education because the emergent readers are not familiar with routines and expectations in the classroom setting (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Vinogradov, 2008). Consequently, nurturing learners' confidence is one of Vinogradov's (2008) principles for teaching literacy to adult emergent readers.

The participants' belief that emergent readers need more time to be successful in learning to read in English was consistent with the literature. August (2006) wrote about adult emergent readers requiring additional time to learn because they need to learn the higher order thinking skills that they did not acquire through learning to read in the native language. Likewise, Vinogradov (2008) suggests giving adult ESOL emergent readers more time to practice through providing learners with a variety of tasks for honing a specific skill.

Learner Success

While acknowledging that they were at some disadvantage, the instructors all agreed that adult emergent readers could be successful in learning to read in English. Two of them gave examples of adult emergent readers having funds of knowledge to bring to their learning (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenburg, 1992) rather than only weaknesses. Wrigley (2013) emphasizes the wealth of skills that adult emergent readers need to develop to manage their lives without literacy. Furthermore, one strength the Humanist mentioned, the ability to remember large quantities of information, was documented by Bigelow and Tarone (2004), with their example of a Somali herdsman who memorized detailed information about 200 different camels, and by others (Vinogradov, 2008; Wrigley, 2013). It is of note that the instructors' mindset was in contrast to Vinogradov's (2008) finding that deficit thinking was common among instructors of emergent readers.

Curriculum and Instruction

Although most of the instructors did not differentiate their planning for adult emergent readers, they did support the idea of a separate curriculum and particular strategies for teaching these learners.

Planning for Instruction

Although not including the same elements or describing a comprehensive curriculum, all of the instructors believed that adult emergent readers would benefit from a separate curriculum tailored to their needs, thus implying the creation of separate classes for these learners. Similarly, Bigelow and Schwarz (2010) concluded from the work of various authors that having separate classes for adult ESOL emergent readers would be beneficial due to their (1) lack of familiarity with text, (2) lack of self-confidence, (3) loss of social status in heterogeneous classes (4) need for different types of assessment, and (5) need for a slower introduction of skills. A separate curriculum and classes could incorporate Vinogradov's (2008) suggestions for teaching adult emergent readers: (1) Keep it in context, (2) Go up and down the ladder, (3) Provide a buffet of learning opportunities, (4) Tap into strengths, and (5) Nurture learners' confidence. Vinogradov's principles include whole-part-whole instruction, which has been found to be effective with adult emergent readers (Marrapodi, 2013; Trupke-Bastida & Poulos, 2007; Vinogradov, 2008). The Language Experience Approach could be implemented to achieve whole-part-whole instruction (Bell & Dy, 1984; Holt, 1995; Nessel & Dixon, 2008).

Teaching Strategies

Several strategies for teaching adult emergent readers were shared by the instructors. These were creating associations, using technology, employing repetition, working with partners or groups, and use of the native language.

One type of association that the instructors spoke about was connecting learning with the students' real lives. In the literature, making real world connections is supported

as an important practice for instructors of adult emergent readers learning English (Condelli et al., 2002; Condelli and Wrigley, 2006; Vinogradov, 2008, 2016.) Each of these participants made real-world connections with the course content for students in the observed lessons. Vinogradov (2016) suggests that instructors of adult emergent readers encourage students to make connections between texts and their real lives. Similarly, Larrotta (2019) promotes relating literacy to the learners' life experiences across instruction.

Another association that this highlighted in the literature is teaching letter-sound correspondence. The instructors all mentioned teaching the connections between letters and sounds in English as important with adult emergent readers. However, while some of them focused more on bottom-up techniques (Birch, 2015), Trupke-Bastida and Poulos (2007), Marrapodi (2013), and Vinogradov (2008) promote a whole-part-whole teaching approach, such as the Language Experience Approach (Bell & Dy, 1984; Holt, 1995; Nessel & Dixon, 2008), where bottom-up and top-down instruction are done simultaneously. Using such an approach has been shown to be more effective with adult emergent readers (Trupke-Bastida & Poulos, 2007; Marrapodi, 2013; Vinogradov, 2008).

In regard to technology, all of the participants used, or were in favor of using, computer assisted language learning software, mobile applications or online services to enhance learning for emergent readers. Schiepers and Van Nuffel (2019) found that adding technology-mediated learning to face-to-face instruction was beneficial for Dutch learners in the workplace when teachers were present in the online environment and planned meaningful collaborative tasks that included pre-activities and post-activities, and where the online tools used were appropriate for the group of learners. Likewise, in

her doctoral thesis, Filimban (2019) found that the computer-assisted language-learning software DigLin improved adult emergent readers' phonological awareness and decoding skills when used to supplement their traditional teacher-led classes. Similar findings were presented on LESLLA Finnish language learners at a symposium by Filimban and Melessa (2017). The authors emphasized that computer-assisted language-learning activities and the hardware necessary for participating in the activities should be made available to LESLLA learners. Overall, while research in this area is ongoing, not much has yet been published on the effectiveness of using learning technology specifically with adult ESOL emergent readers.

Furthermore, most of the instructors emphasized employing repetition with emergent readers. Vinogradov (2008) promotes using repetition through ample review time (one half to two thirds of a lesson) and opportunities to practice the language structure through various types of activities, which is consistent with the participants' views. However, Vinogradov warns against rote repetition, which was encouraged by one of the instructors.

Most of the participants used partner and group work with their adult emergent readers. Condelli and Wrigley (2006) indicate varied practice and interaction as being beneficial for emergent readers, which would include learners interacting with each other. Through a literature review, Severinsen et al., (2019) identified collaborative learning to be a motivating strategy for adult emergent readers. Similarly, Freeman, Freeman and Mecuri (2002) include collaborative activities in their keys to success for adolescent learners with limited formal education.

Lastly, all of the instructors allowed the use of the native language at times during lessons primarily for efficiency and to foster understanding, which was identified in the work of Condelli and Wrigley (2006) as being effective with adult emergent readers. In addition, although the term translanguaging (García, 2009; Park & Valdez, 2018) was not used, one of the instructors spoke about this concept as learners mixing languages together, which reflected an understanding that languages are not stored as separate systems in the brain as outlined by Garcia (2009) and Park and Valdez (2018).

VI. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to document the teaching practices of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) instructors serving adult emergent readers in community-based programs and their perceptions of these students' learning needs. This study aimed to add to the body of literature on best practices for teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to adult emergent readers and on professional development and TESOL training. The study began with a pilot study which confirmed the need to conduct this research. At the conclusion of this dissertation study, it was evident that much could be learned from the practice and perceptions of experienced TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers. Four instructors from three different programs participated and provided insights into this relevant topic.

Study findings benefit instructors and community-based education programs to better serve the needs of adult ESOL emergent readers. The dissertation findings can be shared with educators, institutions, graduate students, and researchers to develop approaches to improve literacy levels in the state of Texas. This last chapter includes the following sections: study highlights, a conceptual map of study findings, study contributions, implications, recommendations for practice, tensions and challenges, future research, closing thoughts.

Study Highlights

Chapters IV and V of the dissertation presented study findings in great detail. This section calls attention to a few relevant findings in relation to the study framework and the research questions.

Elements of democratic education were present throughout the data collected for this study. Most prevalent was a focus on real life. Dialogism, reciprocal learning, and praxis were also present to a lesser degree. However, there was not a strong link between the data and critical consciousness and learner autonomy. A real-life focus was primarily implemented through making a connection between the content being taught and the learners' lives, content being either a topic of discussion or the language structure. However, one instructor did take students out into the real world to practice language in context. All of the instructors allowed for the free exchange of dialogue during lessons with students able to ask questions and make comments throughout. Finally, all of the instructors primarily spoke of learning about teaching adult emergent readers through experience, thus demonstrating reciprocal learning as a part of their praxis. In rare cases, this real-life focus was connected to learners' current struggles in society, such as religious discrimination and economic difficulty. Overall, however, critical discussions were extremely limited. Likewise, learners did not have autonomy when it came to decisions about the curriculum.

The study research questions provided specific insight into the experiences, perceptions, and teaching practices of the participating instructors regarding adult emergent readers. Each question is discussed separately in the subsequent pages.

Highlights for Research Question # 1

What are the experiences of TESOL instructors teaching adult emergent readers?

The participants in the study expressed many common experiences surrounding the teaching of adult ESOL emergent readers. These experiences had mainly to do with instructor training, learner identification, planning for instruction, abilities of learners,

learner confidence, impact of low native language literacy on learning, and use of the native language in the classroom.

While all four of the participants had significant experience in teaching ESOL, they explained that they had no formal education or training for teaching this particular population. All of the instructors had learned to teach adult ESOL emergent readers by working with these students, or through praxis. However, three of the four instructors directly expressed the desire to get additional training or information on teaching adult ESOL emergent readers.

The four instructors also found that students rarely or never disclosed being unable to read and write in the native language to the instructors. This lack of disclosure and no systematic measures in place to identify adult ESOL emergent readers in their programs left all four participants to discover the status of the adult emergent readers in their classes by working with the learners and observing their behaviors.

Three of the four participants discussed not planning instruction specifically for the adult ESOL emergent readers in their classes. Instead, they planned for their beginner-level learners in general. In practice, all four of the instructors gave extra support to the adult emergent readers during observed lessons either through one-to-one assistance during learning activities, pair or group work, or through both.

Unanimously, the four participants asserted that adult ESOL emergent readers are able to be successful in learning English. Three of the four instructors based this on the level of effort the student put forth. The various instructors also mentioned that time, support from the instructor, and a good curriculum contributed to learner success. Furthermore, the instructors viewed adult emergent readers as having strengths and

difficulties in the learning context. Half of the participants mentioned that adult ESOL emergent readers had strengths, due to managing their lives without literacy, that learners with higher literacy skills might not have. At the same time, all of the four instructors mentioned being concerned that adult ESOL emergent readers had lower confidence related to learning than did other students.

All of the participants found that native language literacy level affected the student's progress in learning ESOL. The instructors found that learners with lower native language literacy struggled more with English literacy while those with higher native language literacy struggled less when learning to read in English.

Additionally, in regard to the native language, all of the instructors found it beneficial, to varying degrees, to use the native language in the classroom at times. All of the participants used the native language to facilitate the learners' understanding during lessons, for example with instructions or vocabulary. The instructors did this with all learners, not only for adult ESOL emergent readers, however.

Highlights for Research Question # 2

What do they perceive as the needs of adult emergent readers learning ESOL?

The participants in the study had overlapping perceptions about the needs of adult ESOL emergent readers in the areas of curriculum, teaching and affective considerations. All four of the instructors agreed that adult ESOL learners would benefit from a separate curriculum designed around their learning needs. In addition, three of the four instructors thought that having a separate class only for adult ESOL emergent readers would help them feel more confident in their learning. Furthermore, three of the four instructors spoke directly about building and preserving students' confidence in the learning context.

In regard to what should be taught in the classroom, all four of the participants felt that it was important to teach learners letter-sound correspondence, and three of the four instructors spoke about connecting learning to the real world. In addition, three of the instructors explained that it would be beneficial to teach adult ESOL emergent readers to read in their native language.

Highlights for Research Question # 3

How do these perceptions impact their teaching practices? While all of the instructors stated that it would be beneficial to have a separate curriculum for adult ESOL emergent readers, and three out of the four agreed with having separate classes for these learners and native language reading instruction, none of the participants' programs had implemented this. The instructors' perceptions about learner confidence were evident in their teaching and how they described their teaching. Two of the instructors spoke about not putting adult ESOL emergent readers on the spot during lessons and about making learners feel comfortable in the classroom. Most of the instructors gave one-to-one support to the adult emergent readers in class during lesson activities, and all of the instructors had students working in pairs or groups so that they could have the support of their peers while learning. Three of the instructors also included real world connections in their observed lessons.

Highlights for Research Question # 4

How do they approach teaching when the learners are adult emergent readers? When teaching adult ESOL emergent readers, most of the instructors, three out of four, approached instruction as they would for all beginning-level learners. They did not plan differently than they did for any beginning-level class. However, some of the participants

did treat the students differently. Half of the instructors spent more one-to-one time working with the adult emergent readers in the class and also had them work with partners or groups. The other participants had the adult emergent readers working with partners or in groups as well.

In addition, all of the instructors made use of some type of technology in the classroom, such as a projector, Power Point, and/or mobile learning applications. These were used with the whole class, however, not only with adult ESOL emergent readers. Two of the participants also promoted the use of language learning software programs for adult ESOL emergent readers outside of the classroom to supplement their learning. In addition, the instructors connected their lessons to the students' real lives, to varying degrees. This was done through topic choice or application of the structures being learned. Finally, all of the four instructors focused on providing learners with the opportunity to repeat learning through varied activities using the same language structure. Three of the four instructors also approached their teaching with the knowledge that students who were not successful would be able to repeat the course until they achieved success. Finally, all of the instructors approached learning as a process of making associations whether it be between letters and sounds, images and words or language structures and objects and the real world.

A Conceptual Map of Study Findings

This dissertation presents data collected from experienced TESOL instructors who have taught adult ESOL emergent readers for three or more years. It adds to the very limited body of literature surrounding TESOL instructors of adult emergent readers in community-based programs by documenting instructor perceptions and practice,

including teaching strategies that these experienced instructors found to be effective with adult emergent readers.

Many of the instructor's perceptions and practices surrounding adult ESOL emergent readers were supported by existent research. Furthermore, they showed how they had grown through their experience and praxis in employing various techniques that worked with their learners. However, while the instructors showed evidence of providing support for adult emergent readers in the classroom and using some research-based practices, for the most part, these instructors did not have a comprehensive view on how to best serve this population of learners. A conceptual map employing the metaphor of trees and their underlying roots and mycelium can help to illustrate the interaction between the emergent themes in this study, or the roots of teaching adult emergent readers (see Figure 5).

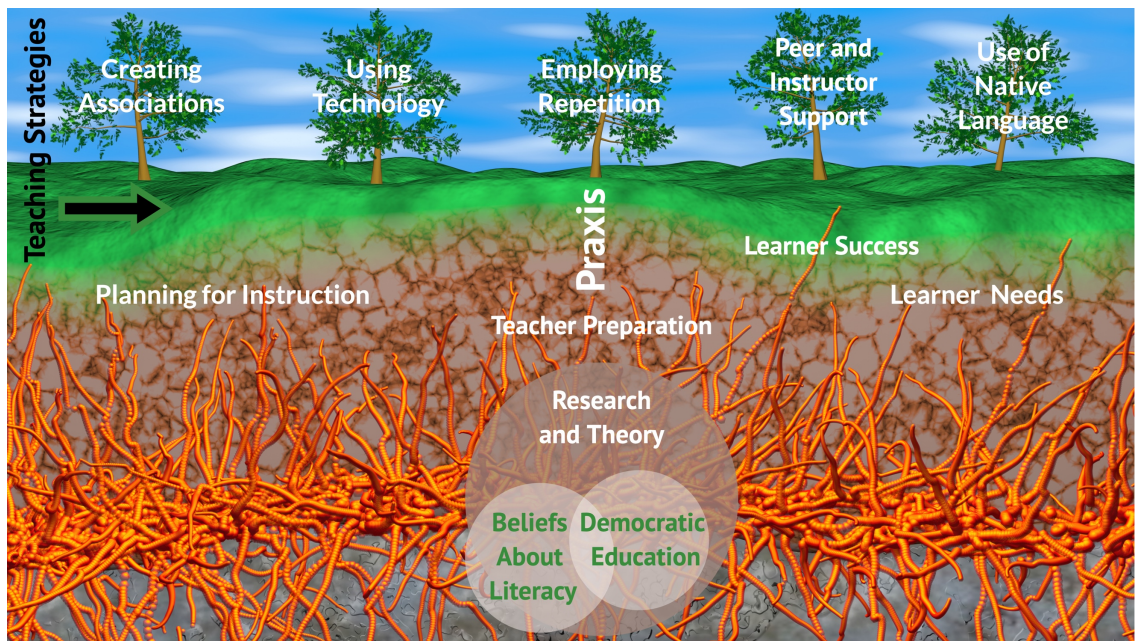


Figure 5 Getting to the Roots of Teaching Adult ESOL Emergent Readers

The trees in this metaphor represent practices that the participants used with adult ESOL emergent readers in their classes, namely: creating associations, using technology, employing repetition, peer (partner and group work) and instructor support, and use of the native language. The practices were evident as the trees above ground on the earth are evident to passersby. However, much like the root and mycelium systems are hidden from the view of humans on the surface of the earth, the instructors in the study either expressed directly not having complete knowledge of larger systems or did not show evidence of that knowledge. The roots and mycelium are a complex network that provide a foundation that allow the trees to grow strong and healthy and to protect themselves. This network creates a connection between individual trees, and other plants. In other words, the instructors all employed some effective strategies with adult emergent readers learning English, but they were not aware of the complete network of theory, research and practice that apply to adult emergent readers. The study participants all expressed not having sufficient knowledge on how to best teach adult ESOL emergent readers and none of them had had specific professional development or training on best practices for instructing this group of learners in the classroom. As a result, the majority of the instructors did not plan specifically for adult emergent readers in their lessons, and what they did to support these learners was based largely on their experience “above ground,” or in the classroom.

Because they were not informed about research and theory related specifically to teaching adult emergent readers, an element of their praxis was missing. Therefore, they were only able to see part of the whole picture. Complicating matters, the participants did not have systems in place for identifying emergent readers. As a result, they relied largely

on observation in order to determine who might actually be an emergent reader in the classroom. Finally, while the instructors all demonstrated some tenets of democratic education, these tenets were present to varying degrees and, in most cases, were closer to the surface rather than going deeper into the roots of the concepts.

Implications

This study results in various implications for policy makers, programs, and instructors. Considering that combined data from the Immigration Policy Institute (2016) and the American Immigration Council (2017) show that in the state of Texas, more than half of all immigrants come from countries with a high rate of interrupted formal education, these implications should not be ignored.

Policy makers need to be aware that adult emergent readers need more time to learn English and transition into the workforce. Funding must be provided for instructor training, purchasing relevant hardware and software, and for programs to acquire instructional materials. The unique learning characteristics of adult emergent readers need to be considered when evaluating their progress. Funding should allow for the development of a separate curriculum that begins with skills that adult ESOL emergent readers need to develop, starting at a more basic foundational level than many programs are able to offer. Furthermore, attention must be focused on using technology in language learning. As I am writing this, the United States is in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has shown a light on the inequities that learners in all age groups are subject to in regard to internet access and devices for getting online. Learners may not currently be able to afford or access reliable internet service, and not all applications, software programs, or online services are supported by all devices.

Moreover, ESOL programs should create and implement a culturally sensitive, discreet method of identifying adult emergent readers upon entry so that they can be directed into appropriate class levels. Their curriculum should support the learning needs of adult emergent readers by providing instruction at a level that coincides with the learners' needs. ESOL programs must strive to preserve learner confidence to protect against learner attrition. Appropriate instructional levels and instruction that builds from the learners' strengths rather than emphasizes their challenges would be helpful toward this end. Furthermore, teaching with technology must be promoted by programs. This should be sensitive to the learners' ability to access the internet and hardware for using applications, software, and online resources. Funding could be sought from policy makers in order to provide learners with computers, Chromebooks, or other devices to use on campus. Additionally, programs need to provide their instructors with professional development and training opportunities that allow them to connect their experiences with teaching adult ESOL emergent readers with theoretical knowledge and current research so that instructors can deepen their praxis in order to best serve this population of learners. Training on adult education theory and critical pedagogy must be included so that instructors are prepared to engage in democratic teaching. This will allow them to reflect more deeply on their practice and on how to foster learner autonomy in their classroom. Programs will need to be creative in assisting instructors in making classes more democratic while still adhering to TWC's policies regarding the curriculum. Other training opportunities should include using technological resources with emergent readers. Programs need to motivate and incentivize instructors to participate in professional development and training opportunities, especially considering that many of

the instructors in community-based programs are unpaid volunteers. Lastly, ESOL program administrators should be open to learning from the experiences of seasoned TESOL instructors of emergent readers.

Finally, instructors must be sensitive to the needs of adult ESOL emergent readers in the classroom. They should be aware that these students are dealing with a greater cognitive load because they do not have native language literacy skills as a base for learning literacy in English, and if they have interrupted formal education, they may be learning about how to learn in a classroom as well. Thus, students are learning much more than just to read and write. This amplifies the need for instructors to create a safe learning environment that builds learners' confidence, which could be done by creating learning situations that allow students to experience being successful with the language. Instructors should focus on making learning meaningful for adult emergent readers by providing students with the opportunity to connect learning to their real-life experiences. Additionally, instructors should engage in dialog about learners' goals and seek ways to support learners in reaching these goals. This may take creativity on the part of the instructor if programs or policy makers have imposed structures that inhibit learner autonomy. Furthermore, instructors should do their best to attend professional development opportunities about teaching adult ESOL emergent readers, adult learning theory, and critical pedagogy. Other training should include using mobile applications, software, and online programs that support learning English. At the same time, instructors should value their own experiences and seek to collaborate with each other on their strategies for teaching adult emergent readers. Instructors must engage in praxis that includes a deep understanding of theory related to teaching adult emergent readers and

providing them with a democratic education that allows them to work toward their own goals.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on study findings, there are several recommendations that would be helpful for ESOL programs and TESOL instructors. These recommendations are related to materials and learning modes, teaching strategies, and perspectives.

Recommendations for ESOL Programs

Seek opportunities to provide training for instructors. Programs should incentivize instructors to attend professional training on instructing adult emergent readers.

Create and implement a culturally sensitive method for identifying adult ESOL emergent readers. Learner identification can allow programs to place students in classes that will best meet their needs.

Encourage program instructors to collaborate in planning instruction for adult emergent readers. This could take the form of a community of practice where collaboration allows instructors to learn from each other. Instructors with experience teaching adult emergent readers can help others increase their knowledge, and all instructors can grow from professional interaction with their colleagues.

Provide specialized software on native language literacy for different languages. Building skills in native language literacy could be supported through the use of computer assisted language learning. This would allow for native language literacy instruction without the necessity of hiring multilingual instructors.

Incorporate learning technology into the curriculum. Mobile applications and online learning programs could be used to enhance learning. Providing training for

instructors would help them incorporate these tools into lessons. Choose applications and programs that can be used on devices to which adult emergent readers have access.

Create a bank of activities and resources for teaching adult emergent readers.

Because commercially prepared textbooks may start at a level too high for some learners, having a stock of materials for teaching the most basic foundational skills would help instructors meet the needs of these students. These materials should be housed on campus in a location accessible to all instructors. Materials should include resources for teaching letter names, letter sounds, and letter-sound correspondence.

Recommendations for TESOL Instructors

Provide learners with extra support in the classroom. Instructors can give more support to learners both one-to-one and through the use of partner or group work for gaining additional help from peers during learning activities.

Use learning technology in lessons. Learning applications, instructional software, and online programs can be used with adult emergent readers to enhance learning and provide them with extra opportunities for practice with the language.

Employ repetition in lessons. Adult ESOL emergent readers should be given the opportunity to practice new language structures multiple times with different activities.

Create associations in learning. This should include making various associations between letters and sounds, images and words (both spoken and written), objects and words (both spoken and written), and new learning and the real-world.

Relate learning to the students' real-life. Instructional activities should be linked to learners' past experiences and present life.

Allow some use of the native language in the classroom. The learners' native language can be used to make clarifications on instructions for learning activities and content. Instructors or other students can do this.

Believe that emergent readers can be successful. Adopt the mindset that adult ESOL emergent readers can be successful in learning English if given the time and support needed for learning.

Give adult emergent readers time to learn. Instructors should understand that adult ESOL emergent readers may need more time to reach their learning goals and allow for that.

Tensions and Challenges

Conducting this dissertation study presented some tensions and challenges. For instance, wanting to provide detailed information on each layer of this case study, as a researcher, I had to find a balance between protecting the participating organizations' and instructors' identities. I wanted the picture to be complete and to provide as much detailed data as possible. At the same time, I wanted the instructors to feel comfortable sharing details about their professional lives.

Furthermore, because the programs and instructors in the study did not have a systematic method of identifying who in the program was an adult emergent reader, in many cases, I had to rely on who they identified as an emergent reader through observation. In one case a discrepancy arose, with two instructors in the same program identifying a shared learner differently.

Tension was created, as well, when most of the instructors expressed that they did not know how to plan for adult ESOL emergent readers. In some cases, they asked for

resources, which I would have liked to provide immediately but could not during the ongoing study. This was solved by agreeing to send them information after the study was completed. This will share resources, including the LINCS course on teaching adult emergent readers and articles about effective teaching practices with adult ESOL emergent readers, such as the Language Experience Approach.

A challenge for the participating instructors was knowing about the student needs and not being able to meet them due to program limitations. Most of the instructors believed that a separate curriculum and native language literacy instruction would benefit the learners, but neither of these had been implemented in their programs, although one program was working toward using an online native language literacy program.

Lastly, without funding, community-based programs are limited in what they can put into effect. Even if program administrators want to implement some of the more costly recommendations from this study, they may not have the budget to do so.

Future Research

From this study, it is evident that more research is needed in the area of teaching adult ESOL emergent readers. One area that deserves attention is the identification of these learners. If instructors are to better serve these students, they must first know who they are. Educators need information on the preferred methods of identifying these learners in culturally appropriate ways that do not lead to learner discomfort or embarrassment.

Furthermore, research on using technology in instruction with adult emergent readers should be further developed. Studies on how to use different mobile applications, software programs and online learning programs would be beneficial in guiding

instructors on how to best implement this technology specifically with adult emergent readers.

Moreover, a study capturing the student perspective and comparing it to the instructor perspective could be insightful. Do adult emergent readers find the same teaching strategies to be helpful in their English learning?

Additionally, more needs to be known about the willingness of TESOL instructors in community-based programs to participate in professional development and training, including instructors that work on a purely volunteer basis. Professional development and training can be offered to these instructors, but if they are not willing or able to participate, then no purpose is served.

Furthermore, a longitudinal study following the participants over time to examine changes that may take place after this study would be useful. This type of study could provide insight on how the instructors continue to develop their teaching of adult ESOL emergent readers through praxis and what was learned from this study.

Finally, ESOL instructors do not teach independently from the constraints of their particular programs. Thus, a study that focuses on directors and coordinators of ESOL programs that documents their perspectives on serving adult emergent readers would help to provide a more complete view of how these learners are being served.

Closing Thoughts

The idea for this study came from my own realization as a novice TESOL instructor that I had not been prepared to effectively teach adults who had low levels of native language literacy. Almost 30 years have passed and TESOL instructors are still having those same experiences. My own professional background and completing this

dissertation study has informed me about how adult ESOL emergent readers can be better served, and using this information will assist me in future positions as an instructor, program director, or policy maker. Professionals in the previously mentioned positions have roles to play in improving instruction for adult emergent readers. Vertical and horizontal collaboration is necessary so that instructors can support each other, programs can support instructors, and policy makers can support programs.

This study shows that in the absence of training, seasoned instructors lean on their experiences and praxis to guide them. Providing these instructors with the needed training to add to the many practices they are doing well will provide them with the theoretical knowledge and ingredients for completing the recipe for democratic teaching that was proposed in the Chapter I of this dissertation, thus, making ESOL literacy instruction stronger in Texas. The TESOL instructors in this study believed that adult emergent readers could be successful and wanted to grow in their knowledge and skills for teaching this population of learners. They asked for information and better training opportunities. This motivation coupled with a now growing body of research on adult emergent readers brings hope for the future for better supporting these learners, which will lead to a more literate Texas!

APPENDIX SECTION

APPENDIX A

RELEVANT ACRONYMS

ESL	English as a second language
ESOL	English to speakers of other languages
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LESLLA	Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults Formerly, Low Educated Second Language and Literacy for Adults
LINCS	Literacy Information and Communication System
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TWC	Texas Workforce Commission

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adult emergent reader

An adult learner that has not yet learned to read or write proficiently in the native language and is learning to read in ESOL. An adult emergent reader may be preliterate, nonliterate or semiliterate.

Community-based organization

Refers to a nonprofit corporation or association that is located in close proximity to the population it serves (Texas Government Code, 2009)

Community-based education

Education that is organized and carried out by a community-based organization

English as a foreign language

English taught to speakers of other languages in a country where English is not considered to be a native language

English as an additional language

English taught to learners who have a language or languages other than English as a native language

Immigrant

A person who has come to live permanently in a country that is not the country of birth. Includes documented and undocumented immigrants

Literacy

The process of using reading, writing, and oral language to extract, construct, integrate, and critique meaning through interaction and involvement with multimodal texts in the context of socially situated practices (Frankel et al., 2016, p. 7)

Low literacy

Low or limited literacy may mean that the student's native language culture does not have a print literacy, that the learner has not yet mastered reading, or that the learner's reading ability is minimal (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010)

Nonliterate

A person who comes from a culture with print literacy but cannot read or write him or herself (Huntley, 1992)

Preliterate

A person who comes from a culture that does not have print literacy (Huntley, 1992)

Professional Learning Community

A group of practitioners who participate in collaborative discussions and take action to improve student learning (Thompson et al., 2004)

Semiliterate

A person who comes from a culture with print literacy who may have participated in some formal schooling and understands that print conveys meaning but cannot read above a minimal level (Huntley, 1992)

Target language

The new language being learned

Translanguaging

All of the linguistic information that the learner has is treated as one system from which the learner chooses what is needed in order to communicate effectively (García, 2009; Park & Valdez, 2018)

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH QUESTION AND DATA COLLECTION ALIGNMENT CHARTS

Research Question	Q Sort	Conversational Interviews	Classroom Observations	Research Journal
1. What are the experiences of TESOL instructors teaching adult emergent readers?	X	X		X
2. What do they perceive as the needs of adult emergent readers learning ESOL?	X	X		
3. How do these perceptions impact their teaching practices?		X	X	X
4. How do they approach teaching when the learners are adult emergent readers?		X	X	X

Research Question	Q Sort	Conversational Interviews	Classroom Observations	Research Journal
1. What are the experiences of TESOL instructors teaching adult emergent readers?	Conversation after Q sort	Questions about instructors' experiences	Observations of instructors' experiences in the classroom	Documentation of non-verbal data
2. What do they perceive as the needs of adult emergent readers learning ESOL?	Q sort ranking activity Conversation to clarify ranking	Questions about the needs of adult emergent readers		
3. How do these perceptions impact their teaching practices?		Questions about how the need of emergent readers are taken into consideration in their lesson planning	Observation of instructors actions based on their expressed perceptions	Researcher reflection on how instructors' expressed align with their teaching practices
4. How do they approach teaching when the learners are adult emergent readers?		Questions about how instructors plan for teaching adult emergent readers	Observation of instructors' actions based on their expressed plans for teaching emergent readers.	Researcher reflection on how instructors' expressed ideas on planning for teaching emergent readers align with their actions in the classroom

APPENDIX D

Informational Flyer



Contact Information:

To participate in this research or ask questions about this research please contact:

Jill Carter
512-517-3647
jmc384@txstate.edu

This project 6777 was approved by the Texas State IRB on 9/23/2019. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Denise Gobert 512-716-2652 – (dgobert@txstate.edu) or to Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2334 – (meg201@txstate.edu).



Research Participation Invitation

TESOL Instructors' Perceptions and Praxis Teaching Adult Emergent Readers



Adult emergent readers are English as a second language students who are learning to read in English and have low literacy level in their native language.

Purpose of Study

By talking to instructors and observing their teaching this study aims to:

- Learn from the experiences and teaching practices of English as a second language instructors serving adults who are learning to read in English
- Understand how instructors' perceptions of student needs affect their teaching in the classroom

Participation

Participation is voluntary. In order to participate you must have

- Three or more years of experience teaching adult ESL learners
- Experience teaching adult emergent readers
- Have one or more adult emergent readers in a current face-to-face class.

Each participant will receive a \$25 gift card.

APPENDIX E

Q SAMPLE FOR Q SORT

- A. I learned to teach adult emergent readers on my own.
- B. It is essential for adult ESOL learners who lack literacy in their native language to learn the connections between letters and sounds.
- C. The literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in ESOL.
- D. Instructing adult ESOL learners to read in their native language can help them learn to read in English.
- E. Using learner generated texts can be beneficial when teaching adult ESOL learners who cannot yet read in their first language.
- F. Adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs.
- G. Adults who cannot yet read or write in their native language are less confident learners.
- H. It is difficult to find materials to use with adult ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time.
- I. Regardless of their native language literacy level, adult ESOL learners can be assessed using the same methods.
- J. ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time feel more confident in a class of all emergent readers.
- K. Adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language may learn to read more quickly than other students.

- L. It is easy to identify adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language.
- M. Making real-world connections is a must to support adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy when they are learning to read in English.
- N. Adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy come from cultures without print literacy.
- O. TESOL instructors must receive training to work with adult learners who lack first language literacy.
- P. Adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy are usually older students.
- Q. Adult ESOL students who cannot yet read in their first language report this to their instructors.
- R. Learning to read in a first language and in a second language are basically the same.
- S. Adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English.
- T. Adult ESOL students who lack first language literacy have had their education interrupted in their youth.
- U. Only English should be spoken in the adult ESOL classroom no matter who the students are.
- V. Adult ESOL students who are learning to read for the first time are responsible for their own success.
- W. Adult ESOL students who lack native language literacy bring more weaknesses than strengths to the classroom

APPENDIX F

INSTRUCTIONS FOR Q SORT

Adapted from Van Excel and De Graaf (2005)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this Q sort! For this activity, keep in mind that I am interested in your perceptions about teaching adult ESOL learners with low literacy levels in their native languages. This is about your point of view. There are no right or wrong answers. Below are the instructions for completing the Q-sort exercise. Please read each step all the way through before doing it.

1. You should have one Q-sort grid and a deck of cards. Put the grid and deck on the table in front of you. Each of the 23 cards in the deck contains a statement about adult ESOL learners who have low literacy in their native languages. Each of the statements has been assigned a random letter. The letter is only there to help you organize the statements on the Q-sort grid.
2. Read each of the 23 statements carefully. Divide them into three piles: those you tend to agree with, those you tend to disagree with, and those you neither agree nor disagree with or that do not apply to you. Again, I am interested in your point of view. There are no correct or incorrect answers.
3. Use the three boxes at the bottom left of the grid sheet to record how many statements you agree with, disagree with, and feel neutral about. After recording the numbers, be sure they add up to 23.
4. Read the cards from the agree pile again. Select the two statements you most agree with and place them in the last two boxes on the far-right side of the Q-sort grid. It does not matter which one is on the top or bottom. Now, from the

remaining cards in the agree pile, choose the next three you most agree with.

Place them in the three boxes next to the cards you have already place on the grid.

Follow this procedure with the remaining cards from the agree pile working toward the center of the grid.

5. Take the cards from the disagree pile and read them again. Choose the two statements that you most disagree with and place them in the two boxes on the far left of the grid. It does not matter which one is on the top or bottom. Now, from the remaining cards in the disagree pile, choose the next three you most disagree with. Place them in the three boxes next to the cards you have already place on the grid. Follow this procedure for the remaining cards from the disagree pile working toward the center of the grid.
6. Take the remaining cards and read them again. Place the cards in the remaining open boxes of the grid.
7. After you have placed all of the cards on the grid, you may review them and shift them around if you would like.
8. At this point, please allow me to take a photograph of your work.
9. Now that you are satisfied with the placement of the cards, write the letter on each card in the corresponding box on the Q-sort grid.
10. Let's have a conversation about your choices.

APPENDIX G **23-ITEM Q SAMPLE Q-SORT GRID**

Adapted from Van Excel and De Graaf (2005)

MOST DISAGREE		NEUTRAL				MOST AGREE	

AGREE: _____

DISAGREE: _____

NEUTRAL: _____

APPENDIX H

Q SORT FOLLOW UP CONVERSATION

1. Please tell me why you feel strongly about the items you placed in the most agree section of the grid.

2. Please explain why you agree most with _____.

Card* ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

3. Please tell me why you feel strongly about the items you placed in the most disagree section of the grid.

4. Please explain why you disagree most with _____.

Card ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

*I will write down the letters of the five cards that the participant placed in the most dis/agree.

**I will monitor the items placed in the neutral columns to ask the participants about items that call my attention.

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR FIRST INTERVIEW

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview! This interview focuses on your experience teaching ESOL learners who have low literacy levels in their native languages.

1. Describe the training you have had to work with adult emergent readers.
2. How many years have you taught ESOL to adult learners?
3. How many years have you taught students with low first language literacy?
4. What was your first experience like teaching adult emergent readers?
5. Recall an anecdote about an adult ESOL student who was learning to read for the first time in your ESOL class.
6. Tell me about the students you are teaching now who are adult emergent readers.
7. Describe the learning needs of adult ESOL emergent readers. How do you know?
8. What do you do to assess the learning needs of adult ESOL emergent readers?
9. If you were given the opportunity to design a literacy curriculum for adult ESOL emergent readers, what would you include?
10. How do you plan the ESOL lesson to include the needs of adult emergent readers?
11. How does the adult ESOL student's first language literacy affect learning to read and write in an additional language.
12. Where do you get the materials you use with adult ESOL emergent readers?
13. Describe the lessons that I will observe. How did you account for the needs of the emergent readers in the class?

14. What is your advice for ESOL instructors who have adult learners with low literacy skills?
15. How can teachers prepare lessons that include the learning needs of adult ESOL emergent readers?
16. What else do you want to share with me about your experience teaching adult ESOL emergent readers?

APPENDIX J

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR SECOND INTERVIEW

Thank you for allowing me to observe your teaching and for participating in this interview. I have some follow up questions for you.

1. What was the highlight of the lesson?
2. Keeping in mind adult emergent readers, how do you introduce a new topic?
3. What are the best practice activities for adult emergent readers in the classroom?
4. How do you assess that they are becoming better readers? How do you know?
5. Talk to me about the choices you made to address student needs.
6. Once you have identified the learning needs of adult emergent readers, how do you adapt your teaching to those needs?
7. In the lessons I just observed, was there anything in particular that you did to address emergent readers' learning needs?
8. What did you do in the lesson that was specifically aiming to help adult ESOL emergent readers?
9. What other comments do you have about the lessons I observed?
10. What do you need to be able to do a good job teaching adult emergent readers?
11. Where are you getting information on teaching adult emergent readers?

As a researcher, I will prepare some follow up questions based on the observations.

APPENDIX K

TESOL INSTRUCTOR OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Date:

Time:

Observer:

Class:

Lesson Focus:

Setting Map

(Physical arrangement of classroom, location of learners and instructor)

FRONT OF ROOM

Warm up/Review

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes																								
<p>Time spent _____</p> <p>Topic:</p> <p>Activities:</p>	<p>What types of question did the instructor ask?</p> <p>Does the instructor include elements of democratic education and/or critical pedagogy?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin: 10px 0;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">Element</th><th style="width: 33%;">Included?</th><th style="width: 33%;">How?</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dialogism</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Real-life focus</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Learner autonomy</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Opportunities for learner decision making</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Critical consciousness</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Critical analysis or current events</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Reciprocal learning</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>What happened in the lesson that shows the instructor is helping students learn to think?</p>	Element	Included?	How?	Dialogism			Real-life focus			Learner autonomy			Opportunities for learner decision making			Critical consciousness			Critical analysis or current events			Reciprocal learning		
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Introduction

classroom functioning/etiquette? fine motor skills? The use of L1? familiar routines?
 real-life connections to text? whole-part-whole instruction? bottom up
 instruction/learning?
 top down instruction/learning? choices for the students? independent reading time?
 numeracy activities? funds of knowledge? deficit thinking?

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes																								
<p>Time spent _____</p> <p>Topic:</p> <p>Did the instructor activate prior knowledge? How?</p> <p>Was the focus of the lesson established? How?</p>	<p>What types of question did the instructor ask?</p> <p>Does the instructor include elements of democratic education and/or critical pedagogy?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">Element</th><th style="width: 33%;">Included?</th><th style="width: 33%;">How?</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dialogism</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Real-life focus</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Learner autonomy</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Opportunities for learner decision making</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Critical consciousness</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Critical analysis or current events</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Reciprocal learning</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">What happened in the lesson that shows the instructor is helping students learn to think?</p>	Element	Included?	How?	Dialogism			Real-life focus			Learner autonomy			Opportunities for learner decision making			Critical consciousness			Critical analysis or current events			Reciprocal learning		
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Presentation

classroom functioning/etiquette? fine motor skills? The use of L1? familiar routines?
 real-life connections to text? whole-part-whole instruction? bottom up
 instruction/learning?
 top down instruction/learning? choices for the students? independent reading time?
 numeracy activities? funds of knowledge? deficit thinking?

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes																								
<p>Time spent ____</p> <p>Topic:</p> <p>How was new information presented?</p> <p>Was it contextualized? How?</p>	<p>What types of question did the instructor ask?</p> <p>Does the instructor include elements of democratic education and/or critical pedagogy?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">Element</th><th style="width: 33%;">Included?</th><th style="width: 33%;">How?</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dialogism</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Real-life focus</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Learner autonomy</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Opportunities for learner decision making</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Critical consciousness</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Critical analysis or current events</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Reciprocal learning</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">What happened in the lesson that shows the instructor is helping students learn to think?</p>	Element	Included?	How?	Dialogism			Real-life focus			Learner autonomy			Opportunities for learner decision making			Critical consciousness			Critical analysis or current events			Reciprocal learning		
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Practice

classroom functioning/etiquette? fine motor skills? The use of L1? familiar routines?
 real-life connections to text? whole-part-whole instruction? bottom up
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 numeracy activities? funds of knowledge? deficit thinking?

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes																								
<p>Time Spent _____</p> <p>Did instructor differentiate for emergent readers? How?</p> <p>Was the practice contextualized?</p>	<p>What types of question did the instructor ask?</p> <p>Does the instructor include elements of democratic education and/or critical pedagogy?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin: 10px 0;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">Element</th><th style="width: 33%;">Included?</th><th style="width: 33%;">How?</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dialogism</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Real-life focus</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Learner autonomy</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Opportunities for learner decision making</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Critical consciousness</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Critical analysis or current events</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Reciprocal learning</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>What happened in the lesson that shows the instructor is helping students learn to think?</p>	Element	Included?	How?	Dialogism			Real-life focus			Learner autonomy			Opportunities for learner decision making			Critical consciousness			Critical analysis or current events			Reciprocal learning		
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Reciprocal learning																									

Closing/Extension

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes																								
<p>Time Spent _____</p> <p>Activities:</p> <p>Did instructor check for understanding?</p> <p>How?</p>	<p>What types of question did the instructor ask?</p> <p>Does the instructor include elements of democratic education and/or critical pedagogy?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">Element</th> <th style="width: 33%;">Included?</th> <th style="width: 33%;">How?</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Dialogism</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Real-life focus</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Learner autonomy</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Opportunities for learner decision making</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Critical consciousness</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Critical analysis or current events</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reciprocal learning</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">What happened in the lesson that shows the instructor is helping students learn to think?</p>	Element	Included?	How?	Dialogism			Real-life focus			Learner autonomy			Opportunities for learner decision making			Critical consciousness			Critical analysis or current events			Reciprocal learning		
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Additional Comments

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes

APPENDIX L

INDIVIDUAL INFORMED CONSENT

Study Title:

TESOL Instructors' Perceptions and Praxis Teaching Adult Emergent Readers

Principal Investigator: Jill M. Carter

Email: jmc384@txstate.edu

Faculty Advisor: Clarena Larrotta

Email: CL24@txstate.edu

This consent form will explain why this research study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate as well as any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may experience while participating. We encourage you to ask questions at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and it will be a record of your agreement to participate. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

You are invited to participate in a research study to share your experiences and perceptions teaching adult English learners with limited literacy skills. The information gathered will be used as research data in a doctoral dissertation. You are being asked to participate because you are an experienced instructor and have rich knowledge on the subject.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, you will be expected to participate in the following:

- A One-hour long Q-sort activity, which includes ranking 23-items according to your opinion and preference and a conversation to discuss your decisions rank-ordering these items
- Two 45-minute interviews answering questions related to your experiences teaching adult learners with low literacy level skills
- Allow the researcher to observe two of your teaching sessions and provide the lesson plans and materials you use to teach during those two days
- Allow the researcher to audio record the conversation explaining your preferences for the Q-sort activity and the interviews. The researcher will take notes using a laptop during the observations, but lessons will not be audio recorded.

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There is minimal risk in participating in this study. All the questions and activities relate to your teaching experience, and you decide what to share. If some of the interview questions make you uncomfortable, you are always free to decline to answer any question, take a break, or stop your participation in the study at any time without consequences.

BENEFITS/ALTERNATIVES

Study findings will improve our understanding of best practices to teach adult learners who are in the process of developing literacy skills when they speak more than one language but have low literacy levels.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private and confidential. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The members of the research team and the Texas State University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) may access the data. The ORC monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants. Your name will not be used in any written reports or publications which result from this research.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION

Participants will be given a \$25 gift card for taking part in the study.

PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences of any kind.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about your participation in this study, you may contact the principal investigator or faculty advisor shown at the beginning of this document.

This project was approved by the Texas State IRB on _____ 2019. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB Chair, Dr. Denise Gobert 512-245-8351 – (dgobert@txstate.edu) or to Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2334 - (meg201@txstate.edu).

DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT

I have read this form and have decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement and possible risks have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand I can withdraw at any time.

_____ Printed Name of Participant	_____ Signature of Study Participant	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Person Obtaining Consent		_____ Date

APPENDIX M

Q-Sort Data Array: Most Agree				
	Technologist	Pragmatist	Linguist	Humanist
B. It is essential for adult ESOL learners who lack literacy in their native language to learn the connections between letters and sounds.	X		X	X
C. The literacy level in the native language impacts how adults learn to read in ESOL.	X	X	X	X
D. Instructing adult ESOL learners to read in their native language can help them learn to read in English.		X		X
E. Using learner generated texts can be beneficial when teaching adult ESOL learners who cannot yet read in their first language.	X			
F. Adults who lack literacy in their native language would benefit from a separate ESOL literacy curriculum focusing on their needs.	X	X	X	X
G. Adults who cannot yet read or write in their native language are less confident learners.			X	
H. It is difficult to find materials to use with adult ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time.		X		
J. ESOL learners who are learning to read for the first time feel more confident in a class of all emergent readers.		X		
M. Making real-world connections is a must to support adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy when they are learning to read in English.	X			X
T. Adult ESOL students who lack first language literacy have had their education interrupted in their youth.			X	

APPENDIX N

Q-Sort Data Array: Most Disagree				
	Technologist	Pragmatist	Linguist	Humanist
I. Regardless of their native language literacy level, adult ESOL learners can be assessed using the same methods.	X			
K. Adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language may learn to read more quickly than other students.			X	X
L. It is easy to identify adult ESOL learners who are not literate in their native language.			X	
Q. Adult ESOL students who cannot yet read in their first language report this to their instructors.	X	X		X
R. Learning to read in a first language and in a second language are basically the same.	X	X	X	
S. Adult ESOL learners who lack first language literacy have little chance of learning to read well in English.	X	X	X	X
U. Only English should be spoken in the adult ESOL classroom no matter who the students are.	X			X
V. Adult ESOL students who are learning to read for the first time are responsible for their own success.		X		
W. Adult ESOL students who lack native language literacy bring more weaknesses than strengths to the classroom.		X		X

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