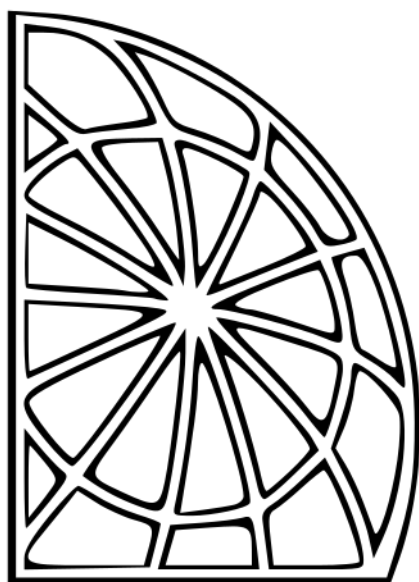


Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults



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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA) supports adults with little or no home language literacy or schooling who are now learning to read and write for the first time in a new language. We promote, on a worldwide, multidisciplinary, and multilingual basis, the sharing of research findings, effective pedagogical practices, and information on policy. Unlike some conferences and professional organizations, the central focus of this symposium is not a particular subject matter taught, but a specific kind of learner, one who is often educationally underserved and academically overlooked.

Since the inaugural LESLLA symposium on August 25–27, 2005 at the University of Tilburg in the Netherlands, annual symposia have rotated between North America and Europe to bring together linguists, psycho-linguists, psychologists, professional language educators, and educational scientists to establish a multi-country and multi-target-language research group to study effective methods of language acquisition and literacy. No other group exists that meets regularly to consider interdisciplinary research on adult immigrants learning to speak and write a language other than their first language.

The 13th Annual LESLLA Symposium was held in Portland, OR in the United States on August 10 –12, 2017. In an effort to ground the 13th symposium in current concerns facing LESLLA learners and the world at large, the theme of the symposium was “The Changing Context of Migration and LESLLA.” The hosts were the Applied Linguistics Department at Portland State University (PSU), Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ORTESOL), and the Portland Literacy Council.

The symposium planning committee included faculty members from PSU’s Applied Linguistics Department (Steve Reder, Kathy Harris, John Hellermann), a cohort of former PSU MA-TESOL graduates (Jen Sacklin, Domminick McParland, Eric Dodson, Margi Felix-Lund), and the Board President of the Portland Literacy Council (Peggy Murphy). Our joint efforts were both emblematic of the collaborative nature of LESLLA and evidence of its advancement as a field, which started from a small group of researchers and now has grown to include a wide range of professionals working with LESLLA learners.

For our part, we (Jen & Domminick) feel fortunate to have been motivated by such dedicated professors to become a part of the ever-growing group of researchers and practitioners concerned with LESLLA learners and the issues they face. Planning a conference with our former professors and with professionals from the Portland community was a treat. We loved discussing all of the different parts of Portland that we wanted to show off to symposium visitors, from PSU's Applied Linguistics Department's cutting-edge classroom research spaces to Portland's famous food scene. Our focus was on providing spaces for all symposium attendees to form connections and have deep discussions centered around LESLLA learners, and we think the symposium was a resounding success.

We would like to thank the authors and reviewers for contributing their time, energy, and expertise to the development of the 2017 proceedings. We would also like to acknowledge the support of the following organizations, whose sponsorship made the 2017 LESLLA Symposium possible: Applied Linguistics Department – Portland State University, Portland Literacy Council, Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ORTESOL), Language Matters Education Consultants, LLC Newcomer and ELL Services, University of Michigan Press, and Grass Roots Press.

Special thanks to the administration and staff of Portland State University for their generosity in accommodating the conference, as well as all of the wonderful volunteers who helped ensure the event was a success. Finally, we would like to thank all of the other LESLLA 2017 planning committee members – Stephen Reder, Kathryn Harris, John Helleman, Eric Dodson, Margi Felix-Lund, and Peggy Murphy.

It is our pleasure to present these LESLLA 2017 Symposium proceedings. The subsequent 12 double-blind peer-reviewed chapters, published in alphabetical order by author, comprise an array of topics from the more than 55 presentations that took place over the course of the symposium. We are confident you will appreciate the authors' breadth of expertise and LESLLA's emergence as a unique field of language and literacy scholarship.

Jen Sacklin and Domminick McParland, Editors
9/2019

Teaching and Tutoring Adult Emergent Readers with Refugee Backgrounds: Implementing a Training Program for Community Volunteers

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of a two-day training intervention for community volunteer teachers and tutors of adult emergent readers from refugee backgrounds. The volunteer teachers participating in this research typically had no previous training or education in working in literacy education and with adult second language learners. After describing the creation and implementation of the training, the study reports the results of surveys of trainees regarding perceived usefulness of various components of the training. Implications of this data and recommendations for best training practices are discussed, along with recommendations for future research.

INTRODUCTION

Background

It is well-documented in the LESLLA community that adult emergent readers--a population of language learners whose unique needs warrant the attention of highly trained professionals--often lack access to instruction by qualified language teachers (Condelli & Wrigley, 2008; Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Burt, Peyton, & Schaezel, 2008). Literature also supports LESLLA teachers' common experience that adult language learners (including emergent readers with refugee or immigrant backgrounds) have limited access to institutional resources when compared to their K-12 or university-level counterparts. Teachers in LESLLA contexts are paid less and are less likely to secure stable, full-time jobs, and as a result, teacher turnover in these contexts is high (Sticht, 2000; Cristoph, 2009; Ross, 1995). In order to address these needs and disparities, programs often rely on the support of volunteer teachers and tutors to teach adult emergent readers. However, without support and training, volunteers may not be able to meet the needs of these learners. Despite these risks, volunteers provide critical support to LESLLA teachers and learners. Effective volunteer training centered on the needs of adult emergent readers with refugee backgrounds is critical for providing volunteers the social and professional support they need to be effective. The following study reports on how LESLLA practitioners collaborated to create and implement such a training.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was 1) to revise and expand a professional development series for instructors and community tutors of ESL adult emergent readers from refugee backgrounds, 2) to understand the impact of this training on participants, and 3) to revise the trainings based on participant feedback. In this research, we aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What do teachers and volunteers learn from participating in a professional development series about working with adult second language learners, specifically L2 adult emergent readers with refugee backgrounds? What information and activities were most helpful, and what do participants wish to learn more about?
2. What observations and reflections do participants have after the professional development series for teachers and volunteers working with adult second language learners, specifically L2 adult emergent readers with refugee backgrounds?
3. How do the observations, reflections, questions, and suggestions that experienced teachers share differ from those that volunteer tutors and classroom assistants share?
4. How can the researchers revise the professional development series according to the articulated needs and reflections of participants to make it more effective?

The results of this study will be of interest to programs in other cities that wish to develop effective volunteer trainings for working with LESLLA learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Training opportunities for teachers of LESLLA learners are scarce, and many programs rely on volunteer (rather than professionally trained) teachers who are unlikely to have relevant teaching qualifications (Young-Scholten, Peyton, Sosinski, & Cabeza, 2014). However, training is important because studies show that adult LESLLA learners' language and literacy acquisition accelerates when they are taught by qualified teachers (Condelli, Cronen, Bos, Tseng, & Altuna, 2010, as cited in Young-Scholten, Peyton, Sosinski, & Cabeza, 2014). It is an unfortunate reality that the responsibility for teaching the highest-need LESLLA learners often falls on minimally trained volunteer teachers, rather than highly trained expert teachers who are trained to work with emergent readers.

Research suggests that practical teaching strategies are of greatest interest to LESLLA teachers. According to Young-Scholten, Peyton, Sosinski, and Cabeza (2014), LESLLA practitioners (paid and volunteer) value learning "skills they need to teach effectively" over the "research and knowledge that undergird and support those skills" (p. 165). As such, the training described in this paper focused on "instructional approaches and materials underpinned by research and theory that teachers and managers without specific LESLLA training can use immediately," (p. 177) such as priorities outlined by respondents in Young-Scholten, Peyton, Sosinski and Cabeza's 2014 survey:

- Learning about teaching methods that engaged learners in active participation and built on learners' background knowledge
- Developing and using strategies and materials authentic to students' lived experiences and needs
- Supporting learners in developing reading and writing strategies for independent real-world use
- Implementing lessons that teach oral language skills.

It is important to note that while developing knowledge about methodologies and skills in classroom practice provides a foundation on which to build, it is also recommended that new or volunteer teachers have "opportunities to participate in authentic continuing professional learning activities" (Smith, 2010 as cited in Vinogradov, 2012). Such ongoing support helps LESLLA practitioners "really understand [...] classroom practice and to make wise, informed choices for individual learners" (Vinogradov, 2012). Therefore, trainers of LESLLA practitioners should consider how to address both immediately relevant instructional tools and deep, reflective practice.

Adult learning theory (Knowles, 1984) offers insight into how to create activities that are deeply relevant to adult participants. Knowles positioned the adult learning experience, termed *andragogy*, in opposition to pedagogy. Whereas *pedagogy* is dependent on an instructor who decides what should be learned (content)--the personal experience of the learner is not incorporated and the learner's motivation is expected to be extrinsic--*andragogy* approaches the learning process from a problem-solving perspective. Adult learners are self-directed, have a wealth of experience that informs their worldview, have a readiness to

learn that is contingent on their need to be able to *do* something with that knowledge, and have intrinsic motivation; i.e., searching for a better quality of life, recognition, self-esteem; self-confidence, and self-actualization (Carney, 1986). This theory can be applied to both the volunteers who are being trained, and the refugee-background students they work with.

This literature suggests that including principles of andragogy into trainings is a critical need for LESLLA practitioners, who most value training that involves practical teaching strategies they can incorporate into their own classrooms, i.e., *do* something with the information immediately. Professional community is also important for LESLLA practitioners, who often work in isolation. The curriculum we developed addressed these needs by offering a thorough training about teaching adult emergent readers with refugee backgrounds while also creating a sense of community for participants. In addition, the conceptual framework of adult learning theory underpinned the discussions and activities included in the training as well as the instructional methods taught to participants. In this way, the training aimed to draw upon the participating teachers' experiences and to explicitly demonstrate to them how to do the same for the learners in their classroom.

METHODS

Context

This study took place in a mid-sized city with a large refugee resettlement program in the southwestern United States. This city is a resettlement site for some of the highest-need refugees from around the world. As such, multiple resettlement agencies and non-profit organizations exist to serve adults from refugee backgrounds in formal settings (such as classrooms) and informal settings (such as in apartments where families live). These organizations often enlist the help of paid and volunteer English teachers and tutors who have limited training in best practices (e.g. using oral language as a foundation for beginning literacy; using authentic, age-appropriate materials in the literacy classroom; using a trauma-informed pedagogical approach) for working with adult emergent readers from refugee backgrounds. In 2014, in response to a wave of requests for training, staff at a local literacy and English language acquisition non-profit secured a grant and developed a training to meet this need. The grant enabled the team to develop and offer a training on working with adult English learners with refugee backgrounds, but without further funding, the team was unable to offer ongoing support or additional trainings.

After the 2016 U.S. presidential election, interest in working with refugee-background students in this southwestern U.S. city spiked. Agencies and organizations once again needed help training volunteers interested in teaching English language and literacy to adults from refugee backgrounds. A grassroots organization unaffiliated with established refugee resettlement agencies, and unfamiliar with the programs already available, began providing services, including in-home English classes, prompting the need for volunteer teacher training. In order to address the surge of volunteers, we revised the original 2014 training; the new training focused on best practices in helping adult emergent

readers from refugee backgrounds develop English language oral and literacy skills. The team piloted the revised training with professional instructors of second language adult emergent readers in the spring of 2017 in order to gain insight from professional instructors on what they wanted their volunteers to know, and what they wished they themselves would have known when they first transitioned into an L2 adult emergent readers classroom. The team then revised the pilot and offered its first Community Volunteer Training (CVT1) in the summer of 2017. Though four additional trainings have been offered since then, this paper will focus on the initial two trainings.

Participants

The pilot training was offered in March 2017 to seven participants who were professional educators and managers. Four were experienced instructors in a refugee English program, an English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA) and English literacy program that is contextualized around workforce preparation for adults from refugee backgrounds. It is funded by the state refugee resettlement program, and housed in an adult basic education department, which is funded by the Department of Education, of a community college. Other participants included the director of the adult basic education center where we conducted the pilot, the professional learning coordinator for the community college, and one English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA) teacher from the adult basic education program. Participating teachers had between 3 and 14 years of teaching experience in this context, and each taught a minimum of eight contact hours per week in a literacy level or low-beginning English Language Acquisition for Adults course.

The first Community Volunteer Training (CVT1) took place in June 2017. On day 1 of the training, there were fourteen participants, and on day 2, there were eleven participants in attendance. The CVT1 participants came from a variety of backgrounds. Unlike participants in the pilot training, most participants in the CVT1 training were not professional teachers, but community volunteers working with learners of refugee backgrounds in homes or classrooms. They were associated with the local non-profit literacy council, church-based organizations, the local refugee resettlement agencies, the grassroots organization that had recently been created and was connecting ESL volunteers to families, and a food security organization that also offers English tutoring as a secondary service.

Data Collection

Curriculum. By piloting the course to experienced teachers first, we hoped to gain input from professional educators before offering the training to community volunteers and tutors.

In order for as many experienced teachers as possible to participate and provide feedback, we gave the pilot training in one, six-hour day though the community trainings were intended to be offered in two, three-hour days. Before lunch, we prepared hands-on activities and discussion to present the following ambitious list of themes: types of L1 literacies, emergent readers, acquisition vs. learning, adult learning theory, cultural indices and doing school, cultural profiles

(including a presentation of resources and problematizing the use of those resources), Affective Filter, Total Physical Response (TPR), and recommendations for using visual aids and graphic devices. Our goal was to raise awareness of each subject and connect key concepts to how they affect practice or why we recommend certain methodologies. After a short break for lunch, we reconvened and discussed assessment, literacy development stages, pre-reading skill development, top-down, bottom up/whole part whole approaches, and the Language Experience Approach (LEA).

Surveys. For the pilot training with the experienced instructors of second language adult emergent readers, we solicited feedback in the form of a five-question survey and group discussion. We asked the participants to dialogically reflect on each activity immediately after we presented it, and we took copious notes on their feedback. We distributed the open-ended surveys at the beginning of the session, asking them to complete the surveys throughout the training and to submit them at the end. The surveys included questions about what participants wanted to learn and practical and theoretical tools they hoped volunteers working in their classrooms could learn from a training. A full list of questions for the pilot study is included in Appendix A.

For the Community Volunteer Training (CVT1), we collected data in the form of anonymous pre-session and post-session surveys administered at the beginning and end of each training day. The surveys ranged in length from 5 to 11 questions and consisted of both Likert scales and open-ended free response. Likert scale questions asked participants to rate the usefulness of various activities and their comfort knowing where to start and how to develop lessons for adult emergent readers with refugee backgrounds, and open-ended questions inquired about participants' experiences and needs, and how they defined *literacy* and *emergent readers*. The surveys asked repeated questions as a means of gauging the participant's learning and the training's efficacy. A full list of questions for the pre- and post-surveys for each day of the CVT1 is included in Appendix B. The data from the experienced instructors' pilot training was analyzed by theme. The data from the CVT1 responses were analyzed thematically as well as quantitatively using the statistical program R (R core team, 2013).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Qualitative Findings: Participant Feedback from the Pilot Training

During the pilot session, teachers provided valuable feedback in the reflective dialogue and on the open-ended surveys. Among their comments, they suggested addressing culture alongside literacy, and not as a separate theme or afterthought. They recommended explaining the impact of cultural etiquette (such as leave-taking rituals) on how students are received inside and outside of the classroom. They pointed out that this issue is important for tutors as well as learners. The teachers also recommended emphasizing how respect is manifested in the classroom. They reported that some community volunteers, though well-intentioned, had disrespected their students in disturbing ways, including by talking about their vacation in a country a learner had fled, indicating surprise about learners' home situations (for example, the number of children they had),

and touching their headscarves. The teachers recommended being explicit about how tutors can show respect for students, their life experiences, and circumstances, and about how to create an asset-based, not deficit-based, learning environment. To this end, they suggested training through anecdotes so volunteers could consider the impact of behaviors on learners, and teaching volunteers how to consider students' lives beyond the classroom (such as their home and community resources, technology use, etc.). Finally, the teachers reminded us that we should consider the expectations we had for paid staff vs. volunteers and focus mainly on themes related to tutoring or helping in a classroom, not necessarily teaching a lesson. To this end, they reported that it would be helpful to incorporate practical advice over theory, and recommended addressing how to use teachable moments in the classroom, demonstrating how to search for visuals, and presenting questioning strategies to promote awareness of how to use accessible language to communicate with learners.

Revisions to the Pilot Training

We revised the pilot training by incorporating the experienced teachers' feedback. This revision would be presented to our Community Volunteer Training 1 (CVT1) cohort. See Appendix C for the training agenda we used with CVT1. First, we eliminated most theoretical content in favor of concrete and immediately relevant information and strategies. We also included a variety of experiential activities; for example, we started the training with "mediocre" and "great" lesson demonstrations in Spanish in order to help participants understand how it felt to be a beginning language learner, as well as to demonstrate the effectiveness of activities like TPR, visuals, repetition, and deliberate teacher talk at the beginning levels of language learning. In addition, we included an activity in which participants were shown a sign for a hospital in Arabic and asked to quickly copy it down. We hoped this activity would demonstrate how it feels to not be able to read important information in a different script, as well as lead into a discussion of language practice in context. Furthermore, in order to demonstrate the importance of context and background knowledge, we asked participants to read a brochure in Somali with and without the context of headers and pictures; this demonstrated both bottom-up and top-down approaches, and provided a venue to discuss the importance of each approach. On the first day, we added a hands-on, multimodal vocabulary lesson, which we simultaneously demonstrated while explaining why and how we were incorporating strategies we had discussed in the training; finally, on the second day, we did a Language Experience Approach (LEA) lesson with the class, where we asked them to generate the text and we gave them suggestions for extension activities and integration of whole language with phonics.

To discuss culture, we included role plays about intercultural communication. These role plays were subversively inserted into the midst of the training content; for example, while one trainer was leading a discussion about levels of literacy, another trainer loudly entered the room and began greeting all the participants. The first trainer modeled how to deal with the interrupting "student," finished the discussion, and then brought the participants' awareness

back to the disruptive act, asking “Why do you think that happened? How did you notice I dealt with it? Why was it successful?”

In order to address stages of literacy development without lecturing or without use of excessive academic jargon, we showed examples of child and adult work, discussed the differences and similarities, and asked participants to order another set of literacy development examples. We retained the discussion about what makes an adult emergent reader “emergent” so that we could focus on strengths instead of deficits, and specified that we were including such terminology so that our participants would be well-informed, and know what search terms to use when looking on the internet or in the library for more information. We also kept the lecture about the types of literacies and the difference between *learning* and *acquisition*. After the session, we e-mailed participants a practical toolkit which included information about where to learn more, as well as teaching resources. The next stage in this study investigates how community volunteers responded to this revised training.

Community Volunteer Training (CVT1): Quantitative Survey Results

After revising the pilot training, we offered the first Community Volunteer Training (CVT1) in June 2017 at a local non-profit which offers free ESL classes at public schools, libraries, and churches in the community. We offered this training in two, three-hour sessions.

Before and after the first session, and at the end of the second session, we asked participants to provide feedback in the form of a brief survey in which we asked participants to use a 1-5 Likert scale to rate their comfort level knowing where to start with language learners (Figure 1) and knowing how to develop lesson plans (Figure 2). In addition, we asked them to rate the usefulness of seven elements of the training: 1) explanations of terminology/research, 2) literacy simulations (Arabic sign and Somali brochure), 3) role plays, 4) group work and discussions, 5) discussion of visual aids, 6) the toolkit, which is a Google drive folder that includes articles on practice and methodology, resources on research, links to videos, other local learning opportunities, and works cited, and 7) lesson demonstrations (Figure 3).

As Figures 1 and 2 indicate, participants report much greater comfort after the end of the first session (from 3.18 to 4.00 on “knowing where to start,” and from 2.75 to 3.75 on a 5-point Likert scale on “developing lessons for language/literacy learners”). Their comfort level increases even more by the end of the second three-hour session (to 4.32 and 4.23, respectively).

Participants’ self-reported comfort knowing where to start and their comfort developing lessons were analyzed in the statistical software R (R core team, 2013) using a two-factor within-subjects ANOVA, with time (pre, mid, and post) and answer as the factors. Results indicate that time was significant overall ($F(2,62)=33.9, p<.0001$), with participants reporting higher comfort levels at the end of the training than at the beginning. This was true for both questions. Follow up pairwise comparisons tests were conducted to determine if participants’ gains were significant at each level of time. Results indicated that participants reported increased comfort from the beginning to end of day 1 ($F(1,41)=27.4, p<.0005$), as well as from the end of day 1 to the end of day 2

($F(1,35)=10.45, p<.003$). These results indicate that participants' comfort level knowing where to start and planning lessons increased significantly after each day of training.

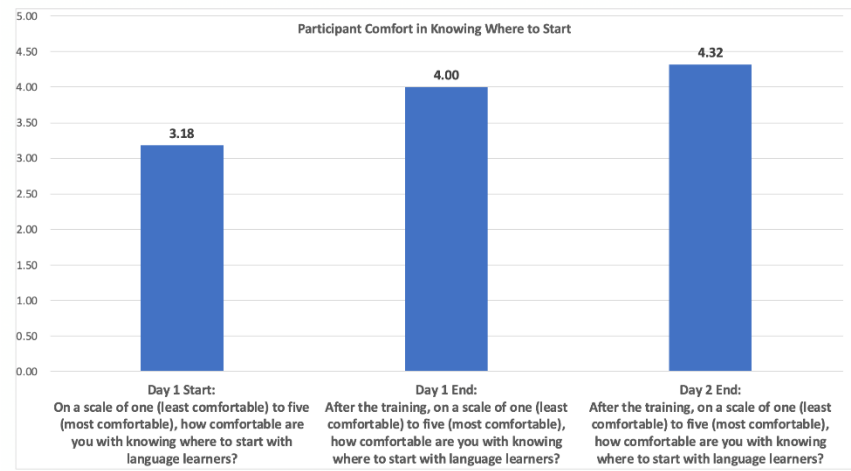


Figure 1: CVT1 Participant comfort knowing where to start before, during, and after training

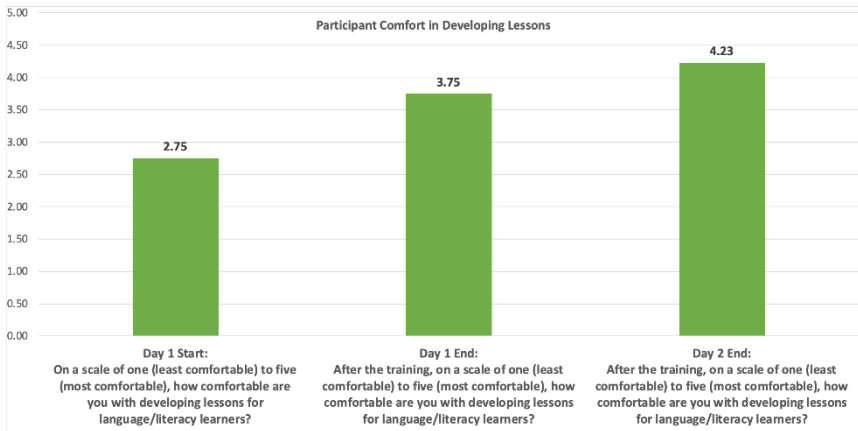


Figure 2: CVT1 Participant comfort developing lessons before, during, and after training

As the survey results indicate, participants indicated that the training was too academic and too classroom-based, with not enough emphasis on one-on-one or small group teaching contexts. As Figure 3 illustrates, they also found the academic terminology and literacy simulations slightly less useful than activities such as modeling visual aids, the toolkit, and lesson demonstrations. For us as the researchers and trainers, this means that we need to be more explicit on the importance of the academic terminology and how participants can use it in their practice. For example, the participants can more accurately look up further

information on topics discussed in the training, and, by using the academic terms, better ensure they are accessing current best practices in the field. We also need to more explicitly discuss the salience of the literacy simulations. For example, many of the participants noted that they felt uncomfortable during the literacy simulations; as trainers, it was our intent to make our participants feel as uncomfortable as our students might feel in new and culturally different educational environments. Therefore, a more detailed debriefing of those training elements is needed.

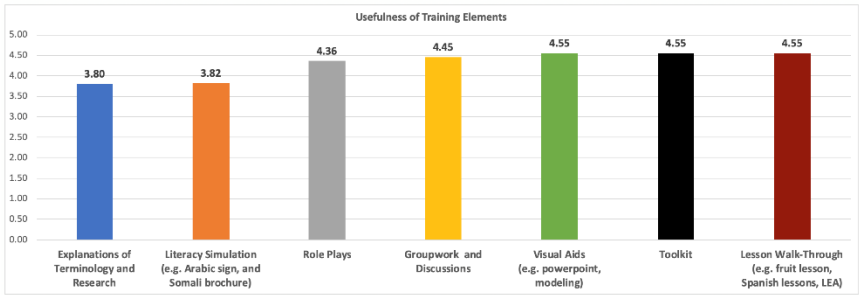


Figure 3: CVT1 Participant ranking of usefulness of training elements

In the verbal feedback that they gave, participants stated that full lesson demonstrations were very beneficial—particularly the accompanying discussion and demonstration of the scaffolding teachers build into their lessons to prepare their students for future activities. They also appreciated the discussion of how to choose and use appropriate visual aids, and the concrete demonstration of effective visual aids and visual aids that do not provide enough context or 3D space to be useful in initially introducing new vocabulary.

Finally, participants noted the power of personal experience from refugee-background students, as one refugee-background volunteer attended CVT1 and provided numerous examples from his home culture, as well as learning and educational experiences.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In response to this feedback from CVT1, we decided to revise future Community Volunteer Trainings to make them accessible to individuals with no teaching background, provide ample time for sharing and discussion, and shift from explanatory to participatory activities. We decided to add a glossary of the academic terms used in the training to the shared digital toolkit in order to provide a concrete reiteration of the usefulness of certain academic terms. Our hope was that participants would then use these terms when searching for resources. In addition, we realized that we needed to address culture explicitly, as our attempts to integrate examples with other activities only confused participants (for example, when we picked our noses, pointed with our middle fingers, and invaded our participants’ personal space, participants remained decidedly unreactive, yet acknowledged being uncomfortable in the surveys). In addition, we realized that we should expand the amount of time allotted for the

discussion of culture. Participants were most conversational during the educational culture section; however, because we had allotted only a brief period of time for this discussion, we had to move on before participants were finished reflecting. Furthermore, it became apparent during CVT1 that we needed to include a brief discussion of how to address trauma in the classroom. For example, many of our participants asked us how they could ask their students about their past traumatic experiences. Though participants wanted to be helpful, directly asking about trauma is culturally insensitive and potentially retraumatizing, and volunteers who bring up trauma can unintentionally trigger those who have experienced it. In order to help participants understand, we responded by asking participants to consider how it might feel if an acquaintance or stranger asked about one of the most difficult times in their lives. In addition, we likened asking adults with refugee backgrounds about trauma to the cultural faux pas in the United States of asking a veteran about their service in direct combat.

Another critical aspect of the training was including trainers with refugee backgrounds. We agreed to be deliberate about inviting former students to join the training team for future trainings. Finally, we decided to be very intentional so that our language, PowerPoint images, and scenarios explicitly included in-home volunteers as well as classroom volunteers.

Implications

Based on feedback from CVT1 participants, the training team advocates a number of best practices for trainings of community volunteers. First and foremost, the training should be as accessible and practical as possible. It should include “the least you should know” and “where to go to learn more” (Henrichsen, 2010). In general, involving participants in hands-on demonstrations of lesson activities was more effective than simply explaining the activities. Most of our participants had no teaching background and were confused by our use of academic terminology. As such, the training team recommends carefully and explicitly choosing any academic terminology used; for example, we strayed away from using terms like *power distance index* when discussing culture, but continued to include terms like *adult emergent reader*. We recommend telling participants that the target academic terminology is being included so that when participants are looking for resources independently, they can find high quality materials by using appropriate search terms. Sharing a glossary is also recommended.

Secondly, we recommend limiting the number of examples given to illustrate categories or phases. For example, when discussing types of literacies (preliterate, non-literate, semi-literate, non-Roman alphabet literate), one rich example should be given for each, but not a list of short examples for each. We found that though we as LESLLA professionals were interested in talking about the differences between given languages and literacies, the participants were unsure of the direct application of this section, as demonstrated by responses on the post-training evaluations. This type of additional information can be included in a Resource Toolkit shared with participants after the training. We recommend devoting ample time to discussions of cross-cultural communication, particularly

as it manifests in formal and informal educational settings. Discussions of cross-cultural scenarios are particularly helpful as participants are able to see themselves in the situation, and thus reflect more deeply. In order to address the variety of settings in which volunteers work, training content and materials should reference both classroom and in-home settings. Finally, the team recommends including ample time for participants to process training content in individual reflection and pair or group conversation.

Limitations and Future Research

Future research will look at the results of two training interventions provided for university students and professors on a university campus and will include suggestions on modifying training content for an academic or pre-service audience. Additional future research will consider the impact of the changes made to the CVT1 session in subsequent Community Volunteer Training sessions. We have provided and revised two CVTs and two trainings on a university campus since conducting the research presented here. Results of the research conducted on subsequent CVTs will be shared in future presentations.

Limitations of the study include the small sample size of participants, and the possibility that the results are not generalizable to trainees of different educational backgrounds and more extensive teaching experience. The pilot training also consisted of a small group of professional educators; additional professional instructors would have yielded more generalizable suggestions.

While one-shot workshops allow for surface-level introductions to topics and strategies, research shows that continuing education opportunities of longer duration are more effective (Desimone, 2009; as cited in Vinogradov, 2013) because they give teachers time and opportunities to “interact with colleagues and to reflect on their classrooms and research findings” (Burt, Peyton, Schaetzel, 2008; Vinogradov, 2012b as cited in Vinogradov, 2013). As such, future research needs to include longitudinal assessments and evaluations, as well as suggestions on incentivizing follow-up meetings with participants.

This article described how a six-hour training was developed and implemented with teachers and tutors working with adult emergent readers in a variety of contexts, including community-based volunteer settings. This information will be valuable for other programs or professionals seeking to develop a similar volunteer training in their own cities or contexts.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS FOR EXPERIENCED LESLLA TEACHERS

Pilot Survey Questions:

1. What did you wish you knew before you started teaching? What do you think would have been too abstract before you actually got in the classroom?
2. What do you want to know about working with volunteers?
3. What parts of this training should tutors have before they set foot in the classroom or work with students one-on-one and what parts should they have after have some experience?
4. What do you want to know more about in depth in the future?
5. What type of activities or examples can you think of to demonstrate specific concepts? What ideas do you have for hands-on parts of the training? What examples do you have from your classroom experience to illustrate particular concepts or aspects?

APPENDIX B: PRE- AND POST-SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR DAYS 1 AND 2 OF COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER TRAINING 1 (CVT1)

CVT Pre-Day 1 Survey:

1. On a scale one to five, how comfortable are you with knowing where to start with teaching/tutoring language learners?
(not comfortable) 1 2 3 4 5 (very comfortable)
2. On a scale of one to five, how comfortable are you with developing lessons for language/literacy learners?
(not comfortable) 1 2 3 4 5 (very comfortable)
3. What techniques would you like to learn for teaching listening and speaking?
4. What listening and speaking strategies do you currently employ in your classes/sessions with your students?
5. What is an adult emergent reader?
6. What do you wish you knew about your students?
7. How do you use visual aids in your sessions?

CVT Post-Day 1 Survey:

1. On a scale one to five, how comfortable are you with knowing where to start with language learners?
(not comfortable) 1 2 3 4 5 (very comfortable)
2. On a scale of one to five, how comfortable are you with developing lessons for language/literacy learners?
(not comfortable) 1 2 3 4 5 (very comfortable)
3. What are best practices for selecting visual aids for use in class?
4. What elements of the training were most useful to you?
5. Which elements do you wish to explore in more detail?

CVT Pre-Day 2 Survey:

1. What techniques would you like to learn for teaching reading, and writing?
2. What strategies do you currently employ in your classes/sessions with your students?
3. What is literacy?
4. What are some best practices for teaching reading and writing with adult emergent readers?
5. When should you introduce print literacy into your lessons?

CVT Post-Day 2 Survey:

1. What elements of the training were most useful to you? Please rate each element (1 = not useful, 5 = very useful)
 - Role Plays
 - Toolkit
 - Explanations of Terminology and Research
 - Visual Aids (e.g. powerpoint, modeling)
 - Lesson Walk-through (e.g. fruit lesson, Spanish lessons, LEA)
 - Literacy Simulation (e.g. Arabic sign and Somali brochure)
 - Groupwork/Discussions

Other (please write in)

Please write additional comments that you may wish to leave about these elements:

2. After the training, on a scale one to five, how comfortable are you with knowing where to start with language learners?
(not comfortable) 1 2 3 4 5 (very comfortable)
3. After the training, on a scale of one to five, how comfortable are you with developing lessons for language/literacy learners?
(not comfortable) 1 2 3 4 5 (very comfortable)
4. Which teaching techniques do you wish to explore in more detail?
5. What is literacy?
6. What is an adult emergent reader?
7. What are some best practices for teaching reading and writing with adult emergent readers?
8. When should you introduce print literacy into your lessons?
9. What did you learn about using visual aids?
10. How do you learn about your students' backgrounds?
11. What did you learn about addressing cultural differences in class/teaching situations?

APPENDIX C: DAYS 1 AND 2 TRAINING AGENDAS FOR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER TRAINING 1 (CVT1)

Day 1 Training Agenda

Gallery Walk with Flipcharts (Gauging participants' prior knowledge)

Gallery Walk with Flipcharts (Gauging participants' prior knowledge)

Opening and Framing the Training

Participant Introductions

Mediocre Class and Great Class Simulation (in Spanish)

“Doing School”

Different types of education

Assets and challenges to learning

Goals for learning

Stretch Break

Literacy/Literacies

Types of literacies

Definitions of literacy

Uses of literacy

Authentic Literacy Use Exercise (Arabic sign copying)

Summary of Literacy

Stretch Break

Authentic Opportunities for Practicing Language (Meet and greet role play)

Building the Foundation: Receptive and Oral Language Development

Total Physical Response

Visual Aids

Levels of Questioning

Developing Vocabulary and Language Structures

Day 1 End

Summarize the day

Ask evaluation questions

Discuss homework

Day 2 Training Agenda

Opening

Review of Day 1

Discussion of respect for students' past experiences

Framing for Day 2 – Participants' Experiences Working with Literacy Learners

Discussion of Day 1's Homework

Think/Pair/Share – Acquisition vs. Learning Re: Children's Language and Literacy

How do children learn language?

How do children learn to read?

Adult Literacy Acquisition vs. Childhood Literacy Acquisition

Literacy Acquisition Exercise

Assessing Reading and Writing Readiness

Increasing Print Awareness and Developing Pre-Reading Skills

Stretch Break

Approaches to Literacy Instruction*Bottom-up Approach (Somali text)**Top-down Approach (Somali text)**Whole-Part-Whole***Language Experience Approach/Using Meaningful Texts****Language Experience Approach Practice****Share Resource Toolkit****Day 2 End***Summarize the day**Ask evaluation questions**Discuss next steps*

Integrating Pronunciation Instruction into the Literacy-level Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Explicit integration of pronunciation instruction into an adult ESL literacy-level curriculum is vital to oral skills development. However, most ESL teachers lack the preparation and resources for the planning and implementation of pronunciation instruction. In response, this paper means to act as a resource for literacy-level ESL teachers who are looking for models of pronunciation instruction meant for their population of learners, including three illustrative literacy-level sample lessons.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Adult English Language (EL) classes are seeing increasingly higher numbers of learners who have had no or very limited access to formal education in their native countries due to civil war, economic hardships or lack of educational opportunities. These learners are commonly referred to as literacy-level learners and are defined as those who are learning a new language without being print literate in any language and who have not had access to formal schooling. At this level, most daily tasks require speaking skills, which for literacy-level learners, often develop prior to literacy skills (Bigelow & Lovrien Schwarz, 2010; Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010). Implicit in this drive to improve oral skills is the need to speak English with intelligible pronunciation that is understood by the English speakers that they interact with outside of the classroom. Studies have

shown that ESL learners desire pronunciation instruction (Derwing, 2003), and that beginning-level learners, when asked, are especially eager to receive this instruction (Baker 2011). However, research has shown that it is common for adult EL teachers, including those who have advanced degrees, to have very limited training in the areas of phonetics, phonology or pronunciation instruction (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011; Gilbert, 2010). Teachers often report that they lack the knowledge and training to make informed instructional decisions regarding pronunciation (Baker, 2014). Additionally, pronunciation research and materials rarely focus on adult immigrants and refugees who have low levels of literacy and who have experienced limited or no formal schooling, a population with whom many adult EL teachers work (Chela- Flores, 2001; Darcy, Ewert, & Lidster, 2012; Zielinski & Yates, 2014). As a result, pronunciation is often taught infrequently and without prior planning, resulting in piecemeal error correction that lacks intention and focus (Gilbert 2010; Levis & Grant, 2003), leaving learners with insufficient instruction on how to improve their intelligibility. This article will discuss current pronunciation instruction and materials for literacy-level learners, review recommendations for effective pronunciation instruction, and describe three pronunciation features: voice quality settings, word stress, and sentence stress; along with activities for practicing those features in literacy-level classes.

PRONUNCIATION INSTRUCTION AND LITERACY-LEVEL LEARNERS

Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2010) assert that there is a pronunciation “threshold level” that non-native speakers (NNSs) of English have to obtain, and that if their pronunciation skills stay below this level, they will have communication problems, no matter how much grammar and vocabulary they master (p. 8). Other researchers cite the social costs that may result from a lack of pronunciation skills as they interact with native speakers (NSs): claiming that NSs evaluate NNSs on the basis of their accent and intelligibility, limiting access to employment, slowing acculturation, and restricting opportunities for practicing English in meaningful communication settings (Bailey, 2005; Derwing, Munro, & Thompson, 2008; Morley, 1991; Parrish, 2004; Yates, 2011; Zielinski & Yates, 2014).

For many literacy-level learners, the classroom is the only place where they are able to develop their English skills (Strube, 2009) and may also be the only place in which they feel safe enough to practice speaking. So what happens to learners whose teachers avoid teaching pronunciation? Contrary to what many teachers may hope, literacy-level learners rarely notice their own irregular pronunciation patterns without explicit, meaningful instruction (Zielinski & Yates, 2014). As an illustration, Derwing, Thomson, and Munro (2006) followed the progress of 40 beginning-level learners attending a full-time ESL program for new arrivals to Canada over a ten-month period. Pronunciation was not purposefully integrated in this program. Native English speakers rated speech samples from the learners three different times during the study: before the

learners received instruction, after two months of instruction, and after ten months of instruction. At the end of the ten months, improvements in pronunciation were found to be very minimal. In order for new language learners to become successful communicators in English and form the confidence that they need to practice and improve their English both in and outside of the classroom, they need to be provided with explicit and effective instruction in the area of pronunciation.

Literacy-level teachers can be hesitant to incorporate pronunciation into their instruction for a number of reasons. The sheer number of pronunciation deviations can make it overwhelming for teachers to prioritize instruction and even know where to begin (Derwing, 2017). Other aspects of English, such as alphabets and literacy skills, may be deemed more important, or teachers may feel that pronunciation instruction is too challenging for this level of learners (Zielinski & Yates, 2014). Teachers' reluctance to include pronunciation instruction in literacy level classrooms may be denying learners the opportunity to build pronunciation skills that could impact their future language development (Chela-Flores, 2001; Derwing, 2017). Additionally, recent research suggests that adult language learners are best suited to acquire phonetic knowledge during the first 6-12 months of extensive immersion in the L2, which implies that early instruction can be highly effective (Darcy et al., 2012; Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, and Fleming, 2014). In light of this information, it is imperative that literacy-level teachers are devoting instructional time to raising learners' awareness about English pronunciation features and providing adequate opportunities for practice and feedback.

Lack of Pronunciation Materials for Literacy Level Adult EL Learners

The lack of research concerning literacy level EL learners' pronunciation has resulted in very few published materials for beginning learners. In her 2001 article, Chela-Flores stresses the importance of thorough pronunciation instruction, beginning in the first stages of learning and continuing throughout a language program, but admits that there is a severe lack of materials that are appropriately leveled for literacy level learners, with most currently available course materials designed for intermediate to advanced level learners (Chela-Flores, 2001; Darcy et al., 2012).

Regrettably, textbooks and tools that claim to be developed for beginning level learners often have high amounts of vocabulary and reading, resulting in an overwhelming amount of text for literacy level learners. Most of the current available pronunciation materials are appropriate only for learners with high fluency and reading skills (Chela-Flores, 2001). Even Gilbert's popular text, *Clear Speech from the Start* (2005), requires a level of reading comprehension that is far above the reach of most literacy level learners. As a result, the onus of developing a curriculum that includes regular pronunciation instruction with level appropriate materials rests with the teachers of low literacy classes, a task for which many teachers have not been trained.

Recommendations for Pronunciation Instruction

Despite the scarcity of explicit pronunciation research and materials for literacy-level learners, there is a large body of global recommendations from researchers that follow early recommendations from Morley (1991) and Celce-Murcia (2010) and continue to be emphasized in pronunciation literature today (for example, in Zielinski & Yates' work with beginning level learners) that can be successfully applied to pronunciation instruction at any level. This section will describe three of those recommendations framed for pronunciation instruction for literacy-level learners: take a systematic approach, teach suprasegmentals along with segmentals, and integrate pronunciation into every lesson.

Taking a Systematic Approach

Just as literacy-level learners are not expected to read words without explicit instruction in alphabets and phonics, neither should they be expected to pronounce English intelligibly without scaffolded instruction to improve their abilities to hear and practice English sounds and pronunciation features. Morley recommends incorporating a variety of practice objectives into pronunciation instruction for all levels of learners. These types of practice include imitative practice, rehearsed practice, extemporaneous practice, and both listening and spelling practice (1991). In their 2010 book, Celce-Murcia et al. suggest basing pronunciation instruction on a communicative framework that takes learners through five stages: description and analysis, listening discrimination, controlled practice, guided practice, and communicative practice. The progression of these phrases serve to begin by first raising awareness of the targeted pronunciation feature and gradually move learners to being able to produce the feature successfully in spontaneous speech. This scaffolded approach is very similar to the way that learners are taken through a series of developmental stages when they are learning any other aspect of English such as grammar or vocabulary. Zielinski and Yates strongly encourage teachers to take a similar systematic approach when teaching English pronunciation for beginning-level learners (2014). Figure 1 shows their systematic sequence that explains purpose and rationale for the four developmental stages in the acquisition of new pronunciation features: listening and awareness, control, practice, and extension.

Far too often, teachers skip the listening and awareness stage of development, leaping right into practice before learners have had the chance to become aware of and hear the pronunciation feature. Research tells us that adult learners tend to perceive the sounds and patterns of a new language through the lens of their first language, which can make it difficult for them to hear, recognize, and replicate sounds and rhythms that are unique to English (Yates & Zielinski, 2009). As a result, learners need help in noticing the difference between their own pronunciation and the target language (Couper, 2003; Morley, 1991; Yates & Zielinski, 2009; Zielinski & Yates, 2014). Spending time in the initial listening and awareness stage of development before moving through more to less controlled practice stages allows learners to gain control over the pronunciation feature so that they can apply it to their own speech. Zielinski and Yates's framework also provides learners with the opportunity to practice the

pronunciation feature in a variety of modalities, such as auditory, visual, and kinesthetic, which may be more accessible for literacy-level learners. Utilizing the kinesthetic elements of physical movement to enhance pronunciation instruction has long been recommended by pronunciation specialists (Baker, 2014). Sample activities for specific pronunciation features that align with the developmental stages outlined in this section will be provided in a later section.

Stage of Development	Aims
1. Listening & Awareness	To develop learners’ awareness of the target pronunciation feature, and how it differs from the feature in the L1.
2. Control	To develop learners’ physical control over the pronunciation of the target feature.
3. Practice	To develop learners’ ability to produce the target feature, in a range of different and increasingly difficult structured contexts.
4. Extension	To develop learners’ ability to apply their new skills in a range of contexts.

Figure 1: A Systematic Approach to Pronunciation Instruction

Focus on Suprasegmentals

Knowing where to begin and what to focus on in regard to pronunciation instruction is a pervasive challenge for literacy-level teachers, particularly in classrooms where learners represent multiple language backgrounds. Should they focus on segmentals, the sounds of a language, or suprasegmentals, the stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns? A general consensus is emerging that a balanced approach to pronunciation, one that incorporates both segmental and suprasegmental acquisition and production is the most successful (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Darcy et al., 2012; Derwing et al., 1998; Derwing & Rossiter, 2003; Gilbert, 2010; Kang, Rubin & Pickering, 2010; Morley, 1991).

Indeed, for literacy-level learners, suprasegmental instruction may be particularly helpful because they can be demonstrated in other ways than the “listen and repeat” method, incorporating the auditory, visual, and kinesthetic modalities that Zielinski and Yates recommend for successful pronunciation instruction with beginning-level learners (2014).

Knowing that few EL classrooms represent speakers from a single language background, we recommend that teachers aim to incorporate suprasegmental instruction, such as word stress, sentence stress, and intonation, along with global features, such as voice quality settings and volume, in their pronunciation instruction along with targeted segmental instruction on sounds that carry high functional loads (Derwing, Munro, Wiebe, 1997; Derwing & Munro, 2014). English suprasegmental and global pronunciation features such as voice quality settings, word stress, and sentence stress are areas that learners from a wide variety of language backgrounds struggle with, therefore, focusing pronunciation

instruction on broader aspects of speech should be effective for a range of language backgrounds (Derwing, 2003). In a literacy level class, particularly one that is multicultural, suprasegmental instruction will benefit the largest number of learners, and should deliver more “bang for your buck” than traditional segmental instruction.

Integrate Pronunciation Instruction into Lesson Plans

Growing numbers of researchers are calling for pronunciation instruction to be integrated into regular classroom instruction rather than taught as “stand alone” lessons or special classes (Burns, 2006; Celce-Murcia, et al., 2010; Foote, et al., 2011; Grant, 2014; Morley, 1991; Zielinski & Yates, 2014). Programs are encouraged to think of pronunciation as an “integral part of oral communication” (Morley, 1991, p. 496), and essential to communicative competence (Celce-Murcia, et al., 2010). Low-literacy learners in particular require frequent repetition in order to maximize their learning potential; when pronunciation instruction is integrated into the regular classroom curriculum, it allows for meaningful communicative practice that connects the pronunciation instruction to the learners’ daily lives and varied practice and interaction, which utilizes best practices for literacy-level learners and pronunciation instruction (Condelli & Wrigley, 2006; Gilbert, 2010, p. 31; Levis & Grant, 2003; Morley, 1991).

Integrating pronunciation into regular classroom instruction does not mean that every lesson should be built around pronunciation. Rather, it means that teachers should have a pronunciation feature in mind, (Zielinski & Yates, 2014), and weave practice of that feature into the vocabulary and oral skills practice that is already a part of everyday lesson plans. Incorporating pronunciation instruction into literacy level lesson materials, vocabulary, and topics serves to address the previously mentioned gap in appropriately leveled pronunciation materials since it alleviates the need for teachers to locate or create stand-alone pronunciation resources. The following section will provide examples of how teachers can integrate pronunciation along with commonly taught language such as vocabulary and dialogues.

PRONUNCIATION FEATURES FOR LITERACY-LEVEL LEARNERS

This section will discuss three different pronunciation features: voice quality settings, word stress, and sentence stress. Our decision to focus on these three features draws from the research mentioned in the previous sections and from our own experiences teaching literacy-level learners; these three features have been shown to be particularly accessible during classroom instruction in both general pronunciation teaching research, Zielinski and Yates’s beginning learner focused research, and from empirical observations of our own learners’ responses to instruction. The two of us have each spent over 15 years teaching in EL classrooms and providing professional development around the topic of pronunciation for EL teachers who work in a wide variety of instructional

settings. The three pronunciation feature sections below also include suggestions for activities that we have successfully integrated into regular classroom routines in our own teaching that can be duplicated by other literacy level teachers.

Voice Quality Settings

Voice quality settings are defined by Esling and Wong (1983) as the “long term postures of the larynx, pharynx, tongue, velopharyngeal system and lips” (p. 89). They identify English voice quality features as: spread lips, open jaw, palatalized tongue body position, nasal voice, lowered larynx, and a creaky voice, many of which are significantly different from the voice quality features of ELs. When someone first begins to speak a new language, it is natural for them to apply the voice quality settings from their first language. Many NNSs of English hold their jaws in a loosely closed position, maintaining minimal jaw movement, which is in contrast to the open jaw that is a distinctive characteristic of American English speech. Features of voice quality settings that occur in EL learners’ native languages (such as minimal jaw movement), but do not occur to the same degree in English, can be obstacles to intelligibility (Esling & Wong, 1983).

Some researchers hypothesize that teaching adult EL learners to apply English voice quality settings in their own speech should improve their production of both segmental and suprasegmental features (Esling & Wong, 1983; Kerr, 2000). Voice quality settings are considered to be a global and long-term aspect of prosody that directly influences the articulation of segmentals. This leads to several researchers to claim that teaching English voice quality settings is the most “holistic” way to teach pronunciation, and that learners are best served when pronunciation instruction begins with establishing and practicing the settings of the new language before moving to specific phonemes (Esling & Wong, 1983; Jones & Evans, 1995; Kerr, 2000; Thornbury, 1993). These claims are particularly relevant to literacy-level learners, who may have previously had limited exposure to English, and no prior pronunciation instruction.

With its emphasis on jaw posture, tongue position, breathing, and strengthening of the vocal muscles, voice quality settings instruction can be carried out with the most basic of language content, causing it to be highly appropriate for the literacy-level classroom. Drawing attention to the differences in voice quality settings between EL learners’ L1 and English using visual demonstrations such as videos, mirrors, and partner work has the potential to make this area of instruction highly viable to literacy-level learners since it is one of the few areas of pronunciation that is visible as well as auditory, and as a result does not require extensive language to explain, demonstrate, or practice. Moreover, the auditory feedback can be difficult for literacy-level learners to notice and synthesize, so the kinesthetic feedback provided by mirror and partner work when working with voice quality settings may be more helpful for this level (Kerr, 2000).

Voice Quality Settings Activities

1. Listening & Awareness

- Learners watch a video of a native English speaker with the sound off. Teacher asks the learners what language the speaker was using, and has the learners imitate the mouth movements that they noticed. Using handheld mirrors, the learners speak their L1 while watching their mouths. Learners and teacher compare the L1 mouth movements to the English mouth movements in the video. (This activity is used when voice quality settings are first introduced.)
- Using a list of vocabulary (pictures or words) that is relevant to the context of the lesson, teacher says each word aloud while the learners watch the teacher's mouth. Learners then look in their mirrors, say the word, and imitate the teacher's mouth movements.
- Teacher chooses a word from the list and silently mouths it. Learners read the teacher's lips and say the word out loud. Repeat several times.

2. Control

- Learners work in pairs. One learner chooses a word from the above list and silently mouths it. Their partner reads their lips and says the word out loud. The first learner indicates their partner's accuracy, then continues mouthing the words until they have completed the list. Partners then switch roles.

3. Practice

- Teacher introduces a sentence frame that can be used with the vocabulary words (e.g. Food unit: *I like to eat ____*). Learners work in small groups. Groups are given a set of vocabulary flashcards (may be pictures or words). Learners take turns drawing a card, saying the sentence using the vocabulary word on their card.

4. Extension

- Learners act out a short dialogue, independently choosing the words to complete the dialogue from the vocabulary list, first in pairs then in front of the class.
- Learners complete a mingle grid or a survey, moving around the classroom and asking one another questions (e.g. *What food do you like? What food don't you like?*).

Word Stress

It is claimed that “[word stress is] the most convenient focal point for pronunciation instruction; an area of maximum overlap of communicative importance and teachability” (Dalton & Seidlhoffer, 1994, p. 73). There is significant evidence that word stress plays an important role in intelligible English for a vast majority of native English speakers. Most people who grow up speaking English produce and process word stress automatically, without any

conscious thought. However, for many NNSs, especially new learners, the variable word stress of English is an unnoticed phenomenon which can cause intelligibility difficulties when interacting with native English speakers.

Stressed syllables in multisyllabic words are often described as being louder, longer, and higher in pitch than the unstressed syllables. Native English listeners process meaning based on the stressed syllables in incoming speech, relying on the cues that the stress pattern provides (Celce-Murcia, et al., 2010) to understand the message. Consequently, when word stress is missing or misplaced, it can cause breakdowns in communication (Benrabah, 1997; Celce-Murcia, et al., 2010; Field, 2005).

According to Field, some ESL teachers argue that these listener perception errors will be minor because the listener will be able to rely on contextual information to compensate for words with mispronounced stress (2005). Field points out the fallacy of this argument; context depends on how much of the speech the listener has been able to understand (2005). For literacy-level learners who often have severely limited vocabularies it is crucial that they are able to produce individual words in a manner that will be intelligible to the listener considering the fact that there may be few opportunities for listeners to gain context when interacting with NNSs who produce short utterances. Gilbert recommends prioritizing word stress and distinguishing between strong and weak syllables when working with beginning learners (Gilbert, in Celce-Murcia, et. al., 2010).

To begin to use word stress, literacy-level learners need to first understand that every multisyllabic word in English has a stress pattern (Celce-Murcia, et al., 2010). Word stress is specific to the individual word, therefore, it falls to reason that this feature should be taught along with new vocabulary, including attention to and feedback on the production of their stress patterns (Derwing, 2017; Field, 2005). As with voice quality settings, there are ample opportunities to incorporate kinesthetic and visual practices into word stress instruction, making this pronunciation feature well-suited for literacy-level learners.

Word Stress Activities

1. Listening & Awareness

- Teacher says a word from the vocabulary list. As the teacher says the word, she taps or claps for each syllable. Teacher asks learners how many syllables they heard. Teacher repeats the word, using hand gestures to indicate which syllable is stressed. Teacher asks learners which syllable was the strongest.
- Teacher shows learners two words from the vocabulary list that have different word stress patterns (pictures or written words). Teacher hums the word stress pattern for one of the words (e.g. HUM-hum-hum for *STRAWberry*). Learners indicate which word corresponds with the stress pattern.

2. Control
- Learners use movement (e.g. raising and lowering hands, pulling rubber bands) to mimic the stress patterns in the vocabulary words as they say them.
 - Each learner is given a set of pennies. Teacher says a word from the vocabulary list. Learners count the syllables, setting out one penny per syllable (e.g. *manager* would need three pennies). Learners then move the penny that represents the stressed syllable so that it is higher than the other pennies. Teacher leads saying the word as learners tap the corresponding pennies for each syllable.
3. Practice
- Each learner is given a word stress grid with the word stress patterns represented using bubbles (see Figure 2 below). Learners work in partners to write each vocabulary word into the corresponding square on the grid resulting in words being grouped according to their stress pattern. Learners then read the words from their grid aloud, paying attention to the accuracy of their grid.

O	O o
O o o	o O o

Figure 2: Word Stress Grid

4. Extension
- Teacher introduces a short dialogue, with options for learners to complete it using words from the vocabulary list. Learners then form two lines facing each other with each line taking on a role in the dialogue. As learners complete the dialogue, one of the lines shifts over so that everyone has a new partner. This is repeated several times.

Teacher moves up and down the lines of learners, monitoring for use of word stress and providing guidance and feedback as needed.

- Learners use large and small dots to mark word stress on important multisyllabic words from a current story they are reading. They practice reading the story aloud by themselves using the dots to remind them of the word stress, then retell the story from memory to a partner, using as many of the stressed words as possible.

Sentence Stress

As discussed in regard to word stress above, the ability to use stress appropriately in spoken English plays a large role in meaningful communication. Moving beyond the word level, sentence stress is equally as important, serving as a mechanism through which English speakers draw the listener's attention to the words in an utterance that provide the most meaning. Speakers do this by lengthening stressed syllables in important words while reducing syllables in function words (e.g. articles, auxiliary verbs, prepositions). Sentence stress, combined with word stress, is what provides English with its rhythm.

Learners whose first language has a stress pattern in which all syllables in an utterance are expressed with more or less equal stress tend to use a similar pattern when speaking English (Celce-Murcia, et. al., 2010). This lack of appropriate sentence stress can cause communication breakdowns because when listening to English speech, native English speakers subconsciously pay attention to the strong (stressed) words in order to make meaning.

When teaching sentence stress to learners, it is important to both teach how to stress the important words in an utterance, and destress, or reduce, the function words (Hahn, 2004). For literacy-level learners, this may take the form of using chants, movement, or visual markers to indicate the sentence stress in utterances. Gilbert (2014) recommends teaching features such as sentence stress through the use of dialogues and template sentences. Integrating sentence stress awareness and practice into the dialogues and phrases that literacy-level learners are already working on in class provides an explicit context for stress patterns, and a template that learners can draw from later to inform the rhythm of their speech.

Sentence Stress Activities

1. Listening & Awareness

- Teacher reads a simple dialogue aloud to the class several times. Teacher raises and lowers their hand to show the variation in stress as they say each line.
- Teacher goes line by line through the dialogue. After each line, learners indicate the most important words. Teacher underlines those words. Teacher reads dialogue again, calling attention to the stress placed on the important words. Teacher uses hand gestures and her voice to demonstrate that the function words are reduced resulting in words such as “does it” sounding like a single word, *duzɪt*.

2. Control

- Learners repeat each line of the dialogue after the teacher, clapping, tapping the table, or nodding heads on the stressed words and reducing the unstressed words. Teacher speeds up the dialogue as learners grow more comfortable.
- Teacher takes on the role of one side of the dialogue as the class takes the other, continuing to make movements for stressed words. Reverse roles and repeat the dialogue.

3. Practice

- Teacher says a sentence from the dialogue aloud, replacing the syllables with sounds (e.g. “Where are you going?” “LA lala LA la?”). Learners call out the line from the dialogue that matches the pattern.
- Learners work in small groups to put in order sentence strips that have the lines of the dialogue written on them.
- Teacher then passes out cards with large and small dots representing the syllables in each sentence. Learners match the cards with the sentence strips according to the pattern.

4. Extension

- Using the sentence strips and pronunciation pattern cards from the previous activity as a guide, learners act out the dialogue from the previous activity, first in pairs then in front of the class. Teacher monitors and gives feedback on the use of sentence stress.
- Teacher puts learners into pairs and assigns each partner a role (e.g. customer/clerk, manager/employee, etc.). The teacher calls out a situation (e.g. “You can’t find the red onions in the store”) and the learners roleplay the situation.

CONCLUSION

Teaching literacy-level learners can be a challenging but highly rewarding task. Learners at all levels benefit from explicit and structured pronunciation instruction, but for literacy-level learners it is absolutely critical that pronunciation is included in regular classroom instruction. With a minimal amount of preparation, any literacy-level lesson can include an element of pronunciation instruction that will lead to increased intelligibility, confidence, and more positive interactions outside of the EL classroom. As teachers, it is vital that we balance an open and welcoming classroom environment with systematic, research-based pronunciation instruction. As Morley (1991) states, not attending to a student’s pronunciation needs is “an abrogation of professional responsibility” (p. 489).

Note

Teaching demonstration videos featuring pronunciation instruction in literacy level classes on the areas of voice quality settings, word stress, and sentence stress can be found on the MN ABE Professional Development Youtube channel under the “Pronunciation Instruction” playlist.

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‘Equality of Chances’? Interpreting PIAAC Results on Perceived Political Efficacy, Social Trust and Volunteering as Need for Political Literacy

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the theoretically and empirically addressed question of whether workforce literacy strategies in research and policies may tend to exclude relevant fields of literacy, which have emancipatory chances for participants, but which regularly fail to include low qualified or literate adults (Hufer, 2013), namely the area of basic civic education or political literacy. First, a theoretical discussion makes use of recent publications. The relevance of basic civic education will be discussed using contemporary theories, which point at a crisis of democracy and explain this by the spread of income and capital (Piketty, 2014) and its legitimization (Rosanvallon, 2013). Further detail is provided by using Rosanvallon’s criticism of the term ‘equality of chances’. The everyday unfairness, covered by the narrative of equal chances, leads to peoples’ disengagement from reciprocal relations and disintegration of solidarity within a society. This theoretical approach will then be supplemented by empirical data. The empirical research question is: Do adults with low literacy skills agree less often on feelings of political efficacy and social trust than adults with high literacy skills? Do they engage less often in volunteering than adults with high literacy skills? This is based the PIAAC 2012 dataset which relates literacy on the one hand with variables of political efficacy, social trust and volunteering on the other hand. Results will be compared with volunteer and youth surveys. Furthermore, the connection of a “Nouvelle Droite” (contemporary right-wing populism) and

peoples' low feelings of political efficacy will be reflected in order to refute the stereotype that marginalized groups automatically become voters of right-wing populists.

INTRODUCTION

National strategies for literacy¹ have often been launched as an answer to large-scale assessments, like the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) or the German Level-One Survey (LEO). The strategies focus on employment and employability, workplace and family literacy.

Literacy is a value on its own, without needing legitimization via employability. Indeed, the Austrian scientist Ribolits points out that literacy is relevant for humanistic reasons and also potentially enables people to act in a non-alienated, emancipated way (Ribolits, 2009). The economic argument, however, is not the only one driving national strategies for literacy. As the French economist Thomas Piketty (2014) and the French philosopher Pierre Rosanvallon (2013) discuss (see below), societies are losing their cohesion. Financial and social inequalities and the narrative of equal chances may lead to the instability of democracies. By not addressing countries as economies but as democracies, the attention shifts remarkably.

Therefore this article discusses what empirical data tell us about political and social participation among low and highly literate adults. Thus it fuels the discussion whether national strategies for literacy should have a broader approach, including both employability and citizenship as their aim, instead of prioritizing employment.

This analysis will draw on variables about literacy and *political efficacy*² from the current PIAAC survey (Rammstedt, 2013). Feelings of *political efficacy* are not the same as real *political participation*, but they correlate (see below). Further indicators will be *social trust* and *volunteering*.

The literacy scale has been divided into *low* literacy competence, defined here as 'below 225 points on the PIAAC scale', which equals PIAAC level one and below – and *high* literacy competence, defined as 'above 375 points on the PIAAC scale', which equals PIAAC level four and above. The socio-demographic composition of the subgroup (e.g. migrants) differs by country, but the majorities are native (EU High Level Report, 2012). The first PIAAC round data have been used (all countries' datasets, data collection from 2012).

While the *graphs* show all results, the *interpretation* of results in this article only refers to statistically significant differences. Because of the large sample even small differences of a few percent points are significant in PIAAC. Controlling

¹ In this case we understand literacy as literacy competence in terms of the Programme of the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), because we want to use PIAAC data for the analysis. Our reflection of the controversy on literacy relies especially on the New Literacy Studies, see Grotlüschen, Kretschmann, Quante-Brandt, and Wolf (2011), Grotlüschen & Riekman, 2012.

² See below for the theoretical concept of political efficacy and for the PIAAC theoretical framework.

for sociodemographics and performance variables like education and employment would definitely reduce the correlation and show how strong the *influence* of *literacy* is onto *political efficacy*, *social trust* or *volunteering* - if the influences of education and others are kept aside (which would be a *causal relation* that would require strong theoretical background – and which obviously is too linear to meet the reality).

But this is not the research question here – the question is to describe the *low-literate population* in contrast to high-literate adults with literacy being a result of formal education as well as literacy practices and many other factors.

The reason to crosstabulate *literacy* instead of *formal education* (as it is reported in regular surveys on volunteering and youth, see below) is that the current political attention focuses low-literate adults and not low formally educated adults. Thus it makes sense to use the literacy variable even if it has a high correlation with education.

It was decided to fully report all countries' results in the graphs but focus on three special countries in the interpretation. The reason is twofold. On the one hand, an interpretation needs sound knowledge about the political system and its recent development which would take much longer discussion and explanation than is provided here. On the other hand, the three countries in focus experienced shifts to the right wing in their political landscape shortly after the PIAAC data collection and the shifts were discussed in mass media with high concern. Meanwhile, many other countries face the same problem (or always had before). But this was not yet clear when this article was computed and the shifts now take with more and more distance to the year of data collection (2012). Thus, three countries are selected here: *Germany* newly saw right-wing populism in the streets as well as a new political party quite some time before the borders were open for refugees in September 2015. *France* had strong Front National results in regional elections in December 2015. *Poland* voted for a nationalist government in October 2015.

Still, one of the reasons why this analysis was carried out, lies in a German funding scheme that was applied to improve literacy, and which was mostly focusing workplace literacy and ignored a need for political or citizenship literacy.

WORKFORCE LITERACY PROGRAMS VERSUS BASIC CIVIC EDUCATION: STARTING FROM THE GERMAN CASE

Via the Level-One Survey (LEO), published in 2011, it became clear that more than seven million German adults (145% of the adult population aged 18-64) read and write on a level that equates the international UNESCO definition of functional illiteracy (Grotlüschen & Riekmann 2012). Follow-up programs funded by the federal ministry of education, the federal Laender and the European commission prioritize literacy programs addressing the workforce and their needs in the workplace, but not political literacy.

The international PIAAC survey confirmed the results: According to PIAAC, 17.5% of German adults aged 16-64 belong to reading literacy competence level I and below, the international average being 15.5% (OECD,

2013; Rammstedt, 2013). The description of this level does not equal the LEO descriptions, so this subpopulation should not be called functionally illiterate – for this article we will consider this subpopulation as adults with low literacy skills. Still, there are substantial concerns about this group, and these concerns drive the development of national strategies and educational programs to improve adult literacy.

This article focuses on the relevance of basic civic education (or political literacy) for adults with low literacy skills, whether they are excluded from political participation and how the theoretical explanations for differences in political and social participation of population subgroups have developed. Therefore the research question is: **Do adults with low literacy skills agree less often on feelings of *political efficacy* and *social trust* than adults with high literacy skills? Do they engage less often in *volunteering* than adults with high literacy skills?**

If so, it may be discussed whether low-literate adults' higher agreements to feelings of political efficacy and engagement were desirable (actually political efficacy can be performed by joining extremist groups as well which is not desirable from the standpoint of democratic states). It is also relevant to take into consideration whether national literacy strategies then also should focus on the theoretical and practical improvement of basic civic education.³

To answer these questions, the following sections will analyse recent theoretical approaches which give the three variables a broader sense and meaning. The approaches do not follow the rational-choice approach, partly underlying the PIAAC theoretical framework (OECD, 2011), but substantially exceed the idea of a *homo economicus*. We prefer a recent French philosophers' discussion of a *homo reciprocans* (see below, Rosanvallon, 2013).

ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES (PIKETTY) AND THEIR IDEOLOGICAL LEGITIMIZATION VIA THE NARRATIVE OF EQUAL CHANCES (ROSANVALLON)

The theoretical relation of (high and low literate) subpopulations and political participation is complex. That literacy highly correlates with education and socio-economic status (OECD, 2013). While theory on the relation of literacy and political participation is rare, theory on the relation of social class and political participation exists. Among other things, political participation aims at distributing goods and income, and it aims at getting a chance to move upward in the social hierarchy. Equality of distribution and equality of chances are underlying narratives. Non-participation may be understood as not believing anymore in the narratives. This is to be discussed here.

³ A rather well known construct can be seen in the international approach of basic, critical political education which relies on Oskar Negt's notion of societal competences Zeuner (2013). This approach led to an international project under the leadership of Christine Zeuner (Dvorak, Zeuner & Franke, 2005). So far, the relationship between Basic Education (Grund-Bildung) and Basic Competence (Grund-Kompetenz) seems rather unclear.

Equality of distribution (Piketty)

Current assumptions about the situation of economies and societies – especially in the U.S.A. and France – are strongly influenced the most recent publications in political sciences and economics. Highly relevant discussions have followed the publication of “Capital in the 21st Century” by French economist Thomas Piketty (Kaufmann & Stützel, 2015; Piketty, 2014). Piketty analysed tax data over two centuries and concluded: Firstly, capital grows faster than income – his famous formula “ $r > g$ ” (revenue exceeds growth) receives some criticism, especially because of the database. Although interesting, this first conclusion is not so relevant for this article, so I do not discuss it further.

Secondly, Piketty concludes that the economic gaps in France and the US have increased since the 1980s, after having decreased for roughly 200 years because of revolutions, democratic developments, war and socio-political change. Piketty suggests global tax policies as well as higher taxation of the richest sections of societies (Kaufmann & Stützel, 2015). His core focus is the *equality of distribution*, pointing at financial and economical inequalities.

While Piketty has been discussed in the US since 2014, he was known much earlier in France for his analyses. The trade-unionist and scientist at the Collège de France, Pierre Rosanvallon, uses Piketty’s results as a starting point for his theoretical approach “Society of Equals” (Rosanvallon, 2013).

Equality of chances (Rosanvallon)

Rosanvallon uses the economical (*in)equality of distribution* and asks about the legitimization of this kind of (in)equality in modern societies. He asks about the assumptions about communities and relations which allow inequality to be understood as fair. A core narrative in modern societies seems to be the idea of *equality of chances*. This narrative assumes that economic distribution is fair, as long as all members of a society have the same chance to climb the socioeconomic ladder by relying on their own performance and thus qualify for the income they receive.

According to Rosanvallon, the model has three consequences (2013, p. 303-304):

Firstly, the idea of equality of chances *delegitimizes* instruments that rearrange economic possessions such as *taxes, social insurances and social benefits*. Thus, unsuccessful individuals are interpreted as responsible for their lack of success and income (blaming the victim), while at the same time non-meritocratic, structural effects and exclusions from labour markets or respected societal positions become invisible.

Secondly, the idea of equality of chances has *no upper limit* for an annual income that can legitimately be received because of high performance. This may even lead to accepting spectacular forms of income, as long as it is taken for granted that the income relates to individual performance (Rosanvallon, 2013, p. 304). Even CEO incomes that sometimes exceed more than two hundred

times the income of an average employee (cf. Economic Policy Institute, 2015)⁴ seem to be legitimate in this narrative.

The third aspect is the *lower limit* of what people need to be able to live in a society. Charity and humanity become the legitimization of defining the minimum social benefit, but not solidarity among members of a states' population (ib., p. 304). This also means that social benefits can always be lowered or cut – and those who receive them feel ashamed about their status.

Equality of chances is an idea and a narrative, but the real distributions follow many other aspects, like family background and social heritage.⁵ The consequences of this non-fulfilment of the narrative lead to *dismissed reciprocity* (2013, p. 325), which I will understand here as *disengagement from solidarity*.

The reason for this disengagement is – according to Rosanvallon – the assumption that balanced participation on the one hand and the common refusal of free-riding are no longer the moral bases of the majority in contemporary societies. In exaggerated terms, upper, middle and lower classes would each have their own reasons to disengage by thinking the others do not show solidarity anymore:

- Celebrities and the super rich face the temptation to quit their country and pay tax in other (cheaper) areas of the world, if they do not feel they belong to their country anymore.
- Recipients of benefits experience disrespect and disdain (Butterwegge, 2015) of their status, instead of receiving solidarity from others towards their social group and ask themselves whether they would do better to adapt to the stereotypes that are told about them and in fact avoid controls and become deviant.
- Middle classes wonder whether they are the only ones sticking to the rules between those who might be avoiding taxation and those they assume to receive more benefits than they should. In case middle classes then fight back, their aims are to attack political and economic elites and as well as refugees or migrants.

The political consequences of low solidarity and reciprocity may well fuel the rise of populism as Rosanvallon states:

In sociological terms, the crisis of reciprocity is reflected in the malaise of the middle and working classes. Members of these groups who are employed see themselves as doubly penalized: their situations are not bad enough to receive the benefits of the welfare state, yet they are not wealthy enough to enjoy the fiscal and other advantages available to the rich. Politically, their resentment has fueled the rise of the extreme right in Europe. Extreme right-

⁴ www.epi.org/publication/top-ceos-make-300-times-more-than-workers-pay-growth-surpasses-market-gains-and-the-rest-of-the-0-1-percent/

⁵ Early studies show that the core selection mechanism in the German educational system, the transition to different school types after grade 4, is much more influenced by parents' socioeconomic status than by the performance of the student (Lehmann, Peek & Gänssfuß, 1997).

wing parties have capitalized on frustrations due to the diffuse feeling that reciprocity has broken down, directing their fire at both the privileged elite and immigrants said to be taking advantage of the taxpayers' generosity (Rosanvallon, 2013, p. 275).

This line-up of three social classes struggling with each other for solidarity and distribution of chances and economic goods is not yet complete. According to Jacques Rancière's "Disagreement" (Rancière, 2002), there are always groups that do not even have the opportunity to negotiate, as they are not recognized as members of society. Rancière points at the fact that politics does not happen among those who sit at the table, but only when poor (2002, p. 26), illegitimate groups start claiming their rights. He states that it is especially the poor who benefit from politics (whether precarious workers, benefit recipients, teenage parents, workers in monotonous jobs or retired people who cannot live from their pension alone).

Rancière concludes that this is why poverty has been denied by dominant, prevailing groups for centuries (2002, p. 27). Politics start to happen when *the part that has no part (la part de sans-part)* finds their names and language, claims their part⁶ and step by step gets recognized as a legitimate part of society and solidarity. Silke Schreiber-Barsch used this approach with regard to participation in adult education (Schreiber-Barsch, 2009). Earlier works by Rancière focus on citizenship (1992/2007) and have been used by Vandenaabeele, Reyskens & Wildemeersch to challenge mainstream concepts of active citizenship and lifelong learning (2011, p. 193).

SOCIOPOLITICAL DISENGAGEMENT: PIAAC VARIABLES

Adults on PIAAC competence level I and below (adults with low literacy skills or low-literate adults) are the focus of national literacy strategies. To describe them and their sociopolitical engagement or disengagement, it is better to use literacy variables than formal education or socio-economic status for two reasons: First, formal education does not necessarily guarantee sufficient literacy competences throughout the adult lifespan. Second, adults without formal education can easily have a good literacy proficiency, especially in reading.⁷

⁶ When middle classes start claiming that refugee homes should not be built in their neighborhood, the lack of a voice that would be heard by powerful groups becomes clear. Refugees' possibilities to make a claim are not verbal – they consist of self-vulnerating actions like starting fires in their own camps, going on hunger strikes, risking dangerous flight routes and vulnerating practices like stitching up ones' own lips.

⁷ Roughly 80% of those considered to perform on a level called functional illiteracy hold a school qualification. The definition of functional illiteracy corresponds with UNESCO-Definitions: "A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development" (sources and discussion: Grottlüschen et al. (2011)).

Thus, we use literacy (as defined in the narrow way according to international large-scale assessments like PIAAC) in order to look closer at the subpopulation which is addressed by the "Literacy Decade" (2015-2025) in Germany.

Based on the latest Shell Youth Survey (Albert, Hurrelmann & Quenzel 2015), we assume that the tendency to disengage from a solidaritarian society may be higher for low-literate adults than for high-literate adults. This is specified as:

- (1) low feelings of "political efficacy"
- (2) low expression of "social trust" and therefore
- (3) less voluntary work than high-literate groups.

All three aspects (political and social engagement or disengagement and consequently high or low readiness for volunteering) operationalize the theories discussed above. But we do not focus on lower, middle or upper classes: This article focuses on literacy, not class (even if both correlate).

The variables used in PIAAC need some specification. PIAAC is an economic survey based on human-capital and rational-choice theories. The latter seem to be the theoretical base to the variables political efficacy and social trust, even if the theoretical framework only mentions very few aspects of the theoretical discussion underlying the variables.⁸ Literacy and Education is said to predict economic outcomes as well as wider benefits on all sections of life (OECD, 2011, p. 46).

The assumptions about political efficacy and social trust rely on the idea of rational choices (*homo oeconomicus*), which mean humans vote or act socially as long as they think this makes sense because either it has an effect (political efficacy) or social acts will be reciprocated by others (social trust). Rational choice theories have often been criticized, mostly because they cannot explain altruism, friendship, morals, co-operation or solidarity in larger, functionally differentiated societies. Contemporary criticism comes from Pierre Rosanvallon, who prefers the idea of a *homo reciprocans* (2013, p. 319-320), who belongs to others and does not only individually or cognitively make rational decisions. In line with Rosanvallon, I prefer to interpret the PIAAC variables and results from the theoretical standpoint of reciprocal relations which make a society relevant for its members.

Rosanvallon also clarifies his position by stating that a lack of social cohesion allows the Nouvelle Droite (contemporary right-wing populism) to expand and use the feelings of disengagement for introducing their egoistic ideology.

The variables therefore have a connection with each other and can be read as indicators giving information about the democratic stability of societies and the dangers of right-wing populists making use of social instability.

I will now check the variables with the PIAAC dataset and compare international and intra-national results. Data have been computed because of a

⁸ The framework then points at the work by Tom Schuller and Richard Desjardin's who, under the idea of rational choice approaches, stand for the approach of Wider Benefits of Learning.

Thematic Report “Adults with Low Skills,” which was initiated by the OECD and has recently been published as OECD Education Working Paper 131 (Grotlischen, Mallows, Reder, Sabatini 2016). All countries have been included and all computations have been carried out with weighted datasets and plausible values, using the PIAAC repst module for the Stata software (designed by Francois Keslair, OECD). The English version of the questions reads as follows:

- Volunteering: “In the last 12 months, how often, if at all, did you do voluntary work, including unpaid work for a charity, political party, trade union or other non-profit organization?”⁹
- Political Efficacy: “People like me don't have any say about what the government does.”¹⁰
- Social Trust: “There are only a few people you can trust completely.”¹¹

The analysis has been carried out by country and by literacy level. The results of the OECD partners Cyprus and Russia are shown in the graphs but will not be interpreted. Interpretation focuses on the OECD countries.

FINDINGS BY COUNTRY AND LITERACY LEVEL

The analysis tries to describe the subpopulations of low-literate adults compared to high-literate adults and specified by country. This does *not* mean literacy is the cause for political efficacy, social trust or volunteering. The question is how people with low literacy skills act and feel in their societies and how this differs from high-literate adults. Further discussion may take place and clarify whether the gaps should be seen as a reason for offering possibilities for political and social participation for them, including adult education.

Findings and Discussion: Adults performing at literacy level I and below assume they have little political efficacy

Political Efficacy has to be understood as one's own feeling of having the capacity to understand politics enough to participate, and as the feeling of responsiveness of governments. The question has been operationalized negatively, asking about a lack of influence on governments. Critics state this might be a narrow definition of politics, as it is reduced to governments, political

⁹ I_Q 05f About yourself - Cultural engagement - Voluntary work for non-profit organizations. Answers: Never, Less than once a month, Less than once a week but at least once a month, At least once a week but not every day, Every day.

¹⁰ IQ06a About yourself – Political efficacy – No influence on the government, Answers: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree.

¹¹ IQ 07a About yourself – Social trust – Trust only few people, Answers: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree. The Variable “IQ 07b About yourself – Social trust – Other people take advantage of me” has not been used here, because it is part of a construct made of two variables (IQ07a , IQ07b), which tests social trust. As the others are not constructs but merely single variables (IQ05, IQ06) it felt fairer to use one variable each and not two for social trust, one for political efficacy and one for volunteering.

institutions and elections, while many other expressions of political activities – like demonstrations, petitions, ecological awareness, struggle against class, gender and race inequalities are left out of this definition.

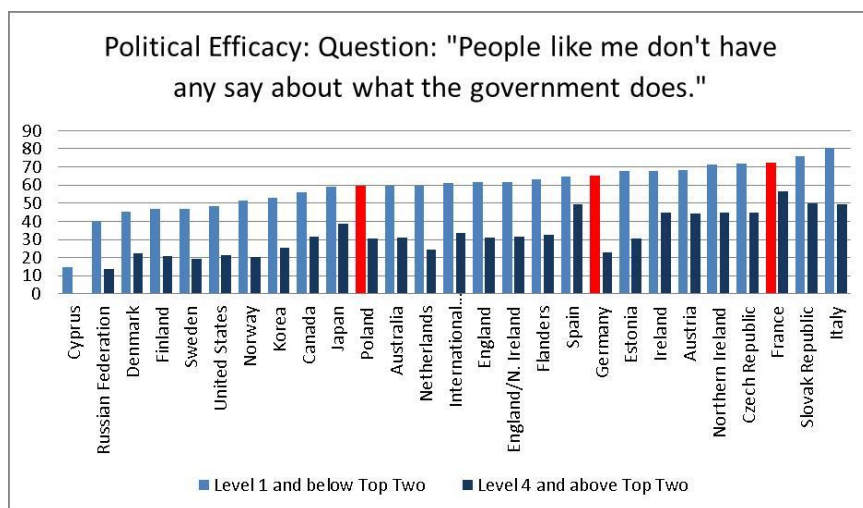


Figure 1: Political Efficacy (Top Two Negative Answers) by Literacy Levels and Country (Source: PIAAC, 2012 data).

Roughly two thirds of the German population at or below literacy Level I (65%) assume not to be able to influence their government. The gap between low and high-literate adults (23%) is rather large (more than 40 percentage points) and larger than the gaps of all other countries.

A closer look at Poland and France, two large but historically very different neighboring countries, shows interesting differences. While Germany has a large gap in 2012 (when the data was gathered), the northeastern neighbor Poland finds better feelings of political efficacy in the low subpopulation (59%) and worse for high-literate adults (31%). Poland changed their economic system to capitalism and their government to a democracy in an ongoing process in the 1980s. In 2016, a nationalist government took over, but the data represent the situation in 2012.

Geographically on the southwestern side, France faces nearly three quarters of low-literates agreeing to the statement of feeling politically ineffective (73%). More striking, however, is the group of roughly 56% of the high-literate adults feeling disengaged from their government, this figure being the highest of all participating countries in 2012. Neither French conservative nor French socialist governmental actions seem to convince the contemporary French population of their political efficacy: Politics obviously disconnects with voters.

The international results are robust and confirm the Mathew Effect (Merton 1968), which is known for *formal education*, holding true for *literacy competence* as well. All countries' low-literate populations report lower political efficacies than the high-literate adults. These data do not mean low-literate adults are to be

blamed for. The explanation by German political scientist Christoph Butterwege seems more convincing: precarious groups and lower classes vote less often than others. So politicians, who depend on voters, organize their activities towards middle classes (Butterwege, 2015). Therefore, the most precarious groups actually do not receive any response from their politicians, and thus the statement of being politically ineffective is simply true. This does not mean low-literate adults were politically uninterested; they still may protest or enjoy satirical shows. And they also may feel understood by nationalist and populist agitators – which is an expression of political thoughts and wills as well, even if it has nothing in common with democracy, solidarity or social cohesion.

Findings and Discussion: Adults performing at literacy level I and below express low social trust

Social trust is – for this analysis – an indicator representing the social cohesion of societies, as Rosanvallon claims. The question of whether to trust not only one’s government but also other members of society is – as explained above – most important for legitimizing monetary distributions within these societies. In case middle classes suspect upper classes of avoiding taxation and lower classes of illegally receiving more benefits than they have a legal right to, the middle classes feel exploited by others who do not stick to the rules. This would increase the tendency of social disengagement and a loss of solidarity.

Compared to other countries, Germany can build upon a rather good structure of social trust. Real solidarity seems to be most widespread in the Nordic countries, with the lowest values for mistrust for both high and low-literate adults.

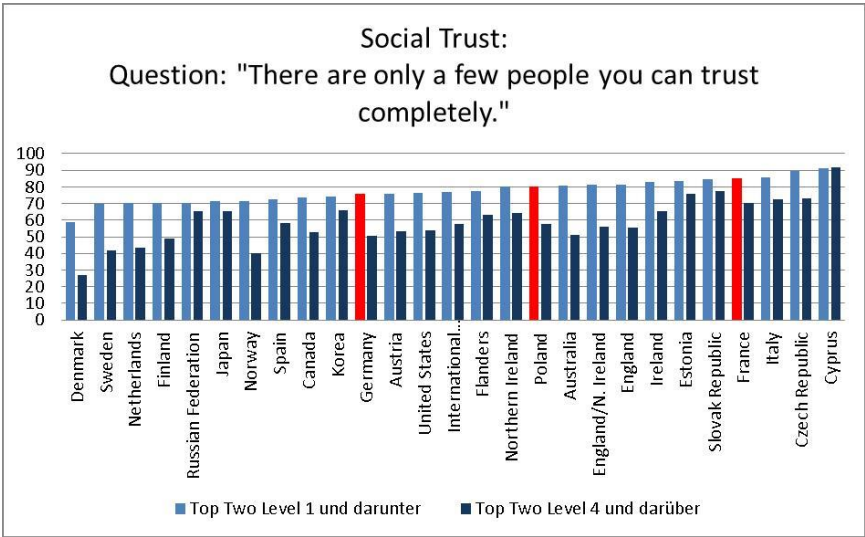


Figure 2: Social Trust (Top Two Negative Answers) by Literacy Level and Country (Source: PIAAC 2012 data).

The international comparison shows again that Germany has quite a large gap between high and low-literate subpopulations and their feelings of social trust (25 percentage points). However, in contrast to the other Nordic countries, Norway has the largest gap, with 30 percentage points. This surprising position in the *international* comparison could perhaps be explained by the recent extreme right terrorist act (Utoya, 2011), but this does not explain the large gap *within* Norwegian society.

Some 80 percent of low-literate Polish adults express social mistrust. This is higher than in Germany (76%) but lower than in France (85%).¹² Rosanvallon, who explained his theories on a lack of social cohesion based on French and American history, can thus be confirmed for the case of France. The U.S.A. in the year 2012 does not show severe difficulties regarding social trust (76% low-literate adults vs. 53% high-literate adults), but still a considerable number of low-literate adults seem to disconnect with their society. This may have become much worse in the past four years since the data were collected.

Intra-national gaps are in all cases much larger than the international differences. This confirms earlier findings from PIAAC round 1 (OECD, 2013; Grotlüschen, Mallows, Reder, & Sabatini, 2016) and may be due to the economical similarities of the countries.

Findings and Discussion: Adults performing at literacy level I and below participate less in volunteering

Low feelings of social trust and political efficacy will be mirrored in lesser engagement for the society and community. It can be assumed that low-literate adults participate less often in non-governmental, non-profit organizations.

It is important to keep in mind that inclusion and exclusion play a role here. Lower formal education or a migration background correlates with low integration in social organizations (Albert, Hurrelmann & Quenzel, 2015). Literacy is not necessarily the most relevant factor. We also cannot conclude that low-literate adults are responsible for less volunteering, as they are sometimes smoothly excluded from non-profit organizations by dominant, well-educated groups.

Furthermore, the welfare regime of the economies and societies respectively is a relevant factor. The question as to whether social security is guaranteed by social law and transfer, or whether it has to be provided by the citizens themselves, does have an impact on the readiness to participate in voluntary work and engage for others in need.

In fact, the two extremes, the traditionally neo-liberal, Anglo-American states, with their charity approach on the one hand, and the sociodemocratic Nordic countries, with guaranteed social welfare on the other can be found side by side in the higher ranks of the table. Roughly two thirds of low-literate adults state that they never volunteer (Norway: 62%, U.S.A.: 64%), or looked at the other way around, roughly one third do participate in voluntary work. At the other end of the scale, we find France (86%) and Poland (87%), indicating that

¹² All differences are statistically significant.

only some 13 or 14% of their low-literate populations get in touch with voluntary activities.

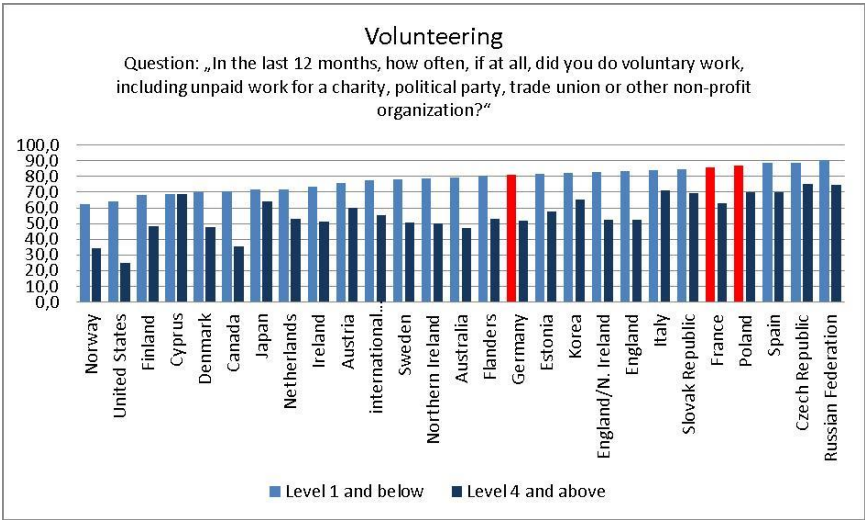


Figure 3: Volunteering (Answer: Never) by Literacy Level and Country (Source: PIAAC 2012 data). Differences between Germany and Poland/France are significant. Differences between Poland and France are not significant.

Of Germany’s low-literate adults, some 81% state that they never volunteered, compared to high-literate adults, where about half of the group (52%) never entered non-profit organizations. The mechanisms of self-exclusion and external exclusion are not only relevant with regard to employment but also in non-profit organizations, as well as in global and local community activities. The findings are robust across countries.

Adults performing at level IV and above are most often found volunteering in the US, Norway, Canada, Australia, Denmark and Finland. We assume that Anglo-American societies with a more neoliberal tradition, who give responsibility for social aid to charity and volunteering structures, mix in the ranking with more egalitarian sociodemocratic welfare regimes, which offer public services (and therefore need less volunteering) but also face less social exclusion in their non-profit organizations. The findings for the level I and below subpopulations and the level IV and above subpopulations are quite similar to each other.

**FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH REGARD TO CONTEMPORARY
RIGHT-WING POPULISM**

Calls for more civic education always become louder when populist, xenophobic and similar groups and parties are founded or elected. Civic education – especially for adults - cannot solve these problems alone, but it is still a relevant factor for prevention and for throwing light onto simplifying

populist mechanisms and worldviews. Faced with the increasingly louder voice of nationalism in the political arena, this would seem to be quite necessary these days.

However, by way of an explanation for nationalism and right-wing world views, often a special pattern is reproduced, claiming that economic losers, high unemployment, lack of perspectives for youth, low education and feelings of exclusion would lead to xenophobia (Heitmeyer, 2002). These explanations are tempting, but they ignore the fact that populists who act willingly to spread their right-wing ideology and try to recruit members for their movement or parties from such socioeconomic losers are needed. Thus, Heitmeyer's unpolitical interpretation of neofascist activities in Germany has been fundamentally criticized (Dierbach, 2010).

Sociological indicators, like an increasing divide between incomes, as well as the delegitimization of social transfers, which are shown above, can only be interpreted as the soil where neofascist or populist, xenophobic or nationalist seeds can grow. It always needs people who willingly want to spread their right-wing ideology. Indeed, socially losing groups may equally feel attracted to left-wing approaches like Syriza or Podemos, who may listen to their needs and bring them to the political arena. That is the reason why political or civic education can be successful.

Furthermore, the Leipzig Surveys on the *economic middle classes* and the *political centre* (Decker et al., 2016) point at the fact that right-wing populism becomes dangerous *when* and *because* it is accepted by the middle and center of societies.

CONCLUSIONS: RELEVANCE OF POLITICAL LITERACY AND BASIC CIVIC EDUCATION?

Conclusions here rely on two aspects of the article. The *theoretical* discussion informs about the mechanisms of material spread of income (Piketty) and its legitimization (Rosanvallon) in current societies – and their impact on different classes within the social distribution. The *empirical* results about adults and their feeling of *political efficacy* and *social trust* as well as their participation opportunities in *voluntary activities* show large gaps between low-literate and high literate adults in all countries.

The question as to whether all social classes can influence their societies' politics and whether governments and societies can rely on a certain degree of social cohesion and solidarity, seems highly relevant in times of refugees and migrants coming to Europe or at least trying to do so. Disengagement and decreasing solidarity, as Rosanvallon states, develop because of the feeling of having too little influence on the government. The narrative of equal chances delegitimizes taxation and social benefit and leads to conflicts regarding the spread of income and capital. Each social class can have the feeling that the other social classes take too much out of the commons and give back too little:

- At the top end of the social hierarchy, spectacular cases of tax avoidance, extreme CEO incomes and corruption are reported.

- Those who receive social benefit are shamed (by governments!) as unemployed *lazybones*¹³ or migrants only *simulating their will to integrate*¹⁴ into German society.
- Parts of the middle classes try to keep together what they understand as theirs, protecting it against others by voting for populist parties and fighting against elites and migrants.

The core question is whether these activities are carried out by a few people (and just made visible via mass media) within a solidarity society, or whether these few are already the majority. The parts of a society who agree to fund social benefits through their taxes are rather relevant for welfare regimes. The findings about political efficacy, social trust and volunteering thus can be read as indicators, pointing at the quality of social cohesion and solidarity in western societies.

For the question of literacy and its correlation with political efficacy, social trust and volunteering, the findings confirm the thesis that all three indicators show lower results for subpopulations with low literacy skills. This is confirmed by qualitative research recently carried out in Germany with low-literate adults (cf. Pape, 2011). This situation is dissatisfying for democratic societies with a tax-paid social welfare system. But it is also dissatisfying because the results can be interpreted as rather fewer possibilities for political participation for low-literate adults. Feelings of political efficacy correlate with taking political action (both in conventional ways, like voting, as well as in unorthodox ways, like the blockading of crossroads or public areas), as the political scientist Angelika Vetter shows (1998, p. 34 et seqq.). Relatively small parameter values for political efficacy – which can be shown for low-literate adults in all participating OECD countries – indicate restricted possibilities for political participation.

This brings us back to the question asked at the beginning of this paper: if less participation in employment and work life, a higher risk of exclusion from the labor market, and low incomes in menial jobs are a reason to start programs on workforce literacy, shouldn't the findings of this analysis lead to a discussion on political literacy? Shouldn't the terms (political literacy, civic education, basic civic education) be discussed and didactical approaches be offered?

Apart from this sociological reason for political literacy provision, several scholars claim for an emancipatory approach anyway (cf. Ribolits, 2009, p. 175 et seqq.) – without needing any statistical base for this, the starting point is normative, not empirically driven. The idea is that basic education cannot only help people *adapt* to social realities, but also has to make an effort to teach people

¹³ Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (social democrats) claimed in 2001 that job agencies should show more strictness against those unemployed who are unwilling to work. The tabloid press (BILD) quotes him stating “There is no right to laziness in our society”.

¹⁴ Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel (social democrats) stated at a press conference in April 2016 concerning the new immigration law (SZ 15.4.2016) that Germany would not want “Integration simulators” (“Integrationssimulanten”); he meant refugees who would only pretend they would want to integrate.

to understand and *change* the situation. Mere adaptation would lead to defensive learning, as German learning theorist Klaus Holzkamp states (1993), which appears in combination with unreflected *learning reluctancies* (Lernwiderstände, Faulstich, & Bayer, 2006). On the other hand, expansive learning (Holzkamp, 1993) aims at an expansion of one's own sovereignty, both in material as well as in immaterial terms.

This would lead to adults who learn to clarify their interests, claim them and expand the areas where they can decide according to their values, interests and needs. This may be decisions about work and leisure time, for and against starting a family, long-term job security, knowledge of trade unions, tariffs and rights as workers, better income and affordable housing – all these aspects being more or less material improvements of one's life. But expansive learning may also lead to better participation and embeddedness in political structures, in non-profit organizations, in better quality of friendships and personal relations as well as better understanding of contemporary aspects of life by reading weblogs or newspapers – just to name some examples for immaterial outcomes of expansive learning, especially with regard to political literacy.

Thus it is from both perspectives (sociological and emancipatory) quite relevant to offer political literacy and workforce literacy side by side, instead of giving one of them full attention and neglecting the other. But it will be necessary to develop didactical settings for civic education that really attract low-literate adults by allowing them to clarify their interests and needs and to articulate them – and this may include the deconstruction of the narrative of equal chances – and find legitimizations for solidarity which understand and scrutinize the dominant neo-liberal ideology.

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Taking Our Seat at the Table: Why the Expertise of LESLLA Educators is Needed in the Health Literacy Field

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ABSTRACT

In the changing context of migration, the LESLLA field remains an untapped resource in efforts to address health literacy disparities among underserved immigrant populations, including those with limited schooling and literacy skills, as well as other historically hard-to-reach populations, such as immigrant adults without legal documentation and elderly immigrant adults. Despite persistent links between low literacy and poor health outcomes (Sudore & Schillinger, 2009), there are almost no routes for collaboration between the LESLLA field and public health, even though the literacy classroom represents an ideal context for reaching at-risk immigrant communities. This article, structured as a conversation about health literacy, discusses a range of questions and action-steps that the LESLLA field must consider to ensure that the LESLLA learner population does not remain a neglected cause in the health literacy field.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Health has been a mainstay in adult English language learner instruction for many decades, certainly in the U.S. since the days of competency-based education in the 1970's, and more recently, as a result of efforts to develop contextualized ESL (English as a Second Language) curricula. The National Library of Medicine first established the concept of *health literacy* in 1974 as part of an effort to formalize health education standards across all grade levels (National Library of Medicine, 2000, as cited in Singleton, 2002). Over time,

several definitions of *health literacy* have emerged, with the most often-cited definition appearing in a landmark publication by the U.S. Institute of Medicine (IOM) (2004) entitled *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*:

The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

The IOM report also acknowledged that an individual's ability to make effective health-care decisions is shaped by social context, including the nature of the local health care system, access to services, and a range of socio-cultural factors at work in adults' lives at home and in the community. However, to date, most health literacy research tends to emphasize a functional view of health literacy, a perspective that tends to narrowly focus on an individual's reading and writing skills.

We argue that the LESLLA field -- referring to our emerging network of literacy educators, program directors, adult learners, and their advocates -- remains a neglected resource in efforts to address health disparities among under-served immigrant and refugee populations, including those with limited schooling and literacy skills, as well as other historically hard-to-reach populations, such as immigrant adults without legal documentation and elderly refugee adults. The LESLLA field has extensive knowledge about literacy development but there is no clear structure for mobilizing or sharing this expertise with health literacy researchers. At the same time, populations that reflect the LESLLA demographic profile largely remain an invisible group in health literacy research. Public health researchers may use labels like "low educated" or "low literate" to account for the needs of low-skilled populations, but their analyses rarely provide adequate descriptions of what health literacy looks like at emergent levels. At the same time, while the LESLLA field has generated an increasing amount of theory and research on L2 acquisition among learners who do not read or write in any language, this knowledge base has barely influenced our understanding of the social and linguistic consequences of increased health literacy competence.

The absence of a coordinated health literacy agenda between public health and adult literacy education may be a function of persistent cuts to adult education funding that have certainly eroded the field's capacity for innovation. At the same time, there have been windows of opportunity to develop such a coordinated agenda that came... and went. Notably, with each iteration of large-scale assessments of adult literacy -- the U.S. National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) in 1992, the U.S. National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) in 2003, International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) in 1994, 1995, 1996, and most recently, the Program for the International Assessment in Adult Competencies (PIAAC) in 2012 -- there were opportunities to capitalize on the increased public awareness about the state of literacy levels in many countries.

In the U.S., the NAAL 2003 provided the first nationwide assessment of health literacy with the goal of evaluating performance on "health literacy tasks [that] represent a range of literacy activities that adults are likely to face in their

daily lives” (Kutner, et al., 2006, p. iii). The 2003 survey revealed that about 90 million Americans did not possess adequate literacy skills for carrying out health care tasks, with greater disparities found among adults with less than a high school education and whose primary language is not English (Institute of Medicine, 2004). The release of such findings, summarized in *The Health Literacy of America’s Adults: Results From the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy* (Kutner, et al., 2006), spurred policy discussions about the relationship between literacy and health and called for partnership between public health and educational sectors.

Starting in 2012, a brand new survey cycle, the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), was implemented in 24 developed countries. The PIAAC assesses skill levels in literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy, but does not include a section on health literacy skills per se, so unfortunately PIAAC results cannot be directly compared to that NAAL 2003 results on health literacy. However, the PIAAC 2012 revealed significantly strong relationships between literacy levels and self-reported health status, with the effects of low skill levels and limited schooling particularly deleterious in the U.S. In contrast, the relationship between skill level and health outcomes was not evident in Sweden (Borgonovi & Pokropek, 2016). A word of caution here: these PIAAC findings don’t indicate that low basic skills and limited schooling cause poor health outcomes, but these findings certainly affirm why we need to invest energy and resources into high-quality literacy programs. Moreover, these findings should embolden us, as LESLLA educators and researchers, to stake a claim in policy discussions about immigrant and refugee health disparities (see also Santos & McKinney, 2019, for related discussion of health literacy integration in U.S. adult basic education more broadly).

Our perspective in this article is forward-looking and optimistic as we contemplate answers to two essential questions: *What can the LESLLA field do to ensure LESLLA learners are included in the vision of a healthy society? How do we bring greater visibility to LESLLA learners’ health literacy needs and (their often overlooked) sources of resilience and strength?* Our presentation at LESLLA 2017 in Portland, Oregon, aimed to stimulate dialogue in response to these questions. To extend that dialogue, we have structured this article as a conversation to reflect the range of questions that we have explored in partnership with other literacy practitioners, public health professionals, community partners, and adult learners. We focus on a series of questions that we (Monica Leong and Maricel G. Santos, hereafter Monica and Maricel) have asked one another as we have strategized about how to bring more visibility to LESLLA learners in the health literacy field.

We hope our article prompts more LESLLA practitioners to pursue dialogue with one another, as well as with public health practitioners. Leaving our professional silos can be an intimidating task logistically and psychologically. We work in different spheres (Monica Leong in a community-based program in Calgary, Canada, Maricel G. Santos in the academic world at San Francisco State University, United States), and although we share strong overlap in our interests in health literacy and LESLLA learners, we rarely find natural opportunities to

meet and exchange ideas. Our dilemma is a familiar challenge to many adult literacy practitioners, particularly those who work multiple part-time jobs and lack the time and the resources to cultivate professional networks and sustain collaborations with other practitioners, much less in other fields. In sharing our questions and answers, we hope to convey the range of issues that represent potential inroads to meaningful dialogue in our field about health literacy.

PURSUING DIALOGUE ABOUT HEALTH LITERACY IN THE LESLLA FIELD

Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life. - Amy Poehler, US actress and comedienne

The conversation in this section reflects our thinking about the need to advance a coordinated health literacy agenda within the LESLLA field. The interactive nature of this section is designed to share not only the kinds of conversations we have had together and with others over the past few years, including at our workshop in Portland, but also to illustrate the reality of the work we do. Building partnerships and engaging with other fields to share expertise and new perspectives is messy work. Pathways for action are rarely linear. Interdisciplinary collaboration requires a willingness to listen, a commitment to cultivating a shared vocabulary for the most fundamental concepts (e.g., what do we mean by *literacy*?), and a critical examination of the literacy activities already taking place in classrooms and clinics.

Maricel: Let's begin with a short trip down memory lane. Why did you, as a LESLLA practitioner, get involved in health literacy?

Monica: At the 2015 TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) conference in Toronto, I first came across the term health literacy. It was in a session you offered that challenged ESL practitioners to engage in dialogue about health literacy as a meaningful and viable research agenda for the ESL field. To this day, I remember that session well.

I have a background in teaching ESL and literacy for adults and adolescents, and like many other ESL teachers, I have often included health content in my lessons as a high-interest, meaningful topic that could serve as a vehicle for language and literacy learning. I often felt, however, that those health topics were just scratching the surface and that I was missing meaningful opportunities that could benefit my learners, and their families and communities, in far broader ways than just their language and literacy learning. Additionally, for many years, I have thought of adult ESL literacy learners when I have interacted personally with the healthcare system. I have wondered how they make health-related decisions with such serious implications for themselves and their families in a system that relies so heavily on print-text.

It was at that Toronto TESOL session that I had a realization, an 'a-ha' moment, that began to shift my perception and gave voice to my lingering

feelings of unexplored potential in the classroom and the broader field of adult ESL literacy education. I was inspired by your passion about the connection between health literacy research in ESL contexts and weighty social justice issues of equitable access to health care for multi-barriered and marginalized populations. I started to see beyond my limited view of health as an interesting topic in an adult ESL class, toward the broader view of adult ESL education as fertile ground for advancing social justice through health literacy education and research. That one conference session gave me a glimpse into a whole field of study I knew nothing about called health literacy. I felt myself starting on a new path but did not know exactly where I was headed.

Maricel: So your practitioner insight underscores how the topic of health literacy deepened your appreciation for the real-world consequences of improving someone's literacy skills and practices.

Monica: Yes, I felt there was something more to it than simply covering health as a topic or teaching functional readings skills, like how to read a nutrition label. But when I started looking into health literacy, I found it a bit overwhelming. It is a massive field of study, spanning almost 4 decades, and it's hard to know where to start. I had questions that I thought were simple, like "What exactly is health literacy?" and "Is health literacy a health outcome?", and they turned out to be surprisingly complex. What definition of health literacy do you feel is most useful in our work with LESLLA learners?

Maricel: While the Institute of Medicine (IOM) (2004) lays claim to the most widely cited definition, it could be improved by tapping the LESLLA knowledge base on literacy acquisition. Uta Papen's focus on health literacy as a social practice provides a more generative framework for exploring the health literacy competence of our LESLLA learners. She rejects the IOM's emphasis on health literacy as an individual's skill set:

[Health literacy] is not simply a property or an attribute of an individual, but... it is shared knowledge and expertise. It resides in the patient's social network. An individual's health literacy could thus be seen as the sum of what she knows and is able to do herself and what she is able to achieve with the support from friends, family and other significant people in her environment (Papen, 2009, p. 27).

By definition, LESLLA learners are not yet able to proficiently navigate print environments that are designed, for example, for mainstream English-speaking speakers. If we focus only on the LESLLA learners' ability to read, write, and speak in English to make healthcare decisions, well, of course, they look deficient. Papen counters this deficit view by inviting us to conceptualize LESLLA learners' health literacy as the sum of what they can do on their own *and* what they can do with social support.

Monica: Papen's view echoes what I have found in The Calgary Charter on Health Literacy (Coleman et al., 2008) that I have used as a guide to the project I am working on. It states that health literacy encompasses more than an individual's skills and abilities. It describes both health literate individuals as well as health literate health professionals and systems. They all work together to affect health literacy, and in a sense, it means that you are only as health literate as your health system allows you to be (see Nutbeam, 2008).

Maricel: Yes! And Papen's views are consistent with other literacy scholars as well who view literacy as a social practice, as an attribute of social networks and social relationships, not a decontextualized set of skills (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Purcell-Gates, 2007; Purcell-Gates, et al., 2012; Reder, 2009; Santos, Handley, Omark, & Schillinger, 2014). LESLLA teachers rightfully should be concerned with their learners' individual achievements but Papen (2009) asks us to frame this growth as changes in literacy practice and patterns of participation, not just change in skills.

Monica: Papen's framing resonates with what many literacy teachers try to do, which is to give our LESLLA learners tools that enable them to widen their spheres of participation -- beyond the classroom, at their kids' school, in the workplace, in the community, or in digital environments. It sounds like the social practices framework can also be used to critique the idealized view of a health-literate person as someone who takes care of all their own health care needs regardless of the health literacy demands placed on them by the system, and they do this only in the target language - English, in many cases in the U.S. and Canada.

Maricel: I agree. Many LESLLA practitioners prefer to think of their learners as emerging bilinguals, not merely L2 learners. I worry that the IOM report inadvertently perpetuates a monolingual English bias in health literacy research because it offers little insight into the practical realities of how bi/multilinguals routinely draw upon knowledge in languages other than English to make healthcare decisions (see Martínez, 2008; Santos, McClelland, & Handley, 2011). Unless we develop health literacy assessments that fully account for these multilingual dimensions, our ability to document the health literacy of LESLLA learners will continue to be constrained.

Monica: These kinds of issues really speak to me as a literacy practitioner, and it resonates in what we see in the lives of learners on a daily basis. I am drawn towards this more contextualized, social practices view, but I must admit, it raises a lot of tough questions about how I should teach and assess health literacy. *What do we know about how to measure health literacy?*

Maricel: How to measure health literacy is such an important question, one that I would love to see LESLLA practitioners and public health practitioners working on together more concertedly. Pleasant and McKinney (2011) provide a

comprehensive, digestible overview of the state of health literacy measurement. Particularly relevant for LESLLA practitioners is their critical commentary on how widely used health literacy measures only assess a limited set of readings skills, through word lists (e.g., Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine, REALM; Short Assessment of Health Literacy for Spanish-speaking Adults) or cloze passages (Test of Functional Health Literacy in Adults, TOFHLA). Other measures test a person's ability to make decisions based on printed health information, such as the Newest Vital Sign (NVS), which asks 6 questions about the information in an ice cream nutrition label. As Pleasant and McKinney (2011) argue, such measures tend to stigmatize people as 'low health literate' for their lack of technical health content or medical vocabulary. They further argue that these measures tend to "[devalue] the communicative skills and abilities (e.g. verbal and visual) that literate and low-literate individuals often do possess" (p. 96).

Monica: I can't imagine there are quick-fixes here but it's exciting to think about LESLLA teachers and health literacy researchers sitting down together to hatch new assessments that (1) could be validated with LESLLA populations, and (2) could be put to use in classrooms and clinical settings. As I work to develop a health literacy partnership project, I wish I had more opportunities to talk to researchers about useful ways to measure health literacy growth. I look for research and theories to base our work on, but I often find that accessing published health literacy research literature can be difficult. As a community-based practitioner working outside the scope of an academic institution, I have somewhat limited access to published literature. Not everything is accessible online through Google Scholar or publishing clearinghouses. This situation creates a barrier to collaboration.

Maricel: Your thoughts echo the words of health literacy expert Rima Rudd who called for "an open-access and evidence-based repository of the best practices of health literacy that have been proven to improve public health" (Institute of Medicine, 2014, p. 20).

Monica: That kind of resource would be great, but the health literacy field is vast and encompasses many distinct subfields like health communication, plain language, and health education. Within that complex dynamic, is the voice of the LESLLA field audible? *Is there published research that addressed LESLLA populations specifically?*

Maricel: Finding LESLLA learners in the current body of health literacy research is tricky work, as the public health world doesn't use the term "LESLLA" in its demographic descriptions of research samples. Some studies only disaggregate schooling background in 3 broad categories, 'less than high school', 'high school', and 'more than high school', which makes it hard to know if LESLLA populations were included in the sampling. Fortunately, there are also health literacy studies that disaggregate samples into groups that are useful for

identifying LESLLA populations, such as ‘none’, ‘1-6 years’, ‘7-12 years’, ‘more than 12 years’ (e.g., Wängdahl, Lytsy, Mårtensson, & Westerling, 2015). Other search strategies – using keywords such as *refugee*, *elderly immigrant*, *ESL* – can also help to identify health literacy studies on LESLLA populations, but it’s not always clear what those terms index in terms of immigration histories or circumstances. Health literacy studies may rely on self-report for data on L2 (English) literacy or oracy, but often due to the lack of reliable measures, no data on oracy and literacy in other languages is reported. As dismal as the state of research sounds, I am more positive about the contributions that LESLLA researchers and educators could make to improved sampling strategies and measurement development. With LESLLA expertise, the health literacy field would be better positioned to examine the oral dimensions of health literacy, the interplay of oral and written language in health literacy activities, the multilingual nature of health literacy competence, and the role of social support mechanisms, i.e., the role of “literacy sponsors” (Brandt, 1998; Comings & Cuban, 2002).

Maricel: You mentioned building a partnership. In what context are you working, and what needs are you addressing?

Monica: I am working to develop a partnership between a health clinic in an urban Canadian centre and an adult ESL literacy program in an agency dedicated to serving newcomers from immigrant and refugee backgrounds. There is a growing number of patients at the clinic that have limited literacy in their home languages. Preliminary needs assessment from the clinic suggests that these patients’ newness to the language, literacy and health literacy demands of their environment impacts their ability to successfully navigate the healthcare system and make informed choices for themselves and their families, and it creates significant challenges for their healthcare teams.

Maricel: So what kinds of issues are they seeing that are related to the LESLLA patients’ health literacy levels?

Monica: Well, despite the fact that the healthcare professionals are experts at patient education, their efforts with these patients take extra time and still do not always result in the intended outcomes. For example, patients often miss appointments or are unprepared for the appointments they do attend. Patients can not name the medications they are taking or what exactly they are for. Or they do not complete required blood work or other tests or specialist appointments before they return for their next clinic visits. And they often do not request interpretation services when they set up their appointments, leaving the clinic to scramble for last-minute help. These kinds of situations make it challenging for healthcare teams to address their patients’ needs, especially given the short time available for everything that happens in appointments.

Maricel: And how does the immigrant serving agency fit into this picture?

Monica: This subset of patients struggling to navigate the systems and processes at the health clinic represent a very similar demographic group as compared with the adult ESL literacy learners in the immigrant serving agency - they are newcomers with limited literacy in the home language, and many are from refugee backgrounds. These learners often ask their instructors questions about health information, how to access health services, and how to navigate the healthcare system.

Interestingly, most of the instructors are from immigrant backgrounds themselves and have had to learn to navigate the health system as well. But even though they are diligent in searching for answers to their students' questions, it tends to be in an ad hoc way, each instructor responding independently to their own students' questions as they arise. In our preliminary discussions with instructors, we have learned that their primary way to find information to address learners' questions is to go home and Google it. While there are some health curricular materials available, not all the instructors knew about them and there was not program level coordination or implementation of those materials.

Maricel: *What are the goals of the partnership?*

Monica: The goal of the partnership is to improve health literacy and reduce barriers to accessing health services for multi-barriered immigrants & refugees with limited first language (L1) literacy. We will work with three participant groups: LESLLA learners and their instructors from adult ESL literacy classes in an immigrant serving agency, and healthcare professionals from a health clinic. Since we are taking a social practices view of health literacy, we have goals for all the participants, not just the LESLLA individuals. For example, some of the project goals include the following:

- The adult ESL literacy learners will improve their knowledge, skills, and confidence in accessing healthcare services and communicating with healthcare professionals.
- The literacy instructors will improve their knowledge, skills, and confidence in integrating health-related information and skills practice in their classes.
- The healthcare professionals will improve their knowledge, skills, and confidence in communicating effectively with patients with limited literacy in their home languages.

The project will provide shared learning experiences through activities such as healthcare workers giving presentations to classes, and learners touring healthcare facilities and completing a health literacy review of the clinic from a patient's perspective. We will develop training and resources to address the needs of each participant group, such as a guide for healthcare workers to understand LESLLA patients and how to communicate effectively with them, and classroom activities to support the creation of multilingual health video storybooks to use in class and in the clinic.

The two-year pilot project does not allow enough time to measure improved health outcomes such as lowered rates of emergency room usage or better health of individuals, but we hope to show that the innovative tools and methods we develop can have an effect on each participant group and the combined effect will reduce barriers and improve health literacy.

Maricel: What activities have you already undertaken?

Monica: Currently, at the time of publication, our project is funded by the Canadian federal government. But much work went into the project planning stages earlier. We brought the two organizations together, built relationships, engaged in preliminary assessments of needs and strengths, drafted a partnership agreement, and submitted a proposal to the federal funding agency. We are extremely fortunate to have the support and enthusiasm of a team of talented individuals, including executive decision makers at each institution, who are committed to the principles and vision behind the partnership and that has helped us persist through the unfunded stage of project development.

Maricel: What unexpected challenges have you encountered?

Monica: The biggest challenge so far has been the patience it takes to develop these kinds of partnership projects and to deal with the cycles of the funding system. I had not expected it to take as long as it did to secure funding and begin the project, especially since we had strong buy-in from decision-makers in both institutions from the very beginning.

Another challenge is how difficult it can be to bridge the divide between the health and adult education sectors. Both our organizations serve the same demographic group of marginalized populations and are invested in improving health literacy, but the education and health sectors come to the table with different views on health literacy and ways of measuring progress, not to mention distinct institutional language and cultures. At times, these differences are obvious, but even when they are subtle or hidden, they impact the way each partner approaches the project, the goals they envision, the assessment measures they value, and the expectations for growth they assume. It can be challenging to uncover and address these differences.

We also found that dealing with the ethics review process in a partnership can be challenging. Each organization has different requirements when it comes to ethics review, and this highlights the particular cultures of the adult education and healthcare fields that I mentioned above. We worked together to determine what level of ethics review is necessary in order to satisfy both the hard science world of healthcare as well as the somewhat less stringent standards of adult ESL education, all while keeping the LESLLA learner and their right to both protections in the project and equitable healthcare access at the centre of our efforts.

Maricel: So it sounds like you have made some progress but there have been some difficulties to overcome along the way.

Monica: That's true. I have already learned so much through this process, but I wish I had reached out for more guidance at the beginning. It would have been helpful to have a blueprint for partnership development or a list of steps to take. *As a first step, what can a LESLLA practitioner do to get involved?*

Maricel: An essential first step is finding like-minded colleagues. As you have already found, it's tough staking new ground on your own. One easy action step is to join the LINC'S Health Literacy Group (community.lincs.ed.gov/group/health-literacy), an online discussion group that is maintained by the U.S. Department of Education. You don't need to be a U.S.-based practitioner to join. If you'd like to network with a broader network of public health practitioners and researchers, consider joining the online discussion group maintained by the Institute of Healthcare Advancement (listserv.ihahhealthliteracy.org) or the most recently launched International Health Literacy Association (www.i-hla.org) which has recently hosted events in Switzerland, Vietnam, New Zealand, and Taiwan.

Monica: *Is there a LESLLA voice on those platforms?* I want to find other LESLLA professionals in this area and health literacy researchers who understand LESLLA learners.

Maricel: Yes, there are adult literacy practitioners and researchers, including those who focus on LESLLA issues, on those platforms, but there does not exist a formal mechanism to disseminate LESLLA expertise with health literacy researchers. This suggests a real need for structured communities of engaged practitioners, like annual roundtables or special interest groups within existing professional organizations in public health or adult literacy, so there is no visible platform to accomplish exactly what you are seeking - a voice for the LESLLA field to provide insight into LESLLA learners' needs and strengths. Andrew Pleasant (cited in Rudd, 2012) similarly calls for the creation of "incentives through policy, funding, and regulations for public health organizations at all levels to engage with and demonstrate gains in public health through the explicit incorporation of health literacy into the entire spectrum of efforts to improve public health". If I could wave a magic wand over the health literacy world right now, I'd want to see those incentives made real, so that LESLLA researchers, teachers, and even adult learners are included in planning efforts to improve health literacy. *What would you ask for in your context if you could wave a magic wand?*

Monica: I have a vision of what our partnership could become, but I wish I had someone who could mentor me and commit to that mentorship with funds. Someone who could work with our team to shepherd us through the partnership building process. They could bring a list of resources and actions we should take to get the process going. They would help us build a shared understanding of

health literacy and how LESLLA fits into that picture. They would help do the needs analysis and crunch data and coordinate partnership meetings to get the project off the ground. In our partnership, all of this work was necessary before securing funding, which means that it was done by me, a volunteer trying to pull two busy organizations together into a new relationship. And that relationship building takes a lot of unfunded time. So I would ask for a LESLLA consultant with seed money! I feel like that would validate how important the relationship building and shared understanding is to our project, rather than just a small thing we do to get ready for the real work. And I feel it would better position our partnership to be sustainable and make meaningful change in the literacy practices of our participants.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND NEXT STEPS

It is our hope in this paper to demonstrate that our field has a unique contribution to make in the area of health literacy and that we need to engage intentionally in dialogue to make that contribution possible. The professional wisdom of LESLLA researchers and practitioners provides a powerful (and under-utilized) counterweight to prevailing deficit views on the health literacy skills of low-skilled adults: LESLLA teachers witness on a daily basis what immigrant adults *can* do with language and what resources they *do* leverage when confronted with new challenges, such as communicating with health providers and accessing health care information.

While we encourage LESLLA professionals to engage informally in conversations about health literacy, we also submit that more formal structures are needed to support fruitful and sustained dialogue. These might include, but are not limited to, conference convenings, dedicated symposium themes, town halls, position statements, a research agenda, and special interest groups (SIGs) within the newly formalized LESLLA organization. Please see the Appendix for resources to assist LESLLA professionals in taking the courageous step of beginning these kinds of conversations within our own field as well as with public health practitioners and policy makers.

As a next step, and with focused coordination in the LESLLA organization and field, we could begin to engage meaningfully in the following activities:

- promoting awareness about the health literacy needs and sources of resilience of LESLLA learners among other practitioners, researchers, and the broader public through the dissemination of our expertise and insights working with LESLLA learners;
- addressing priority issues related to the health literacy needs of LESLLA learners through international and regional webinars, open forums, workshops, and conference presentations; and
- cooperating with other health literacy organizations with shared concerns about the health outcomes of patients and consumers from LESLLA backgrounds.

This is how we envision LESLLA joining the conversation, taking our seat at the table, and building on the work already done. We believe that it is possible for the LESLLA field - indeed it is incumbent on us - to contribute this expertise as a way of advocating for our learners and reducing health inequities. We hope the conversations in this paper and the tools in the appendices will inspire others to engage in that important dialogue and, in doing so, will work towards a formal commitment in our field to advancing health literacy and keeping this commitment at the center of our advocacy work.

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APPENDIX A: 8 CONVERSATION STARTERS ABOUT HEALTH LITERACY FOR PRACTITIONERS IN LESLLA AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The list of questions in this appendix, which we welcome readers to download, copy, or adapt, is designed to jumpstart conversations between practitioners in LESLLA and public health. To promote interdisciplinary collaboration, practitioners in both fields need to articulate (1) their beliefs about what “health literacy” is, (2) their professional responsibilities in response to the needs of LESLLA learners/patients, and (3) their most pressing concerns and challenges. Ideally, by exchanging answers to these questions, practitioners in LESLLA and public health will move towards a shared vocabulary in health literacy and discover shared ‘pain points’, which may serve as seeds for collaborative action.

8 Conversation Starters about Health Literacy For practitioners in LESLLA and public health







1. How do you define ‘health literacy’?
2. How would you describe the health care needs and health literacy of your patients with low literacy skills? What would you like to better understand about them?
3. What kind of language assistance are you able to provide your patients with low literacy skills in the classroom/clinic? What are effective practices?
4. What matters to you most when you think about measuring health literacy growth among LESLLA learners/patients?
5. How is technology making life easier or more complicated for patients with low literacy?
6. Tell me about a time when a patient with low literacy came to you with a problem, and you didn’t know what to do. What happened?
7. (for public health) Wave a magic wand. What immediate changes to the healthcare system would make your job easier for meeting the needs of patients with low literacy skills and limited schooling?
8. (for LESLLA) Wave a magic wand. What immediate changes to the adult education system would make your job easier for meeting the needs of learners with low literacy skills and limited schooling?

APPENDIX B: NETWORKING TASK

We offer this Find Someone Who activity, developed for our Portland 2017 workshop, as an interactive tool to begin discussions and make connections with other professionals in the LESLLA and health fields.

Use this networking task to find other people who are interested in health literacy. Walk around the room, introduce yourself, talk to you colleagues. When you find someone that fits one of the descriptions below, write their name, city/country, and email in the box. Try to meet as many people as you can and fill in each box.

Find People Who...

<p>Have developed a health literacy lesson or curriculum for LESLLA learners.</p> 	<p>Are engaged in a partnership between an adult literacy program and a community health partner.</p> 
<p>Have written a funding proposal before. (Bonus points if it was for a health literacy project!)</p> 	<p>Believe LESLLA should be a stronger voice for health literacy and advocacy.</p> 
<p>Are interested in the same area(s) of health literacy that you are interested in!</p> 	<p>Have ideas about what LESLLA can do to help support practitioners looking for health literacy information and resources.</p> 

(All icons from Noun Project thenounproject.com)

Implementing Photovoice with LESLLA Learners to Stimulate L2 Development, Identity Expressions, and Social Justice

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ABSTRACT

This participatory exploratory action research study reports on the primary stages of my investigation to transform pedagogy and inquiry with Latinx Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA) learners. Based on a sociocultural perspective, I investigate how complementing the responsive instructional approach of the Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011) with the participatory justice-oriented research method of Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) can empower LESLLA participants to articulate transnational identities, confront linguistic and cultural gaps and power structures, and document their language learning practices through digital photographs or other visual media. The preliminary findings reveal that initiating and negotiating participant-led tasks and fusing formal and informal learning styles in a multilevel community-based setting not only helps develop an inclusive community of practice but advances multimodal literacy practices, reflection, and hands-on learning.

INTRODUCTION

Context and Teaching Puzzle

My interest in Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA) and culturally sustaining pedagogy and research grew out of my three-year volunteer ESL practice at Casa del Corazón (pseudonym, House of the Heart, hereafter CC), a community-based organization (CBO) in a suburban multiethnic southern US neighborhood. My students were migrants with low or no literacy in their first languages (L1s) who were learning a second language (L2) while developing print-literacy and numeracy skills, knowledge of content area, and classroom norms (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015). I was curious whether implementing the Mutually Adaptive Paradigm (MALP) (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011), a framework that systematically mixes (in)formal learning standards, and

Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997), a method that inspires informants to visually document their sociocultural realities, would promote inclusive learning and advocacy in my classroom.

When I started teaching at this CBO in summer 2014, this organization provided adult education, a basketball league, consular support, language interpretation, and legal referral services to around 300 members. The courses lacked fixed curriculum, assessment, instructional and technology resources, and adequate Internet connectivity. Given the open enrollment policy, students could take time off to work or to care for their families. About 10-15 English language learners (ELLs) from Mexico and Guatemala with collectivistic orientations (DeCapua, 2016; Marshall & DeCapua, 2009) and dissimilar alphabetic literacies joined the classes. About 50 percent of them spoke Spanish as their L1 and the others spoke Tzotzil, Tzeltal, or K'iche as their L1s. Indigenous students spoke Spanish as their L2. Most of them attended ESL courses for the first time; about eight of them continued their studies and became long-term participants in this study. Except for the two 14-year-old newcomers, they were between 26 to 56 years old and had dropped out from school to assist their families in agriculture and contribute to their income (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007). Typically, male learners were without family commitments; females were raising their children as single parents in apartments shared with other immigrants. Speakers of indigenous L1s who had attained print-based literacy and content through Spanish language in elementary schools and had fled their rural communities to escape poverty and discrimination were likely to face increased challenges to develop English fluency. Students had resided in the US between 10 to 15 years, employed in low-wage occupations in construction, agriculture, and landscaping that require minimal L2 fluency, literacy, and numeracy skills. Many of them had acquired L2 fluency through marginal workplace interactions and by watching television in English language and few could communicate using basic vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing. Others could comprehend isolated everyday vocabulary but could not introduce themselves in English language. Those with low-intermediate L2 knowledge could answer questions related to everyday topics and fill out forms with some assistance. Despite cultural and linguistic barriers, they were determined to master linguistic skills to gain membership in communities of practice. Some aspired to get involved in their children's education, expand their work opportunities, and socialize with L2 speakers.

Administering standardized intake assessment was difficult because evaluations typically assume test-taking and other print-based literacy practices (Marshall & DeCapua, 2013) and are unavailable for CBOs without public funding. I assessed students' English language and literacy abilities through an interview grid and a writing prompt. Specifically, I encouraged responses in English and Spanish languages to questions such as What is your name?, What is the name of your home city?, and What language(s) did you use (e.g., in your home, at school) in your country?. Students were also asked to write about their goals, prior schooling, and time in the US. Those who struggled to fill out the grid given their unfamiliarity with asking clarifying questions, noting answers,

decoding words, and following instructions were assessed through an oral visual elicitation task guided by visuals, gestures, and translation.

To address these learners' educational needs, it was vital to explore the relatively scant research on this group and understand their complex educational and migration histories and ways of meaning-making, transnational identities, and linguistic and sociocultural capital. After probing my pedagogical misalignments and underlying assumptions about literacy, I enacted a participatory pedagogical-empirical framework grounded in sensory and linguistic stimuli, storytelling, and other creative practices (Geres, 2016; Zenkov & Harmon, 2009). In this article, I outline this model and conclude with implications for inclusive instruction, research, and advocacy.

Evaluating Teaching and Learning Tensions

While I felt fairly well-prepared to instruct college students, it was challenging to locate appropriate materials for LESLLA learners. I also struggled to teach in a classroom with one projector and whiteboard but no instructional materials or laptops. I observed that while some students conformed to class expectations by taking notes, interacting with partners, and completing activities and advanced their L2 development in a systematic manner, those less accustomed to formal learning practices displayed less predictable development patterns. Although the standardized textbook topics were relevant to the students' lives, they seemed disengaged in these tasks. For instance, to introduce the concept of "food" I asked students' preferred food choices, discussed relevant terminology, and engaged them in questions based on the MyPlate chart. Some ELLs would view the textbook pictures, listen to vocabulary explanations without taking notes, and seemed frustrated to complete Venn diagrams and KWL (What I know, What I want to know, and What I learned) graphic organizers. During vocabulary comprehension checks, those minimally engaged in these tasks had trouble remembering words, while others could partially recount vocabulary. I wondered why these activities resonated with few ELLs and why learning happened at a slower pace in my class at CC. Compared to the international ELLs I instructed at a university, perhaps the LESLLA group's apparent scanty involvement could relate to their unawareness of the formal education practices, social and emotional needs, the difficulty of materials, the discrepancy between their learning preferences and teaching style, or my unfamiliarity with this population (DeCapua, 2016). The students at CC reported that they regarded L2 communication somewhat divorced from their lives due to their ambiguous immigration status, interrupted schooling, extended work and domestic commitments, and insufficient access to affordable childcare, transportation, and social services. The thriving Mexican US diaspora and the Spanish language media that disregarded Indigenous linguistic and cultural capital continued to erode their L2 investment. Despite their discomfort related to practices that undervalued their community and cultural and linguistic capital, they were eager to master their L2 fluency. To better understand their goals, I designed the following questions to guide this inquiry: *In what ways do my students*

perceive the instructional tasks in the ESL classroom? Which activities do they enjoy and why? What might be the source of their (apparent lack of) interest in these activities?

Probing Further Perceptions

Based on my observations, their meaning-making practices appeared to be incompatible with the conventional print literacy-based instructional delivery scaffolded through pre-teaching vocabulary, using academic visual aids, and tapping into existing knowledge. Except for two intermediate-level ELLs who seemed to enjoy notetaking and worksheet-based activities, students mostly associated these tasks with tension, perceived that “Inglés es un idioma muy difícil” [English is a difficult language], and they “no like learn,” due to their evolving L2 proficiency and unfamiliarity with academic norms. I further probed these insights with inquiries related to their home literacies. For many students, knowledge was transmitted through oral traditions and real-world experience: they listened to folk stories and sayings and assisted in cooking, harvesting, planting crops, and other community events (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). One of them recalled that his parents mastered agricultural practices and basic math skills by observing and working with more knowledgeable community members.

To foreground learning with “a highly functional, personal focus” (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010, p. 14), I wanted to harness learners’ oral storytelling competence and practical knowledge to challenge them to establish social bonds with L2 discourse communities. Instead of US-centric textbook materials, I selected age-appropriate short stories (e. g., Reiff, 2015) and picture books (e.g., Simply Cracking Good Stories: simplystories.org and Grass Roots Press: grassrootsbooks.net about immigrants, designed board games using toolsforeducators.com/boardgames (e.g., Introduction: drive.google.com/file/d/1iu_ZN53Ylkull01uU7v1wZ-B98DxP0lk/view), and invited them to share their photographs on a particular topic (Lypka, 2019). Given the spotty internet connection, it was less feasible to stream online content and use online tools such as Rewordify (rewordify.com/helprewordifyingengine.php) to simplify text. Inspired by sociocultural approaches that conceptualize teaching and learning as social endeavors, I adopted learner-initiated discussions and reflections driven by photographs, videos, and objects that students brought to class. Apart from these visuals, I stressed reliance on peer help, gestures, Google Translate (translate.google.com), and other mobile translation applications to increase comprehension through multimodal input and reciprocal learning.

As LESLLA learners enter classrooms, there is a growing need to rethink instruction, research, and advocacy in relation to learners’ sociocultural practices and needs. Numerous scholars (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; DeCapua, 2016) argue that alternative worldviews, cultural differences, individual learning differences, and sociomaterial inequalities shape their socialization. If they perceive themselves as invisible in their new social spaces and do not understand the value of instruction, they continue to struggle to negotiate their membership in L2 discourse communities (Norton, 2013). Implementing culturally appropriate strategies, such as the MALP (Marshall & DeCapua, 2013; Marshall, 1998), the Intercultural Communication Framework (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011),

linguistic landscapes (Lypka, 2019), community filmmaking (Lypka, 2018), and Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) in the curriculum, can transcend linguistic, literacy, and cultural barriers and enable learners to (re)configure their identities to gain access to sociocultural capital.

EXAMINING PARTICIPATORY AND RESPONSIVE FRAMEWORKS

Across disciplines, participant-authored photographs, collages, quilts, digital stories, and other multimedia sources have been adopted to supplement interviews, surveys, and other forms of research data to evoke emic narratives and appreciate participants' talents and linguistic, cultural, and ethnic identities. Integrated in interviews, visuals have been used to bridge L2 fluency, jog the participants' memory, and enrich conversations (e.g., Geres, 2016; Lypka, 2019). Particularly, Photovoice, a "process by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369), has been adopted with (im)migrant-background participants to bring awareness to problems they wish to disrupt, foster participants' agency and identity, and augment learning (Geres, 2016; Green & Kloos, 2009).

Photovoice

Photovoice is an action-driven collaborative inquiry anchored in feminist theory and critical pedagogy (Harper, 2012) developed by Wang and Burris (1997) to enable minoritized groups to identify and document community concerns through photographs and increase awareness on these issues through public displays. This method entails training (1); action plan (2); data collection (3); group discussion, analysis, and reflection (4); and public presentations (5). Recognizing the potential of Photovoice to disrupt power relations by affirming voices habitually marginalized in education, scaffolding print-literacy and L2 communication skills, and capturing multiple perspectives, this approach has been employed as a teaching, advocacy, and research tool with college students (Cooper, Sorensen, & Yarbrough, 2017), displaced refugee youth (Green & Kloos, 2009), preservice teachers, and LESLLA learners (Lypka, 2018). Cooper et al. (2017) adopted Photovoice to encourage student involvement in public health issues and to collect data. Green and Kloos (2009) fused Photovoice with responsive teaching to elicit refugee youth's perspectives about education inequality in Uganda and augment advocacy through public exhibits and media reports. Despite challenges related to data collection, analysis, and technology, this method can enrich L2 development, inquiry, and advocacy by expanding authorial voice and honoring community assets. Furthermore, Photovoice can mobilize co-researchers to (de)construct the multiplicity of their realities in ways that interviews or surveys many not cover (Harper, 2012). Through this process, informants can identify community-relevant concerns and co-author digital stories, photographs, or other artistic works to galvanize the society around these issues.

MALP

The MALP curricular model (Figure 1) connects learners’ informal worldviews, collaborative learning, and oral knowledge transmission with abstract thinking, individual learning, and written mode to ease academic socialization (Marshall, 1998). Unlike the Western educational standards that tend to ignore students’ L1 literacy skills and typically assume the attainment of grade-level education, academic language, L2 fluency, and print literacy, MALP conceptualizes knowledge as an ongoing process that involves students’ identities, emotional and social needs, and sociocultural practices (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011).

Learning Resources	Alternative Educational Paradigm	Eurocentric Education Paradigm
Honor practices	Immediate practical relevance Relational	Decontextualized Future relevance Independent
Combine processes	Collective responsibility Group identity Oral communication	Personal accountability Individual identity Written communication
Tap into familiar content and language	Real-life examples Reciprocity	Abstract tasks Higher order thinking skills

Figure 1: MALP (Adapted from DeCapua & Marshall, 2010, 2011; Marshall & DeCapua, 2009, 2013)

Although incorporating experiential and inclusive instructional standards and students’ lifeworlds remains relatively underexplored with the LESLLA group, scholars (Cole & Elson, 2015; Marshall & DeCapua, 2013) concur that MALP-infused curriculum reframes meaning-making from an asset-based perspective within authentic learning spaces. MALP-based storytelling, feeling posters, and a mural helped participants in the study by Cole and Elson (2015) to configure themselves as experts. Marshall and DeCapua (2013) describe how the Crossing the Mekong River tapestry project empowered Hmong learners to conduct interviews, research documents, generate maps, and capture collective immigration narratives in textile art. These reports suggest that MALP-based learning can expand meaning-making through multiple media and communication modes, mindsets, and collective experiences.

Grounded in the community’s strengths, informal knowledge, and multiple means of representation, Photovoice can effectively complement the MALP framework. Drawing on asset-based sociocultural perspectives, I implemented sheltered instruction, photo elicitation conversations, and demonstrations to connect classroom practice to the outside world, affirm students’ cultural assets and individual learning differences, and collect data. For instance, I relied on learner-created familiar visuals and gestures to clarify concepts. I then gradually introduced the list of domain-specific vocabulary and annotations and asked for

volunteers to provide definitions and elicit conversations in English and Spanish. Except for a learner who had a mobile phone without a camera lens and one who preferred drawing and writing as opposed to taking pictures, most students relied on their camera phones to gather data. The activities grounded in students' linguistic and visual repertoires and everyday realities energized them to tackle community-relevant issues and engage in meaning-making in ways that print-literacy tasks did not. More importantly, over time, the less confident ELLs became more enthusiastic to express themselves and co-author texts, using peer interaction, gestures, and visuals. Comments such as "happy talk for family" and "I like speak and photos and Spanish" were common. Mostly, these statements indicated a preference toward participation in oral and visual communication, collaborative learning, and real-life encounters.

FORMULATING AN ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGICAL-EMPIRICAL MODEL

Based on my observations and consultations with the CC staff, it became obvious that LESLLA learners' L2 development is less predictable than print-literate ELLs'. Some adults in my class had not yet internalized schema for decoding skills, logical sequence, and abstract frames of references in graphic organizers and other materials (DeCapua et al., 2007). This realization prompted me to integrate students' multimodal and translingual repertoires and lived experiences into the curriculum. Inspired by responsive initiatives that stress the relevance of integrating formal and pragmatic tasks (e.g., Marshall & DeCapua, 2013) and community-based visual methods (e.g., Geres, 2016), I reframed my guiding question: *In what ways would the MALP-infused Photovoice framework enable students to articulate their identities as learners and social actors?*

Methodology

Rather than approaching my practice as something to be "fixed", I employed a participatory exploratory action research, a modified exploratory action research design, to "explore, understand and improve" (Smith & Rebolledo, 2018, p. 20) teaching, learning, and advocacy with co-researcher students and CC staff, following these stages:

1. Identify challenges, perceptions, and sociocultural norms, and reflect on these observations,
2. Scrutinize this puzzle further eliciting co-researchers' perspectives through class discussions and interviews, relevant research, reflecting on these experiences, and generating questions,
3. Reframe questions as needed and develop an action plan,
4. Integrate intervention and data documentation, analyze the data, critically reflect on the outcomes, and revise the intervention as needed,
5. Promote change on individual and/or social level through public displays and reflection,
6. Conduct observations, reflect, revisit the intervention model, and implement modifications.

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board at my university, I sought to better understand neighborhood issues and establish connection and trust by participating in local events. I recruited volunteer co-researchers from adult learners who have oral proficiency in English and attended more than one course at CC. I also obtained written and verbal consent and assured co-researchers of anonymity, cultural, linguistic, literacy, privacy, and dissemination concerns on an ongoing basis. Data collected involved my journal, fieldnotes, participant-authored visuals, captions, and semi-structured interviews were analyzed using exploratory thematic and descriptive analysis.

I implemented MALP and Photovoice to sustain meaningful communication (1), traverse literacy and linguistic barriers (2), advance a sense of belonging (3), and activate social awareness of the needs of learners (4). To meet these objectives, I formulated procedures centered on participants' strengths, visual and oral practices, and community voice through storytelling. Respondents visually documented their realities through photographs using their cell phones as well as maps, collages, drawings, and paintings and cultivated dialogue through visual elicitations, public displays, roundtables, and media reports. These visual elicitations served as a means of learning, data collection, and public dissemination.

Photovoice Adaptation. In adjusting this model in six classes between July 2014 and December 2016, I adhered to the Photovoice training considerations, activity sequencing, and logistical planning (e.g., Cooper et al., 2017). After an introduction to the basics of Photovoice, Western storytelling, photography, and ethics, I developed supplementary modifications regarding MALP integration and task development and continued to negotiate tensions on an ongoing basis.

To foster interconnectedness through shared goals, local guests were invited to discuss about neighborhood safety, immigration, education, and other community-relevant issues and understand students' perspectives on these concerns. To establish a trusting environment, I asked the CC director, a multilingual speaker, to serve as a cultural liaison. To recognize participants' voices and connect the gap between limited L2 proficiency and print literacy skills, I capitalized on digital technologies and divergent learning practices and invited participants to draw on verbal, semiotic, and mobile means.

Given that participants documented their realities outside the class, the visual documentation and data collection were reconfigured as individual tasks. The team component encompassed brainstorming potential topics, creating an action plan, discussing the visuals, and negotiating the public exhibit format. To encourage critical conversation and reflection, I minimized the relevance of aesthetics and technology in image editing and encouraged deviation from the SHOWeD questions ("What do you SEE here; what is really HAPPENING here; how does this relate to OUR lives; WHY does this situation exist; how can we become EMPOWERED by our new social understanding; what can we DO to address these issues?") (Harper, 2012, p. 202). To provide debriefing opportunities, I integrated oral reflections during class interactions and interviews. The sequencing of visual documentation and elicitation, themes, presentation format, and social engagement shifted based on interest and

attendance. For instance, students in one class pursued community mural and filmmaking and social media communication. Others hosted a painting exhibit, a fundraiser for toys, and a panel about neighborhood safety. In a less attended course, the Photovoice became a one-time assignment, followed by dialogue around coauthored visuals and public displays.

Photovoice Procedures. In each course, I employed a modified Photovoice following these steps (see Figure 2):

1. Orientation: I familiarized co-researchers with procedures and example projects.
2. Topic Exploration: Students generated ideas and themes and decided on the representation medium.
3. Documentation: They created thematically relevant artifacts and selected work samples for weekly discussions and oral reflections.
4. Elicitation: Using guiding questions, participants highlighted similarities, differences, challenges, and stories behind their images.
5. Call for Action: They selected artifacts for elective public displays, wrote captions to accompany these visuals, and interacted with attendees.
6. Interviews: Informants participated in optional interviews.

Infusing the MALP with Photovoice. To align instruction with co-researchers’ unique mindsets, sociocultural practices, resources, and experiences, I combined the MALP (Marshall, 1998) and Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) frameworks, following the strands in Figure 2:

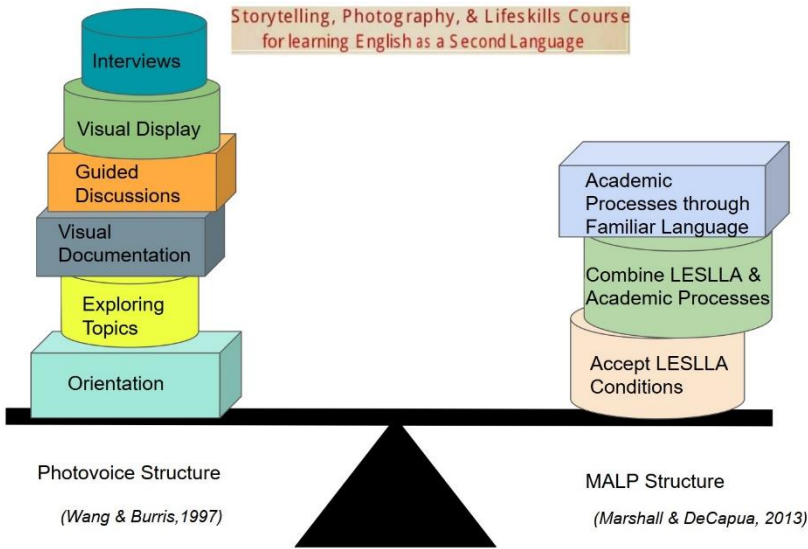


Figure 2: MALP-infused Photovoice

1. To connect curricula to reality, I took into account practical and relational ways of thinking, multimodal and multilingual input, and collaborative learning.

2. I blended elements from both worldviews, such as customary oral modes and cooperative learning with academic written communication and individual learning.
3. To reduce cognitive discord, I emphasized novel academic activities embedded in alternative worldviews and routine content and languages.

Next, I provide in-depth description and examples of the MALP and Photovoice integration.

Implementing the MALP-inspired Photovoice in the Curriculum. I drew on the MALP checklist (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011) (see Appendix A) to incorporate these stages:

1. To prioritize learning conditions for relevance and interconnectedness, students shared relevant objects and personal narratives. To achieve this goal, they reached a consensus on topics, visualized them using preferred modalities, and examined them through various repertoires.
2. To integrate the verbal transmission and joint responsibility with the written communication and individual accountability, learners presented artifacts individually and collaboratively documented their analysis in mindmaps (verbal, visual, and written transmission, collective responsibility).
3. To emphasize decontextualized practices using mundane language, relevant artifacts, and known content, I separated academic skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical tasks from unfamiliar skills and content. Then, I incorporated short mobile learning units to acquaint students with subject-verb-object language frames embedded in familiar themes and processes (i.e., joint narratives, guiding questions, and Photovoice steps) to ease comprehension.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To probe how this MALP-based Photovoice initiative would augment authentic L2 practice and inquiry (1), traverse literacy and linguistic barriers (2), endorse identity negotiation (3), and broaden public mindfulness (4), I designed a learner-focused curriculum. By appreciating the students' sociocultural realities and unique worldviews and fusing (in)formal learning paradigms, this model helped create an equitable space for learners to interact with one another and the world.

Boost L2 Development and Inquiry

One way to support real-life connection is to expose ELLs to meaningful interaction grounded in students' preferred learning modes — oral, visual, gestural, and tactile senses— and culturally relevant artifacts and lifeworlds. Given the repetitive nature of interaction moves, familiar content, and the peer- and web translation scaffolding, everyone had a chance to build content, academic, literacy, critical thinking and problem-solving skills along with data collection and analysis. For instance, students brought tortillas, mortar (*metate*),

and tortilla press (*tortillera*), and photographs to illustrate the tortilla making process. They also shared their visuals and stories in English and Spanish to bring awareness to issues relevant to them. Tasks based on collective practices and reciprocal interests seemed to build confidence and promote communication while enabling them to empathize with one another and participate in storytelling.

Through the longitudinal data collection and previously established trust, they cultivated spur-of-the-moment narratives related to complex, sometimes emotional stories related to parents leaving children in Mexico, crossing the border, feeling isolated, and overcoming barriers through religion, family, and community support. These stories challenged me to reflect, practice self-care, and reframe practice, research, and advocacy with participants.

Despite some reluctance to take on co-researcher roles, students remained invested in English learning through Photovoice and many of them amplified their voices by conveying their realities to representatives from the media and volunteering at neighborhood events. These opportunities honored learners' unique perspectives and transnational literacy practices and stimulated L2 development in ways that appealed to students. Thus, they might have inspired a sense of accomplishment on individual and social levels.

Bridge Literacies and Linguistic Skills

In contrast to teacher-controlled and language-oriented instructional strategies that often presume print literacy abilities and fail to acknowledge ELLs' sociocultural literacies, interests, and access to resources (DeCapua, 2016), the MALP-infused Photovoice model positions learners as knowledge recipients and expands authentic learning through multilingual and multimodal discourse. By blending preferred learning processes, multiple repertoires, and student-led activities, this framework challenged deficit discourses and encouraged sociocultural literacy development and intercultural interactions in a supportive environment. For instance, to bring awareness to question formation, I used high frequency words in English, such as the verb "to be" and "photo" and cognates (e.g., "fotografía" in Spanish and "photograph" in English) to build questions, such as *What is in the photo?* Learners first negotiated the meaning of vocabulary through peer help and Spanish language translations and then dictated these concepts to me in English so that I could write them on a whiteboard. Finally, each copied a term from the whiteboard on a large poster displayed in the class to enable instant reference. Over time, these concepts became accessible through familiar language, translanguaging, and visual representation.

Overall, in line with the MALP, blending immediate experience, relationships, and oral communication assisted with academic, linguistic, and civic socialization. Following the visual elicitation tasks, I noted the relevant vocabulary and sentences uttered by the students on the board (speaking), read them aloud (listening), invited them to read along (reading/collective responsibility), and displayed relevant content on chart paper or scroll for review. They copied the vocabulary in their notebooks (writing/individual responsibility), referred to their notes to write captions for their visuals, and

displayed their texts to raise social awareness. Drawing on this familiar knowledge, students engaged in discussions driven by their visuals with their peers and community members. Although the discussions, visual representations, and linguistic recycling expanded multimodal and multilingual literacy development, investment in print-literacy tasks remained an ongoing struggle for learners with emergent print-literacy skills.

Endorse Identity Expressions



added 5 new photos.

16 hrs ·

Bueno desde que tenia 14 años yegue en este pais y eh aprendido algo a través del tiempo y circunstancias. Y estoy pintando algo con otros compañeros de clase. y creo que ya me esta gustando la pintura. Y estoy pintando mi propia vida y bueno no eh terminado de pintar voy a agregar otros visitas dentro del cuadro. Pero la cosa es nunca te rindas por algo que tu kieras escribe tu libro de la vida. (((((((So this is my life)))))). Y saludita esta noche I feel good. ..

[See Translation](#)



Like Comment Share

Figure 3: Juan's Facebook posting.

The participatory responsive framework can successfully leverage inclusion and strengthen L2 investment by legitimizing learners' agency, authorial voice,

intersecting identities, diverse repertoires, and the transnational discourse in which they engage to navigate L2 discourse communities (Norton, 2013). Students who served as language brokers or buddies (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2009) could amplify their practice, share their knowledge, and gain recognition for their support. Although peer mentoring should be monitored to prevent the monopolization of interactions by more proficient ELLs, over time, this strategy provided opportunities for students to reproduce prefabricated language chunks and establish themselves as competent speakers. However, increased speaking confidence in the classroom did not necessarily enhance the ability to use English for sociopragmatic reasons (i.e., communicate at the doctor's office, workplace, or school) perhaps because students' multilingual capital was not always acknowledged in those spaces (Lypka, 2019; Norton, 2013). Such strategies illustrate the inextricable learning-identity-agency blending, a central tenet of the MALP and Photovoice, and align with the learning-by-doing models familiar to LESLLA learners.

The deployment of technology, translanguaging, and arts enabled participants to link their life trajectories to the course and curate hybrid identities to establish legitimacy with communities of practice. Juan's (all names are pseudonyms) social media posting (Figure 3) about his immigration journey and the written text "esta noche I feel good" illustrates this idea. In discussing his work, Juan aimed to convey his overcoming challenges by practicing religion. His statement reveals his ability to carefully mesh non-linguistic communication modes such as art and digital visuals, dress, posture, and accessories to affirm literacy practices and particularities of his identities with diverse audiences. Thus, the use of multimodality and translanguaging as inclusive strategies can foster inclusion and the articulation of positions toward communities of practice, yet in other social contexts, these practices might stigmatize and position Juan as a less competent L2 speaker.

Envision Personal and Social Change

Through translingual and multimodal practices, this MALP-infused Photovoice model created new opportunities for participants to configure themselves as role models with transcultural connections. In partnership with artists, preservice teachers, family members, and volunteers, they could express their connection to their home, Spanish-, and L2 communities, negotiate their status in a global space, diversify their experience, and bring awareness on migration and educational inequalities and the educational programs at CC. In turn, residents, CBO leaders, journalists, and law enforcement and consular officials could empathize with them on relevant social issues. The end-of-semester culminating digital story and painting exhibit increased students' sense of accomplishment and confidence as well as the visibility of CC. Domingo stated that presenting his work to the public qualified him to "feel happy about this and proud. This is about me and my life." Similarly, Rosalina echoed that "Talking with pictures better than talking with words. I speak better this way. And my son is proud." The visual elicitations and reflections successfully mobilized them to collaboratively address relevant issues while overcoming the

cultural and linguistic incongruity. The excerpt from a volunteer ESL instructor at CC illustrates that collaborating on this MALP-based Photovoice project enabled her to shift her pedagogy from the “practice for learners” to “practice with learners.” Therefore, this process not only supported community building but empowered co-researchers to take on positive identities and volunteers to honor learners’ strengths.

Nevertheless, the changes captured in participants’ narratives would translate differently to their lives. Except for an ELL who started her own business selling cultural artifacts from Mexico and another two who advanced their careers in construction and landscaping and became CC board members, few reported long-term changes and increased L2-speaking confidence. Even though the co-researchers exhibited increased L2 investment by identifying issues, posing questions and hypotheses, collecting and analyzing data, their engagement has diminished at the end of the course given their work and domestic commitments.

Limitations

These preliminary results should be interpreted in light of my evolving LESLLA instructor and researcher identities and various constraints. Even though the open-enrollment policy, sporadic access to technology, resources, and volunteer support, as well as students’ family, work, and commuting needs impeded participant engagement, through observations and discussions, I have gained insights to co-researchers’ unique perspectives, implemented instructional and research alterations, and reflected on procedural challenges. Although I was not able to collect data from more participants to provide an in-depth discussion on their L2 socialization patterns, the ethnographic nature of this project, extended data collection, and the community’s assistance enriched my understanding of participants’ insights and strengths.

Despite my efforts to establish trust and mutual engagement, some students remained reluctant to express their experiences, perhaps because of their unfamiliarity with the research process and my non-indigenous researcher-practitioner status. Finally, given the limited follow-up opportunities with participants and residents, the interpretation of personal and social transformation and the long-term benefits of this initiative remain speculative. Integrating debriefing and inviting public interaction during data collection would have increased the significance of this report.

CONCLUSION

Adopting community-centered approaches in the curriculum can help instructors problematize Eurocentric educational orientation and tap into students’ practical mindsets, transnational ties, and semiotic resources to transcend geographical, linguistic, and national boundaries. The exploratory findings suggest that blending the MALP processes with visual documentation, elicitation, storytelling, public dialogue, and reflection can expand the meaning-making potential, cultural self-awareness, belonging, and the development of

multiliteracies competence. However, initiation of transformative practices should implicate ongoing identity negotiations among the students, instructor, and community members. Such joint explorations are even more critical in low-resource LESLLA classrooms where instructors may lack competence with the students' linguistic and sociocultural wealths.

In contrast to standardized pedagogical-empirical procedures that tend to marginalize LESLLA students, meshing languages, texts, cultural symbols, and digital, geographical, and imaginary spaces can liberate learners to take risks, reconfigure themselves as resourceful agents, and take on meaningful L2 practices (1), connect (digital) literacy and (non)linguistic skills (2), and articulate transnational identities (3) and social rapport (4). Overall, the MALP-based Photovoice model encouraged the synchronous development of linguistic, content, academic, technology, research, civic, and life skills, which are difficult to attain in courses that might not be appropriate and accessible to LESLLA students. Drawing on their primary oral communication mode and experiential learning through observation, modeling, social relationships, and visual resources they selected germane topics, applied their knowledge, and engendered action-driven conversation. As part of this initiative, they negotiated their identities with artists who organized painting and photography workshops, police officers who offered tips on safety, and COB leaders who discussed leadership and employment opportunities. My extensive engagement with LESLLA learners empowered me to contextualize instruction within digitally enhanced authentic relationships, learner identities, everyday experiences, and needs and continue to jointly mold pedagogy, research, and advocacy within an inclusive community of practice.

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APPENDIX A: MALP TEACHER PLANNING CHECKLIST

Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm – MALP Teacher Planning Checklist
A. Accept Conditions for Learning
A1. I am making this lesson/project immediately relevant to my students' lives. How?
A2. I am helping students develop and maintain interconnectedness with each other and the instructor. How?
B. Combine Processes for Learning
B1. I am incorporating both shared responsibility and individual accountability. How?
B2. I am scaffolding the written word through oral interaction. How?
C. Focus on New Activities for Learning
C1. I am focusing on tasks requiring academic ways of thinking. How?
C2. I am making these tasks accessible with familiar language and content. How?

Source: © DeCapua, A. & Marshall, H.W. (2011). *Breaking new ground: Teaching students with limited or interrupted formal education in U.S. secondary schools*, p. 68.

Changing Routes, Changing Needs: Perspectives on Migration and Language Teaching in Europe

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores the relations among language policies, immigration policies and language teaching as a broad frame for adult literacy and L2 learning in Europe. It discusses the place of languages in immigration policies, focusing on the policies promoted by the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE) through legislative acts and guidelines. Two turning points are relevant: the laws on language requirements introduced by many European countries for either residence or citizenship, and the so-called refugee crisis in 2015, both of which have imposed new tasks on all stakeholders. European policies seem to be ambivalent: while access to the host country's language is recommended as a means of integration and is supported through funding, the position of migrant languages is still unclear in the social, cultural, educational and institutional space and in European public discourse on languages, which gives a key role to multilingualism.

INTRODUCTION

According to the UNHCR, we are witnessing the greatest flows of displaced people since the Second World War, with 65.6 million forcibly displaced people and, among them, nearly 22.5 million refugees (UNHCR, 2017). Although the main countries in critical areas are outside Europe and North America, the management of these flows is at the top of the political agenda in Western countries. The European “refugee crisis” or “migrant crisis” in 2015, when about 1,000,000 people fled to Europe, was the turning point in both policies and Europeans' views on immigration. Europe's inability to receive adequately a sudden and massive influx of migrants and the rise of xenophobia and racism in

European populations led to a re-thinking of existing policies for migrant integration (European Commission, 2016).

In 2017, some 20.7 million residents were citizens of non-member states, called “third-country nationals,” while 33.5 million inhabitants were born outside the European Union. About 16 million EU citizens live in a member state of the Union other than the one where they were born.¹ The data do not include irregular migrants, who live in a member state without residence and/or work permit and are the most probable victims of racism and the most vulnerable on the labour market, in housing and in education (FRA, 2017). An extensive provision of language courses is offered to the resident migrants. According to a Report of the European Agency for Fundamental Rights, 26 out of 28 EU Member States now provide some funding for language-learning programmes as part of either educational or integration programmes (FRA, 2017). Thus, it can be affirmed that adult migrants have acquired the possibility to learn the language (or languages) of their European host country in the last two decades, although language courses vary considerably in quality, target groups of learners, and providers (from state institutions to volunteers). Languages play a major role in the public debate on integration and the linguistic knowledge of migrants is increasingly subject to legal regulation.

The refugee crisis puts the already fragile reception framework on the line. Even if the number of people applying for asylum Europe has sharply decreased (to 178,500 in 2017) due to political factors, such as the EU-Turkey agreement, border regulations in Hungary, and the Italy-Libya agreement, the management, reception and possible integration of refugees remains a priority. 645,000 people asked for international protection in 2017, mostly in Germany (198,255), Italy (126,550), France (82,135), Greece (53,160), and the United Kingdom (30,545) (Eurostat, 2017).² The recent *Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals*, issued by the European Commission (2016) as a response to the social and political emergency, includes for the first time refugees and asylum seekers in migrant groups targeted by integration policies, previously limited to legally resident migrants and their families.

Language teaching to refugees is provided in many European countries by state and public institutions, NGOs and volunteers, according to the national laws and the financial resources allocated. An overview is not yet available, especially with regard to adult education programmes. Nevertheless, specificities of L2 teaching to asylum seekers and refugees settled in Europe are emerging from case studies, educational projects, and teacher experiences.

¹ All citizens of the 28 EU member states (2017) are automatically EU citizens and have extra rights and responsibilities, such as the right to live and move within the EU without discrimination because of their nationality, and the right to participate in the political life of the Union. Citizens of non-member states are not EU citizens, and their statuses, rights and responsibilities are regulated by national and European laws and by international treaties. The number of inhabitants born outside the EU has mere statistical value, since they can be either EU or non-EU citizens.

² Since 2017, the trend has been towards a further decrease in the number of arrivals of asylum seekers.

“Refugees” have many possible legal statuses: irregular, applicant, asylum seeker, appealing against rejection, migrant under subsidiary protection, refugee, subject to an expulsion order. Some of them have reached the desired country. Others are trapped in the country where they landed, especially Italy and Greece, by the European agreement on refugees, which compels migrants to apply for international protection in the first entry country (Regulation (EU), 2013).

According to their statuses, adult migrants are hosted in different facilities, contact different figures, have different projects. They learn languages in very different contexts with volunteers or professionally qualified teachers. Their language needs vary accordingly.

This paper focuses on relations among language policies, immigration policies and language teaching as a broad frame for adult literacy and L2 learning in Europe.

It poses three questions:

- How is learning of the language(s) framed in immigration and integration policies in Europe?
- What is the space of immigrants’ languages in the language and educational policies of multilingual Europe?
- How do these policies affect language teaching, especially to the most vulnerable learners, that is, refugees, and non-literate and low-literate adults?

To answer these questions, I will focus on two turning points, that is, the introduction of language requirements for entry, residence and citizenship starting from the late 1990s, and the above-mentioned migrant crisis.

I will discuss language in European immigration policy, sketching its background (actors, legal language requirements for migrants), and how policies consider plurilingual speakers in multilingual Europe. In the second part, I will link existing policies to the reception and inclusion measures of refugees and consider the language needs of asylum seekers and refugees, discussing tasks and resources for language teaching.

LANGUAGE(S) TEACHING IN EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION POLICIES

Actors and developments

Even if one considers only language policies, the expression “European policy on immigration” is misleading and each term requires clarification.

“Europe” refers to at least three different and non-overlapping entities: the geographical space, and two main supranational organisations, the European Union (EU), with 28 member states up to now (2017), and the Council of Europe (CoE), with 47 member states. The EU and the CoE have different powers.

The EU, as a political body to which member states have delegated part of their sovereignty, issues different types of legal acts, some of which are binding on member states and others not, and sets goals that all member states must achieve, through national laws. The balance of national policies of the member state and communitarian governance is complex. As for immigration, the EU

defines the conditions for entry and legal residence, while each member state decides the volumes of admission. Integration policies are the responsibility only of member states, while the Commission is responsible for defining common goals and taking actions for technical and financial support, with additional initiatives by local authorities and bodies (European Commission, 2106).

The CoE, which aims at “promoting democracy and protecting human rights and the rule of law in Europe” (Council of Europe, 2017a), plays a role of advocacy and moral suasion through initiatives, protocols, projects, recommendations, and monitoring activities. As for multilingualism and languages, the CoE has been committed to promoting linguistic diversity and language learning since the early ‘50s. One of the main results is the *Common European Framework of Reference for Language Teaching and Learning (Framework)* (Council of Europe, 2001), which has been translated into 40 languages and is the pivot tool in language teaching in Europe.

Due to the plurality of the decision makers, “policies” would better describe the actual situation. This paper focuses on Europe, primarily on EU immigration and integration policies.

The term “immigration” itself should be better defined, because in the EU it encompasses both intra-EU migration and migration by “third country-nationals.” These two kinds of migration are now differently ruled as far as social and political rights, residence permit and freedom of circulation among countries are concerned. European integration policies address mainly non-EU citizens.

Integration policies at the European level date to about 2000. In Tampere (1999), the Council of the European Union³ established the principle that the Union must ensure “fair treatment of third country nationals who reside legally on the territory of its Member States” and it “should aim at granting them rights and obligations comparable to those of EU citizens” (European Parliament, 1999). In 2004, the Council laid down the foundations for integration policy, agreeing to eleven “common basic principles for immigrant integration policy” (Council of the European Union, 2004), which in 2005 the European Commission adopted as common policy objectives in the first *Common Agenda for Integration* (Commission of the European Communities, 2005).

Immigration was recognized as “a permanent feature of European society”: if “orderly and well-managed,” member states could benefit (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 15). Integration of immigrants and their descendants was indicated as critical in managing immigration. The “Common principles” define integration as “a dynamic bilateral process of mutual accommodation of all immigrants and residents” of the states. Furthermore, it implies respect for the fundamental values of the European Union (Common principles 1, 2).

The fourth principle states that “basic knowledge of the language, history, and institutions of the host society” is an “indispensable” factor (Council of the European Union, 2004). Thus, good introductory courses are recommended. Language courses should be targeted to the needs of migrants in the different

³ The Council of the European Union is formed of the ministers of the governments of Member states and is the main EU decision-making body, together with the European Parliament.

stages of their “integration processes” and with different backgrounds, easily accessible and, if needed, online, attentive to the specific needs of women, to promote their participation in the labour market, as well as of vulnerable groups. Illiterate are expressly mentioned (Niessen & Schibel, 2004).

As for language courses, documents propose as common goals laws and practices already existing at the national level and boost their development. In Italy, for example, language courses for migrants were introduced as a specific activity of public Adult Education centres in 1998, as a part of the general reform of the sector (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2000).

Legal linguistic requirements for immigrants

The stress on the central role of language learning in integration has led to extensive language course provision in Europe, as mentioned above.

Language, together with knowledge of the history and institutions of the host society, become the guarantee of integration as well as the sign of the migrant’s willingness to participate in the host society. In other words, learning the language of the host country swings between two opposite poles: a right or a duty, an opportunity for inclusion or a tool for exclusion.

Since the turn of the century, an increasing number of European countries set legal linguistic requirements for adult migrants in the framework of their immigration policies. In 81% of CoE member states, including 26 EU members, adult migrants are required to certify their second language competence for one or more of the following administrative acts: entry into the host country, permanent residence permit, and citizenship. Mandatory language courses, certification of the acquired level of language competence and, more often, language tests have been introduced for migrants. Moreover, a Knowledge of Society test is compulsory in 18 CoE countries (Extramina, Pulinx, & Van Avermaet, 2014).

These language requirements concern only third-country nationals. EU citizens can access the courses for migrants but are not subject to any obligation.

Four trends are relevant in setting legal linguistic requirements for third-country nationals (ALTE LAMI, 2016):

- a constant increase in tests since the first survey in 2002;
- the preference given to tests rather than to compulsory courses;
- the use of the levels of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Language* to define the required thresholds;
- a convergence towards level A2 (the second out of six levels) for residence permit, even if there is a high diversity in required levels, ranging from A1.1 (less than A1) to B1 and exemplified in Table 1 for the cases of France, Germany and Italy.

Several critics have questioned the practice of testing for migration purposes, increasingly widespread in Western countries. They have discussed the underlying acritical correlation between language and citizenship, which refers to the ideological connection “one language one nation” (Extra, Spotti, & Van Avermaet, 2011), and the legitimacy itself of language testing for migrants,

insofar as discrimination based on language or education appears contrary to democratic laws and even to human rights (Shohamy, 2007). The criticisms are pertinent, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss them.

Table 1

Compulsory language tests: three cases

Country (dates of introduction and revision)	Entry	Residence permit	Citizenship
France (2005, 2016)	40-hour course	A1.1, A2 since 2018	B1 speaking
Germany (2004)	A1 (family reunification)	B1	B1
Italy (2009)	A2 speaking	A2	None

Activists, scholars, professional organizations, political bodies have contested the validity, equity, and fairness of the tests as the only means for determining language proficiency and have pointed out the risk of discrimination that the tests entail. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, composed of representatives of the national parliaments, expressed its concern for the discriminatory effects of the tests in 2014 through a Recommendation:

Statistics and evaluation studies show that language and integration tests have led to a decrease in the number of applicants for family reunification, permanent residence permits and naturalisation. These tests can also have a discriminatory impact, depending on the gender, age, educational background and nationality of the people concerned. (Parliamentary Assembly, 2014, Par.3)

The discriminatory effect resulted also from an impact study carried out for the Italian Ministry of the Interior one year after the introduction of the test for the permanent residence permit. The test had a dampening effect on permit requests (-4%), but the drop was greater for specific groups, e.g., Chinese (Ghio, 2011). In general, speakers of typologically distant languages and LESLLA learners are strongly disadvantaged because of their difficulty in reaching the required level in the required time. Language requirements were among the factors which prompted renewed attention to L2 teaching to non-literate and low-literate adults in Europe (Rocca, Minuz, & Borri 2018).

Immigrants as plurilingual language learners

Two additional problems concerning linguistic requirements for migrants deserve mention, that is, the misunderstanding of the multilingual nature of

modern societies and the simplification of the concept of competence, which laws on language requirements imply.

The German law that introduced the obligation for migrants to prove their language competence spoke about a “sufficient knowledge” (*ausreichende Kenntnisse*) of German language and society (Zuwanderungsgesetz, 2004, §43 Abs.3). One year later, the French law used the same expression (*connaissance suffisante*) (Code de l’entrée, 2005. Art. L 314-2). However, the German law established “sufficiency” at B1, the French at A1.1. The choices depended largely on the composition of the migrant population, immigration policies and goals of integration of the two countries (ALTE LAMI, 2016).

However, the following questions remain:

- What is the “sufficiency level” to live, work, participate in a host society?
- Do the linguistic behaviours of adult migrants correspond to levels?
- Are there levels at all?

A sample of spoken language of a plurilingual speaker, part of an interview collected in 2015 (Minuz, Rocca, & Borri 2016), helps to better focus these questions (Table 2, translated in standard English). The interviewee’s speech presents the persistence of linguistic phenomena that are typical of the basic stage of language acquisition and are mainly concentrated in the noun and verbal syntagmata and non-standard phrases, typical of a post-basic stage in language acquisition (underlined). Simultaneously, some phrases show the speaker’s command of complex sentence structure and pragmatic devices such as phatic expressions (*lo sai che*) and modulators (*per forza*) (bold) (Giacaloni Ramat, 2003).

The communication sounds efficient, where efficacy lies mostly at the rhetorical level. The speaker engages the interlocutrix with jokes about stereotypes of Italians who do not speak foreign languages and ironizes, using appropriate lexical means, on the bureaucratic belief that “with papers in your hand” (an idiomatic Italian expression meaning “with a certificate”) you speak perfectly.

Table 2	
Linguistic interview	
I: allora io volevo sapere. il bengalese è la tua lingua madre	I: so, I wanted to know. Bengali is your mother tongue
H: sì	H: yes
I: l’inglese l’hai studiato a scuola	I: you studied English at school
H: sì	H: yes
I: quanto tempo l’hai studiato?	I: how long did you study it?
H: fino che superiore studiato <u>inglese</u>	H: I studied English up to high school
I: e il russo l’hai come l’hai imparato?	I: and how did you learn Russian?
H: il russo	H: Russian
I: un corso	I: a course

H: un corso ho fatto	H: I took a course
I: appena sei arrivato?	I: as soon as you arrived?
H: appena sei arrivato ho fatto due mesi corso . Adesso molto parole che dimenticato perché lo sai che quando arrivato Italia non funziona inglese non funziona de russo io non capisce italiano per questa quando ero imparato italiano io non è andato in scuola solo ascoltare parlare basta vede tv	H: as soon as you arrived I took a two month course. now there are a lot of words that I forgot because you know that when I arrived in Italy English did not work Russian did not work I do not understand Italian so when I was learning Italian I did not go to school, I just listened, talked, that's all, watched tv
I: ah guardi spesso la tivù	I: ah you often watch tv
H: sì solo ascoltare de no...	H: yes just listen to no ...
I: ah	I: ah
H: tivù perché non è andato in scuola	H: tv because I did not go to school
I: e adesso invece vuoi fare il corso	I: and now you want to take the course
H: sì fare il corso	H: yes take the course
I: devi farlo	I: you have to do it
H: certo per forza perché leggi dici (ride) se io parla bene italiano non è funziona bisogna perfettamente uno corso con un foglio con mano io capisce italiano	H: for sure because the law says (laughs) if I speak good Italian, it does not work. I need perfectly a course. With a piece a paper, I understand Italian
I: mh	I: mh
H: è per questo	H: that's why

A single defined level of the *Framework* cannot describe the interviewee's language competence, as the tests for migrants require. Experts from the Council of Europe have pointed out the misunderstanding and even the abuse of the notion of levels. Since many people have different levels of competence in different skills, it would be preferable to speak about "profiles" instead of "levels", especially when referring to migrants, who have very complex multilingual communication according to situations, interlocutors and topics (Krumm, 2007). Levels are meant as reference in teaching planning and credit recognition, not as standards to be reached. A certain level is much less "indicative of the degree of integration. It is only a measure of linguistic ability" (Parliamentary Assembly, 2014).

The question of a linguistic threshold for active participation in the host society hides the actual migrant linguistic behaviours as plurilingual subjects. What they can do in their languages, including the language(s) of the host society, should come in the foreground.

Figure 1 roughly presents the interviewee's uses of his languages. He is a Bengali man, 36 years old at the time of the interview, who had lived in Italy for 17 years and has a Russian technical degree. He has a rich language repertoire (Bengali, English, Arabic, Italian, Russian, Urdu, Hindi) on which he relies in a

dense system of social networks in Italy, in Bangladesh and in other countries. As for the theme of citizenship, it is worth mentioning his participation in public and political spheres both in Italy and in Bangladesh. He is a typical example of a transnational citizen, active in multiple “national” public spheres. There is no longer any overlapping of one nation, language and citizenship.

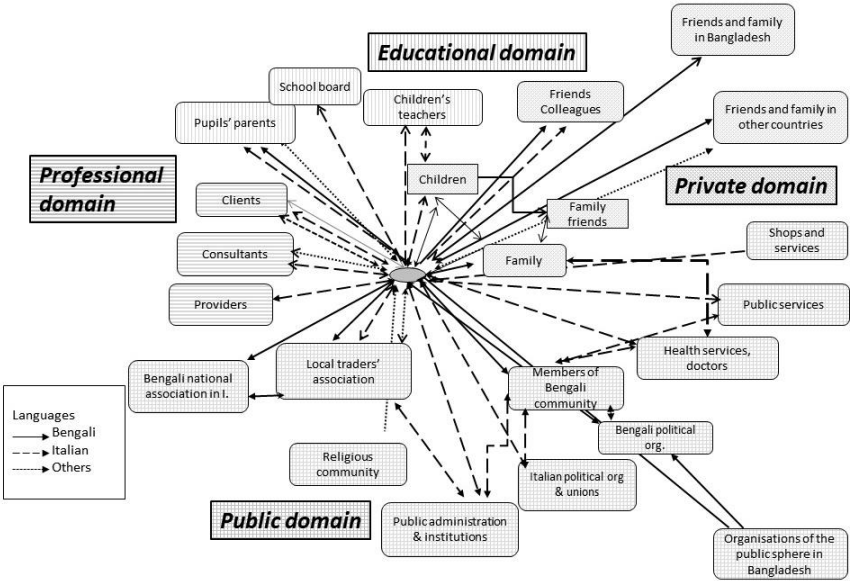


Figure 1: Interviewee’s networks

Plurilingualism and multilingualism are key notions in educational as well as political discourses in Europe. The monolingual bias, which is reflected by legal language requirements for migrants, contrasts with this strong commitment.

On the educational level, the *Framework* views learners as plurilingual subjects. This assumption modifies the aim of language education itself. Plurilingual individuals build up a communicative competence in which languages interrelate and interact. They rely on all their linguistic resources as well as on paralinguistic means to achieve effective communication with a particular interlocutor in a given situation. Thus, language education should aim to develop a linguistic repertoire in which all linguistic abilities have a place (Council of Europe, 2001).

Plurilingualism as a teaching approach has been applied mostly in education programmes for children and young adults, while it is still a relatively unexplored field in Adult Education. However, considerations of adults’ multilingualism have led to the identification of some assumptions, although to no specific educational projects as yet. Drawing from a variety of sources, the following short list of suggestions can be proposed (Gogolin, 2002; Peyton, 2012; Beacco, Little, & Hedges 2014; Minuz et al., 2016).

- Keep in mind the linguistic varieties with which adult migrants are in contact and which can be acquired.

- Avoid marginalization and raise the status of varieties in the immigrant repertoire, supporting the legitimacy of the languages of origin in the host society.
- Stimulate migrants' awareness of both their linguistic behaviour as plurilingual speakers and the similarities / differences among languages.
- Pay due attention to strategic skills in evaluating linguistic-communicative competence.
- Root teaching practices in the language (and reading) practices of the learner.

Learner self-awareness tools, diagnostic tools and teaching materials are becoming available (Lazenby Simpson, 2012; Council of Europe, 2017b; Borri, Caon, Minuz, & Tonioli, 2016-17).

The space of migrant languages in multilingual Europe

Multilingualism also plays an essential role in the political and ideological construction of the European Union, where 24 official languages, about 60 acknowledged minority languages, and a number of immigrant languages are spoken. European multilingualism is regulated by treaties and legislative acts aimed at preserving cultural and linguistic diversity (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000, Art. 22; European Commission, 2005; Treaty on European Union, 2008, Art.3).

It is this diversity that makes the European Union what it is: not a 'melting pot' in which differences are rendered down, but a common home in which diversity is celebrated, and where our many mother tongues are a source of wealth and a bridge to greater solidarity and mutual understanding. (European Commission, 2005, p.2)

As the quotation shows, multiple values are attributed to the preservation of a multilingual Europe: diversity is a factor of economic development, social cohesion and political unification. It is also a founding value of European identity, what "makes the European Union what it is."

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the many contradictions on multilingualism in the public discourse and administrative practice, and the underlying idea of languages as strong, well-identified entities. With regard to immigration, multilingualism refers mostly to national and indigenous minority languages, although EU policy documents (scarcely) quote migrant languages. They are marginalised *de facto* in the process of identity construction to which multilingualism should contribute. From this perspective, the practice of language testing for immigrants can be considered both a tool and a sign of marginalisation. The opposing forces of adherence to democratic and humanitarian values and the *Realpolitik* of immigration control strain European policies on multilingualism, as they do in immigration and integration policies.

Teaching L2 to refugees: challenges and perspectives

The legal status of displaced people who enter Europe defines the language teaching that the receiving countries provide and influences their linguistic needs, as mentioned above. The endeavour of refugees to achieve L2 can be described as “learning in limbo.” Limbo means “uncertainty,” which, for a long period, is the condition of migrants entering Europe.

Attitudes, motivations, educational needs as well as language programmes offered are related to the steps in the long path from first arrival to the approval or final rejection of one’s application for international protection. Although the reform towards a common European asylum procedure is underway, and national procedures are still different, in all countries it takes from months to 3-4 years to be completed (ECRE, 2016).

Let us consider the case of Italy (Figure 2). In the first step, the focus is on material and legal needs (first support). In terms of language needs, interpreters and mediators play a major role. Uncertainty dominates the second period, from the application to the granting of refugee status, the granting of subsidiary protection or the appeal against the commission’s decision. Language courses, aimed at supporting refugees in the asylum procedure and in their first contacts with the new society, are regularly offered in reception centres, even if language provision is widely different in quality across the country. Integration programmes in the true meaning of the term are possible only for migrants with legal refugee status, but consistent and organised language provision at the national level is lacking.

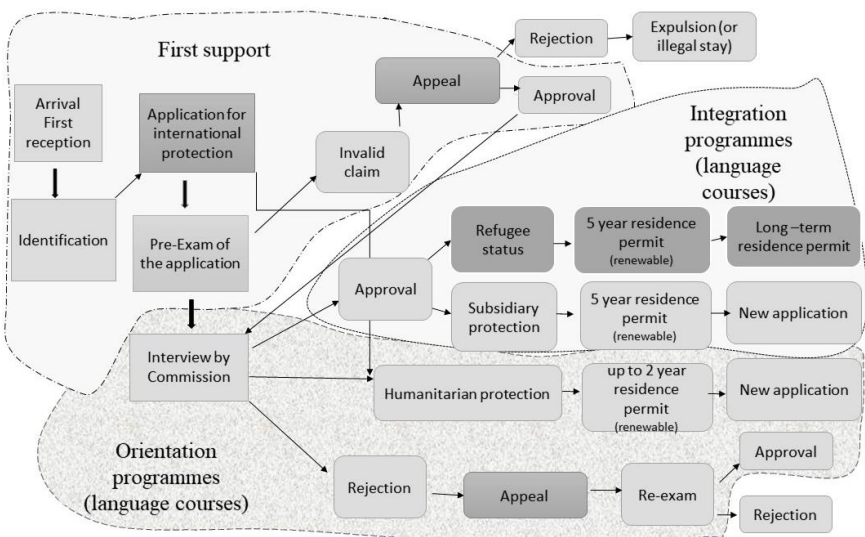


Figure 2: Language learning during the asylum procedure in Italy

Uncertainty and a sense of isolation are shared sentiments of asylum seekers and refugees across Europe. Refugees who are members of a Swedish association, an example of refugee self-organisation (www.supportgroup.se),

complain of long waits, exclusion from society, inability to live a normal life, and loss of hope, ambition and control over their own lives (lecture by Michel Lefranc). On the other hand, teachers contacted in Italy complain of difficulty in identifying asylum seekers' language needs due, once again, to their isolation, inability to plan their future, and lack of autonomy, which in many cases affect motivation (Minuz & Borri 2017).

Well-established approaches in language teaching of migrant adults appear to be in crisis. For example, the biographical approach, the basis of powerful adult education traditions, is to be avoided when biographical narratives are a source of pain, unless such narratives are guided by experts or trained teachers in safe spaces. Refugees and asylum seekers do not seem to share the interests and needs usually expressed by resident migrants, and language courses are difficult to organise when learners lack attention and concentration because of trauma, mourning or urgent problems. Teachers report a higher number of non-literate and low-literate learners than in usual migrant classes.

Some teacher competences (not necessarily new) are demanded. Teachers should be able to:

- plan short-term, modular "courses" for classes that may appear and disappear within weeks and in which attendance is occasional;
- manage multi-level and heterogeneous groups in which there may be learners who need primary literacy courses;
- offer language lessons which can motivate "here and now," when individual or social motivation is lacking;
- negotiate multilingual and multicultural relations;
- change plans together with the changing personal and legal conditions of learners;
- learn to deal with extreme personal conditions of learners (teachers themselves need help to face such conditions);
- be able to deal with heterogeneous groups.

Volunteers play a major role in offering language support to refugees. The Council of Europe (2017b) has provided *Language Support for Adult Refugees: A Council of Europe toolkit (Toolkit)* especially to volunteers who have no specific qualifications and offer language aid to asylum seekers and refugees. The intention is not to "professionalize" the volunteers but to provide them with information, including information on language learning and teaching, as well as suggestions and materials to be used in language support to refugees. The *Toolkit* facilitates their adaptation to the different conditions of the theoretical, methodological and operational equipment of Language teaching. Therefore, qualified teachers have appreciated the *Toolkit* as well.

If speaking of integration as the goal of L2 teaching becomes problematic because of the uncertain situations of many asylum seekers, the different purpose of "welcoming" and "receiving" them then becomes primary. Coherently, the Council of Europe's project focuses on helping migrants approach the country of arrival or transit, explore the new environment, and orient themselves culturally and linguistically. This exploration will be guided by the short-term,

medium-term and long-term needs of the asylum seekers and refugees, relying on each learner's linguistic and extra-linguistic competences and giving them value.

In general, the best language programmes follow the interaction between individuals, migrant families and groups and the multiple facets of host societies from first basic needs in camps or reception centres to job counselling centres, vocational centres, kindergartens and schools.

For refugees and asylum seekers, learning the language can be a way to rebuild a form of individual identity after their flight. Thus, from the very beginning, language should be taught along with literacy, digital competences, job orientation, information on the new environment, health care, and whatever else is needed. Pluricultural and plurilingual approaches are strongly recommended.

CONCLUSIONS

Educational and language policies for adult migrants in the EU are contradictory in principles and effects. While access to the host country's language is strongly recommended as a means of integration, and is supported through programmes and funding, the setting of legal standards for language competence risks preventing instead of fostering integration. Moreover, it seems that the position of migrant languages is still unclear in the European social, cultural, educational and institutional space and in European public discourse on languages, which focuses on national and historical regional and minority languages. The political notion of multilingualism, which is presented as a key concept founding the European identity, struggles to accommodate the languages of immigrants. Since the notion of multilingualism is strongly connected with national identity claims, the relevance given to language risks turning languages from an integration factor into a barrier.

In this context, the influx of refugees has strained integration and reception systems, which have already proved ineffective. At the same time, the migrant crisis has brought to the attention of large sectors of the sympathetic public and policy makers the need for innovative ways to approach the problem.

The *Action Plan*, which was issued by the European Commission (2016) eleven years after the *Common Agenda* (Commission of the European Communities, 2005), takes stock of the past decades. The results are disappointing: "notwithstanding the efforts made, third-country nationals across the EU continue to fare worse than EU citizens in terms of employment, education, and social inclusion outcomes," while "discrimination, prejudice, racism and xenophobia are rising." This requires a new effort, even more so if we have to provide rapid answers to the changing needs of asylum seekers and refugees.

The process of building societies in which people from different backgrounds can live together and understand one another ultimately defines the purpose of language teaching in migration.

The interweaving of didactic, social and political dimensions is intrinsic to this teaching. Mother tongues and that/those of the host country are socially perceived as integration or exclusion tools, identity founders and signs for individuals and communities, means of self-representation, brands of citizenship. The laws that in almost all European countries link residence and citizenship to knowledge of the language are the most visible aspects of these themes. What we mean by integration, what it is in multilingual and multicultural societies and for adult migrants, reverberates on the conception and approaches of language teaching as well as on language representations.

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LESLLA Learners in the United States: A Portrait in Census Data, 1900-2015

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ABSTRACT

LESLLA adults bring little literacy or formal education to their host country second language acquisition and assimilation contexts. Their invisibility and marginality is perpetuated by a persistent lack of solid data and research. This paper aims to help researchers, advocates and practitioners paint and utilize a more comprehensive evidence-based portrait of adult LESLLA adults and their needs using freely available census data. The estimated number of LESLLA adults in the United States in 1900 is slightly over a half million and has increased to over two million by 2015. Although most LESLLA immigrants appear to have at least partially integrated/assimilated into the United States within 5 to 10 years after arrival, a substantial number have not. The paper suggests ways in which future research, advocacy and policymaking can use the census data to better understand and support the growing LESLLA population in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

LESLLA adults migrating to new countries typically bring little literacy or formal education into their host country second language acquisition and assimilation contexts. They are often marginalized as learners and participants by the policies and design of host-country language education and immigrant integration programs and services. Advocates and practitioners serving LESLLA adults frequently find themselves challenged to present compelling data-based information about the extent and needs of the LESLLA population in their countries and local areas. The lack of solid data perpetuates the invisibility and marginality of the LESLLA adults and their families. This paper aims to help researchers, advocates and practitioners paint a more comprehensive evidence-based portrait of adult LESLLA learners and their needs using freely available census data. Although this paper focuses on LESLLA population in the United States, similar techniques can be used in other countries as well.

There has been considerable research on the history of immigrants, their communities, language and ethnic identities in the United States (e.g., Bayor, 2016). These studies describe that, in the 17th and 18th centuries, about 1 million immigrants from Europe came to the United States, roughly half of whom were English speakers. Half of this migration stream wound up as indentured workers. By the middle of the 19th century, most immigrants arriving in the United States originated in northern Europe. By the early 20th century, most immigrants entering the U.S. came from southern and eastern Europe, with a peak of about 1.3 million immigrants arriving in 1907.

Changes in federal immigration laws influenced these changing (im)migration patterns. Some of the key Acts were the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which was not repealed until 1943. The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 established restrictive formulas based on national origin that persisted until 1965. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 opened up immigration from Latin America and Asia, replacing ethnic quotas with per-country quotas (LeMay & Barkan, 1999).

Across these changing policies on the immigration priorities of language, education, literacy (and skills more generally), LESLLA immigrants have systematically been disadvantaged in processes of immigration, naturalization and assimilation. Improvement of education, training and immigrant integration policies and services has been complicated by a persistent lack of information about the number of these adult learners in need of special assistance and supports of various kinds (LeMay & Barkan, 1999).

Although data from national and international surveys such as the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development can identify and describe subpopulations of LESLLA adults (Reder, 2014), they typically have sample sizes too small and are not systematically repeated over sufficiently long periods of time to enable rich historical portraits to be created. In this paper, we begin to paint a portrait of LESLLA adults over time within the growing U.S. population, using U.S. Census microdata to identify LESLLA adults. This paper is intended less as a detailed research report and more as a demonstration of the using of census data to make the LESLLA population in the United States more visible. It is hoped that the paper will serve as an initial resource and gateway to future research, advocacy and policy development that will improve the resettlement and integration of LESLLA adults in the U.S.

METHODS

This paper traces the historical development of the LESLLA population in the United States over the past couple centuries with public use data sets collected by the United States Census Bureau (www.census.gov). Both the Decennial Census data and the American Community Survey (ACS) data collected by the Bureau are utilized. The decennial Census is an enumeration and survey of the entire population, conducted every 10 years. The ACS is a smaller scale survey of target communities that is conducted much more frequently,

rotating which communities are surveyed in any given year, with the particular communities surveyed varying from year to year. The two utilize highly similar questions and procedures so that their results are comparable.

These data are collected within two frames: individuals and households. This paper focuses on the individual data. The Census Bureau and others typically report summaries of these individual-level data for different geographical aggregates such as towns, cities, counties, states and the country as a whole. These aggregate reports rarely contrast the combinations of immigration, age, education, literacy and English proficiency needed to identify populations of LESLLA learners. To accomplish this, the public access individual records -- usually termed U.S. Census Microdata samples (PUMS) -- were directly analyzed.

Public Use Microdata Samples

PUMS data and documentation from numerous decennial census and ACS surveys are accessible on numerous websites maintained by the Bureau and other federal agencies and national organizations. For many research projects, whether focused on the United States or internationally, use of the IPUMS website (www.ipums.org) of data, documentation and related services maintained by the University of Minnesota (Ruggles, Genadek, Goeken, Grover, & Sobek, 2017) is highly recommended:

IPUMS provides census and survey data from around the world integrated across time and space. IPUMS integration and documentation makes it easy to study change, conduct comparative research, merge information across data types, and analyze individuals within family and community context. Data and services are available free of charge. ...

Our signature activity is harmonizing variable codes and documentation to be fully consistent across datasets. This work rests on an extensive technical infrastructure developed over more than two decades, including the first structured metadata system for integrating disparate datasets. By using a data warehousing approach, we extract, transform, and load data from diverse sources into a single view schema so data from different sources become compatible. The large-scale data integration from IPUMS makes thousands of population datasets interoperable. (What is IPUMS?, n.d.)

For the current project, relevant curated and harmonized data and documentation pertaining to U.S. census microdata was downloaded from one of the IPUMS websites, IPUMS USA:

IPUMS USA collects, preserves and harmonizes U.S. census microdata and provides easy access to this data with enhanced documentation. Data includes decennial censuses from 1790 to 2010 and American Community Surveys (ACS) from 2000 to the present. (IPUMS USA, n.d.)

A custom microdata set was downloaded from IPUMS USA and imported into Stata Version 15.1 for this study. This data set included U.S.-resident

individuals born outside of the United States or its territories, age 16 or older at the given point in time, were included in each year of decennial census data (1850-2010) and five-year ACS data (2005, 2015). Although decennial census data are available since 1790 when the first U.S. Census was conducted, characteristics of individual members of households were not systematically delineated until the census of 1850 (Gauthier, 2002). Thus the analysis here begins with 1850. The appropriate sampling weights for each year of census and ACS survey data were applied to generate the population estimates presented in this paper.

Identifying LESLLA Immigrants in United States Census Data

The operational definition of LESLLA adults in this paper is adults age 16 or older not born in the United States who do not speak English well and are not literate in any language or have a 4th grade or lower education. Table 1 displays the availability of the key variables involved in identifying and analyzing this LESLLA population in each year of data examined. Availability here means that IPUMS has curated and documented harmonized variables that are consistent across the time periods and data sets involved. The specificity of information such as country of birth and year of immigration to the U.S. may vary across years in the original data collected, but is comparable in terms of the harmonized variables in Table 1. The second and third columns in the left of the table indicate which of the two types of census data (decennial census or American Community Survey) is used for each year. Notice there is a gap in the decennial census data for 1890; according to the IPUMS documentation, a fire in 1921 destroyed most of the 1890 census data.

The next column moving to the right in Table 1 shows the availability of harmonized data by year about recency of immigration (harmonized data refers here refers to data coming from different studies that has been made directly comparable, e.g., recency of immigration is recoded into binary variables: less than 5 years, 5 years or longer). Although recency of immigration is not itself required to identify LESLLA adults (given that they meet the English speaking ability and literacy/education criteria), we will see below that recency of immigration is helpful in interpreting the trends over time within the identified LESLLA population and for considering the extent to which language and other immigrant resettlement services are effectively reaching LESLLA adults. Recency of immigration data are not available prior to the 20th century nor during the years 1940-1960.

Moving rightward across Table 1, we next see the availability by year of variables indicating the individual's overall proficiency speaking English. There are two harmonized variables indicating English speaking ability. A binary variable equivalent to "Does the individual speak English?" is available for the years 1900-1930 and a four-level ordinal response equivalent that we recoded to best match the binary variable, available for the years 1980-2015. Details will be presented along with the findings below. No information about English speaking ability is available prior to the 20th century or for the years 1940-1970.

Continuing the rightward movement across the table, next comes the availability by year of a binary variable indicating whether the individual is literate in any language. The harmonized variable is based on answers to questions asked in slightly different ways across the years, sometimes including just reading, sometimes just writing, sometimes both, as shown in the table. These different

Table 1

United States Decennial Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data available for identifying adult immigrants with combinations of low English speaking ability, education and literacy, 1850-2015.

Year	Census	ACS	Recency of Imm.	2-Level English Ability	4-Level English Ability	Read & Write?	Read?	Read? Write?	Educ. Attain.
1850	✓					✓			
1860	✓					✓			
1870	✓						✓		
1880	✓							✓	
1890									
1900	✓		✓	✓				✓	
1910	✓		✓	✓				✓	
1920	✓		✓	✓				✓	
1930	✓		✓	✓		✓			
1940	✓								✓
1950	✓								✓
1960	✓								✓
1970	✓		✓						✓
1980	✓		✓		✓				✓
1990	✓		✓		✓				✓
2000	✓		✓		✓				✓
2005		✓	✓		✓				✓
2010	✓		✓		✓				✓
2015		✓	✓		✓				✓

ways of asking about literacy reflect in part changing public perceptions of what it means to be a “literate” person. Census interest in literacy per se was gone altogether by 1940, after which questions about schooling (educational attainment) were asked instead, again perhaps reflecting changing public perceptions and values (Anderson, 2015).

The rightmost column of Table 1 shows years for which information about education is available. Responses to questions asked about individuals’ years of schooling or educational attainment can be harmonized across the years at either of two levels relevant to identifying LESLLA adults: No schooling at all, or completed 4th grade or less. Of these two alternatives, the 4th grade or lower is used as it better reflects the backgrounds of most adults generally considered to be LESLLA learners.

FINDINGS

Figure 1 shows the adult (age 16 and above) population of the United States from 1850-2015. As indicated in Table 1, these data are based on decennial censuses every 10 years from 1850-2010, with the exception of 1890, and the American Community Survey in 2005 and 2015. The sizes of both the native-born and immigrant adult populations are displayed in the figure.

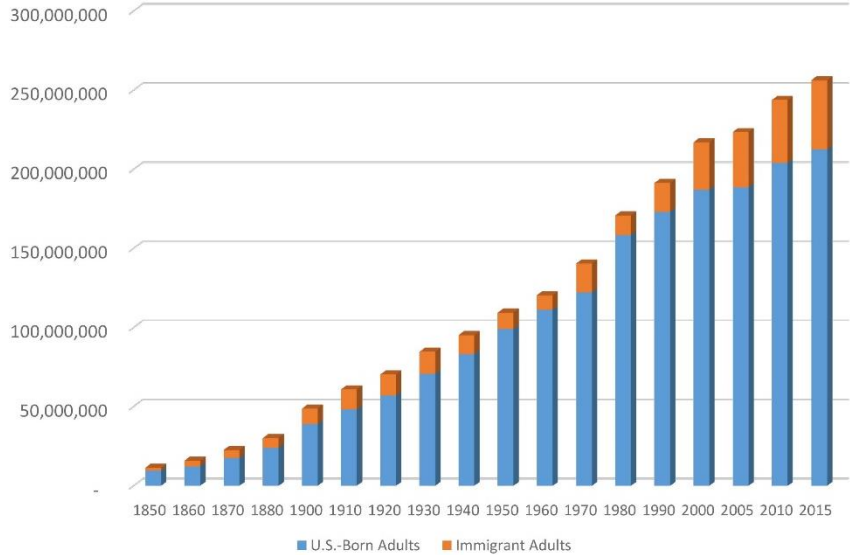


Figure 1: United States population, native-born and immigrant adults, aged 16 and above.

Although both of these groups grew dramatically, their relative sizes have fluctuated considerably over the years, as shown in Figure 2. The percentage of the United States adult population comprised of immigrants reached a peak of 23% in 1860 and generally declined down over time until 1980 when it reached its lowest value of 7%, after which it started increasing again, rising to 17% by

2015. These trends reflect, of course historical changes in immigration policies and migration flows (Bayor, 2016) along with changes in population fertility and longevity.

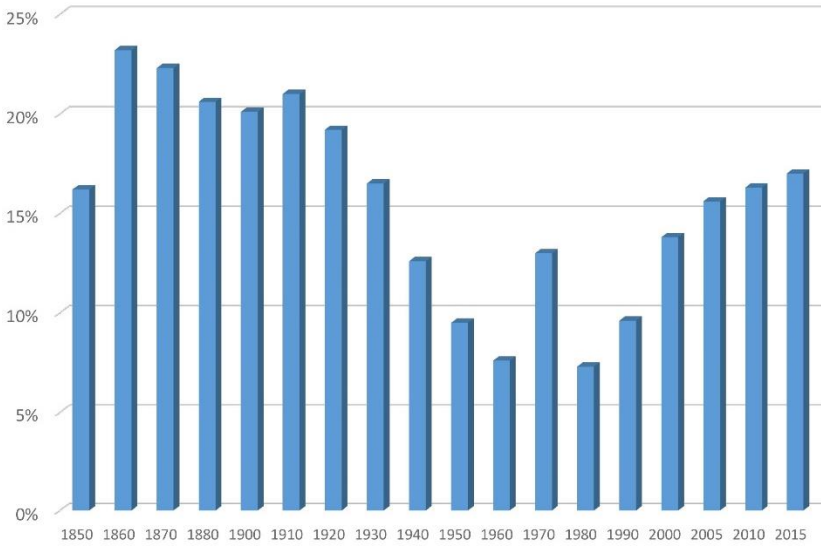


Figure 2: Percent of United States adult population, age 16 and above, comprised of immigrants.

The effects of historical changes in migration flows can be seen in the numbers of recent (i.e., within the preceding five years) adult immigrants in the United States, as shown in Figure 3. The percentages shown in the figure are the percent of United States adults who are recent immigrants, which should closely follow the size of incoming immigrant streams preceding the years in question. Across the years of census data for which such information about recency of immigration is available, we see a couple of noteworthy trends. The largest percentage in the figure is for 1910, in which nearly 5% of the adult United States population were recent immigrants. This corresponds to the well-known large streams of immigrants coming to the United States from Europe in the first decade of the 20th century. In the subsequent decades following World War I, immigration policy changed dramatically in the United States and the size of the incoming streams of migrants were correspondingly much smaller in the 1920 and 1930 census data, as shown in Figure 3. There was no recency of immigration data available in census data in 1940, 1950 or 1960, but starting in 1970 the recency data was regularly collected again. Between 1970 and 2015, the percentage of the United States adult population that was recent immigrants remained relatively stable, varying between 2 and 3%, reflecting new immigration policies drawing immigrants primarily from the western hemisphere (Bayor, 2016).

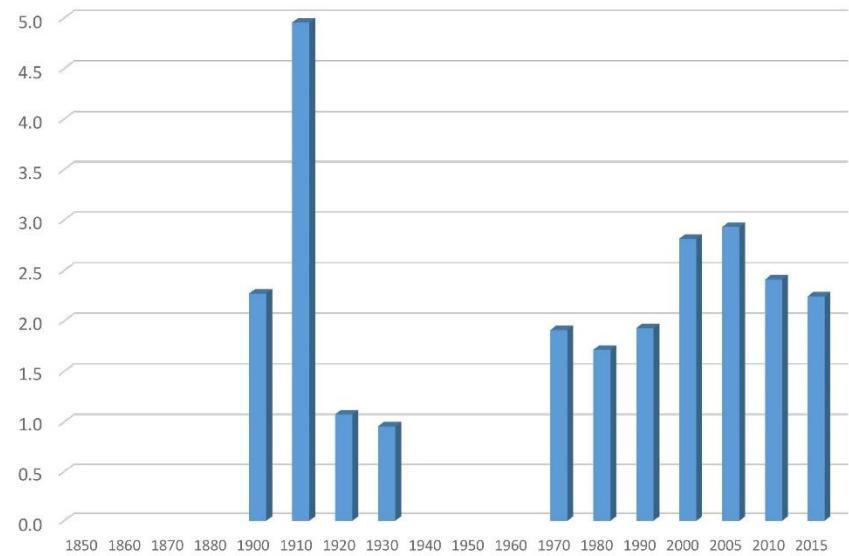


Figure 3: Percent of United States adult population, age 16 and above, who are recent immigrants.

English Language Status

Figures 4 and 5 display the English language status of immigrant adults in the United States. Between 1900 and 1930, the census asked whether individuals spoke English or not; for those years, the figures display the percentage of adult immigrants who did not speak English. Between 1980-2015, four-level judgments of English speaking ability were recorded: “not at all”, “not well”, “well” or “very well”. For these years, Figure 4 displays the percentage of adult immigrants who spoke English “not at all” whereas Figure 5 displays the larger percentages of adult immigrants who spoke English either “not at all” or “not well”. Two bars are shown in the figures for each year, one for adult immigrants who have been in the United States five or more years (left-hand bars) and one for recent immigrants who have been in the United States less than five years (right-hand bars).

The same data are shown in Figures 4 and 5 for the years 1900-1930, whereas the two figures display data derived in two ways from the four-level proficiency reporting scales used in 1980-2015: Figure 4 shows for 1980-2015 the percentage of adult immigrants who speak English “not at all” whereas Figure 5 shows the percentage who speak English either “not at all” or “not well”.

One trend is quite clear in these figures across historical periods and different reporting methods for English proficiency: at each point in time, the proportion of recent adult immigrants with a low level of English speaking ability is substantially less than the proportion for adult immigrants who have lived in the United States five years or longer. At first glance, this may seem counterintuitive, since we might expect English to be gradually acquired over time as immigrants continue living in the United States. Many factors enter into the comparisons in these figures, however. Immigrants who have lived in the

country for longer periods of time tend to be, in comparison with more recently arrived immigrants, older, less educated, and more linguistically isolated from English, all of which may depress levels of English acquisition and use (Fishman, 2016).

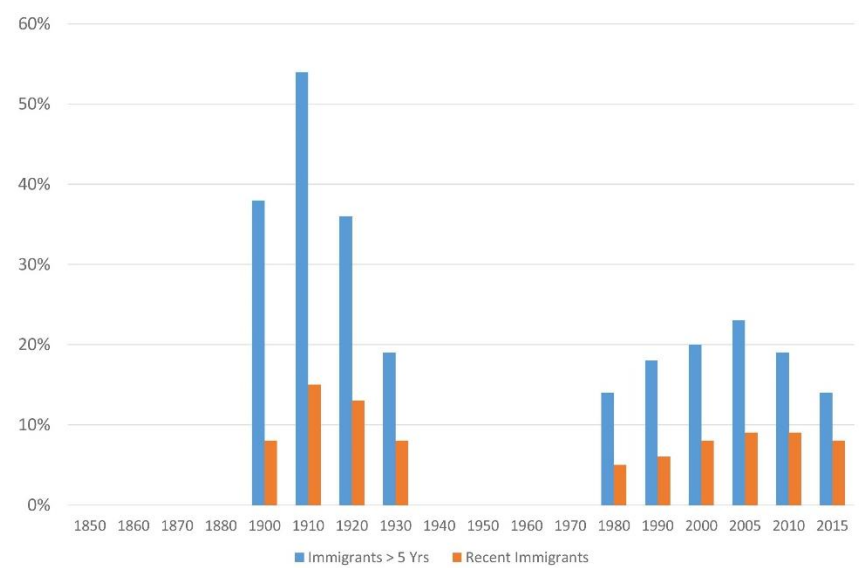


Figure 4: Percent of adult immigrants in the United States who do not speak English.

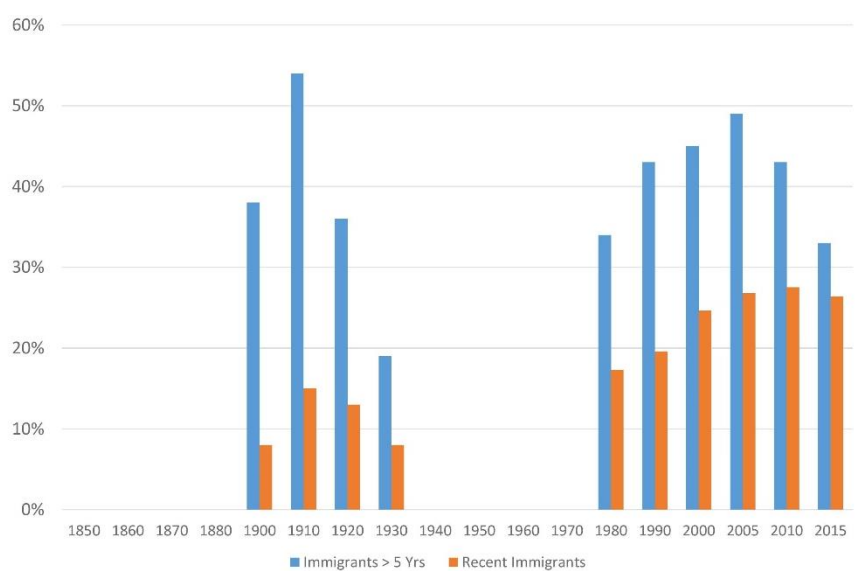


Figure 5: Percent of adult immigrants in the United States who either do not speak English or speak English "but not well".

Historical trends are more difficult to interpret in Figures 4 and 5, particularly comparisons between the earlier group of years (1900-1930) and the later group of years (1980-2015) which confound differences in how English language speaking ability was reported (Anderson, 2015; Gauthier, 2002). Within either group of years, however, certain historical trends are apparent. Within the earlier group of years (1900-1930), there is a large peak, reaching over 50% in 1910, of the percentage of adult immigrants who did not speak English. This high peak reflects in part the “push” of historical and economic forces within sending countries (e.g., Ireland, Italy, China) that shaped the migrant streams of the late 19th century and early decades of the 20th century prior to World War I (Bayor, 2016). These shifting English language data also reflect the United States laws and policies affecting immigrants’ entrance, settlement patterns and integration experiences including of course English language acquisition and use.

Within the later years of available data (1980-2015), some other historical trends can be seen. Regardless of which operational definition of low English speaking proficiency is used (Figure 4 or Figure 5), the percentage of low proficiency English speakers in the adult immigrant population rises dramatically between 1980-2000 and then diminishes between 2000 and 2015. Among recent adult immigrants, the percentage of low-proficiency English speakers steadily increased between 1980 and 2000 and then has stayed relatively constant between 2000 and 2015.

Literacy

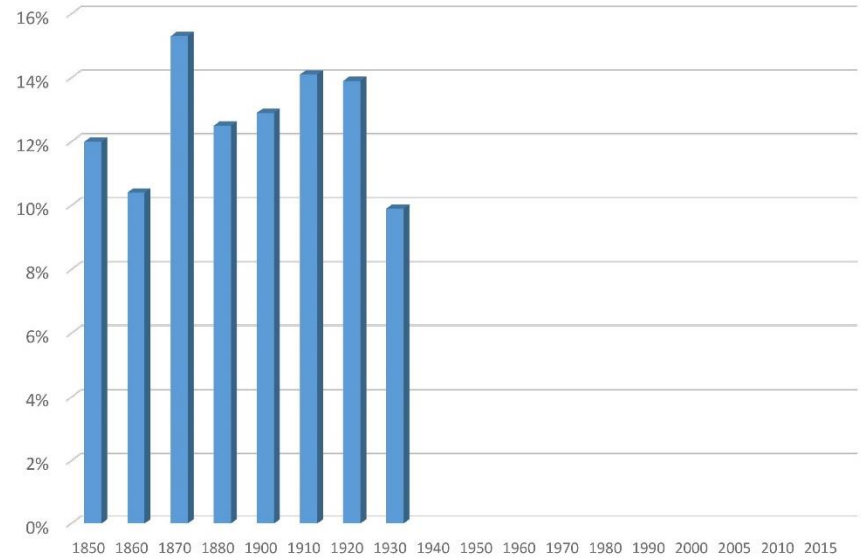


Figure 6: Percent of adult immigrants in the United States not literate in any language.

As indicated in Table 1, individuals were asked if they were literate in any language in censuses between 1850 and 1930. As the table shows, in some years

individuals were asked if they could read or write (in any language), in other years they were asked just about reading, and in still other years they were asked separately about reading and writing. Figure 6 displays the percentage of immigrant adults who indicated that they were not literate in any language (regardless of their format). As the figure shows, that percentage varied between 10 and 15% of the adult immigrant population over the years.

The corresponding numbers of adult immigrants who were not literate in any language over these years is shown in Figure 7. That number rises abruptly as the immigrant population grew in the latter half of the 19th century, reaching a peak of just over 1.8 million in 1920.

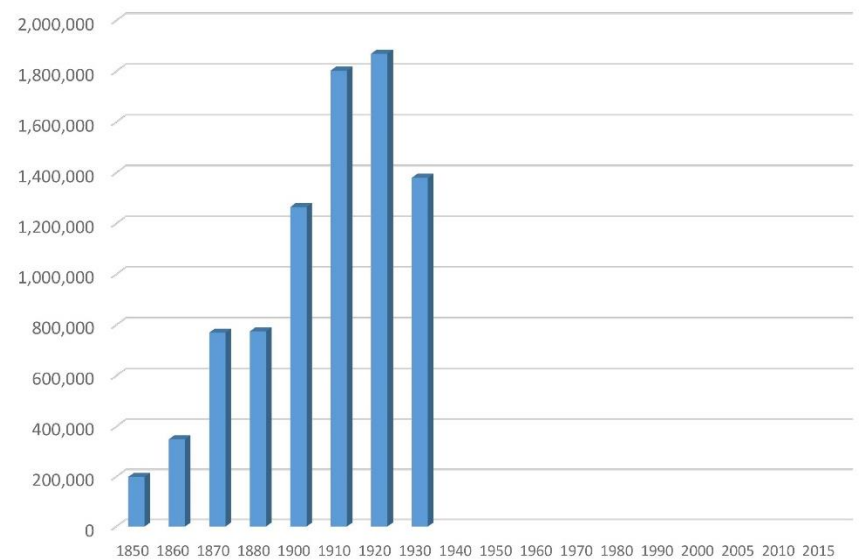


Figure 7: Number of adult immigrants in the United States not literate in any language.

Education

As indicated in Table 1, the census has included educational attainment since 1940. The two lowest education levels that are consistently distinguished in data across these census years are relevant to the identification of LESLLA adults: (1) no education, or (2) 4th grade or below educational attainment. We will use 4th grade or below as the educational threshold for identifying LESLLA adults rather than the overly restrictive no education at all; although this may seem an arbitrary choice, in my experience adults with only a few years of schooling face similar integration and further education challenges as those with no schooling whatsoever.

Figure 8 shows the percentage of adult immigrants in the United States who had a 4th grade or lower level of educational attainment at each point in time. In 1940, slightly more than 1 in 4 (25%) of the adult immigrants in the United States had a 4th grade or lower education. That percentage steadily declines over time until it appears to level off around 7 - 8 % starting in the year 2000. These year-

to-year changes in the education of the adult immigrant population reflect not only differences in the educational backgrounds of successive waves of immigrants, but also the increased level of education of immigrant children who may not be of adult age in one census but who become more educated adults in succeeding censuses in which they are part of the adult immigrant population. Furthermore, the mortality of the older, less educated adult immigrants is also part of the declining low educational status of the adult immigrant population.

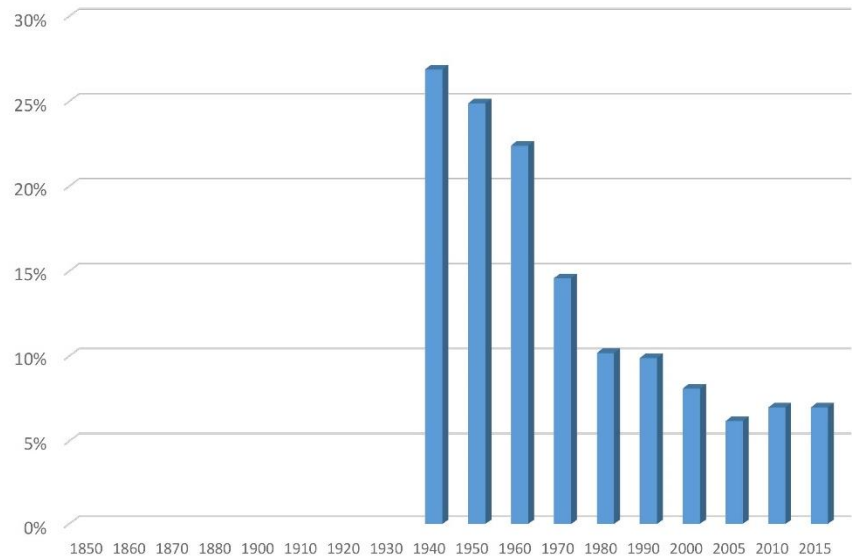


Figure 8: Percent of adult immigrants in the United States with 4th grade or lower educational attainment.

Literacy and Education

The next step in highlighting the demographic history of LESLLA adults in the United States is to combine information about literacy available for the years 1850-1930 with information about low educational attainment available for the years 1970-2015. Figures 9 and 10 display the percentages and numbers, respectively, of adult immigrants at each year who are not literate in any language (1850-1930) or have an educational attainment of 4th grade or less (1970-2015).

The percentage of adult immigrants with no more than a 4th grade education steadily declines over the years until it reaches a level between 6% - 8% where it has remained in recent years. The number of adult immigrants in the United States declined rapidly from over 3 million in 1940 down to nearly half that many in 1980 and then began rising rapidly again up to the 1940 level of just over 3 million. There are of course many factors underlying these trends, including changing immigration patterns drawing more highly educated immigrants from Europe that changed to one drawing less educated immigrants from Southeast Asia and Latin America. We will discuss this in more depth below after we have finished refining this portrait of adult immigrants into a sharper picture of adult LESLLA immigrants.

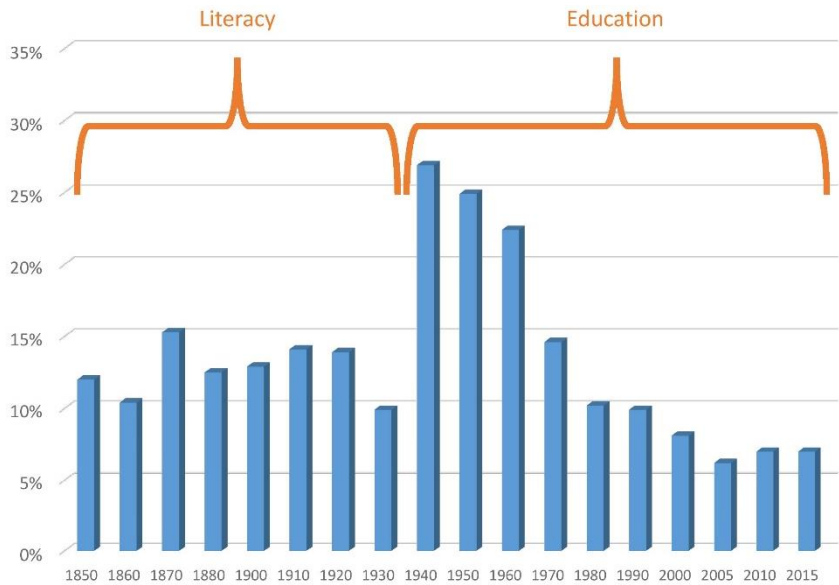


Figure 9: Percent of adult immigrants in the United States not literate in any language or with 4th grade or lower educational attainment.

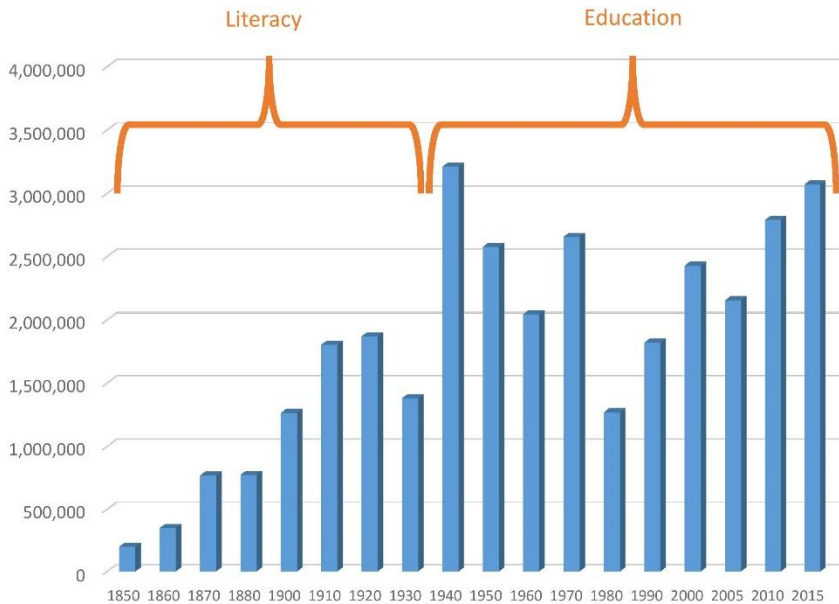


Figure 10: Number of adult immigrants in the United States not literate in any language or with 4th grade or lower educational attainment.

LESLLA Adults

To this point we have identified adult immigrants in the United States who were either not literate in any language or who had a 4th grade or lower level of

education. To qualify as a LESLLA adult for present purposes, an immigrant adult must be either not literate in any language (1850-1930) or have a 4th grade or lower educational attainment (1940-2015) and not speak English well. For the spoken English proficiency criterion, the data shown in Figure 5 are used: not speaking English (available for the years 1900-1930) or not speaking English well (available for the years 1980-2015). Figure 11 shows the counts of LESLLA adults in the United States estimated by combining these linguistic data from Figure 5 with the literacy and education data from Figure 10.

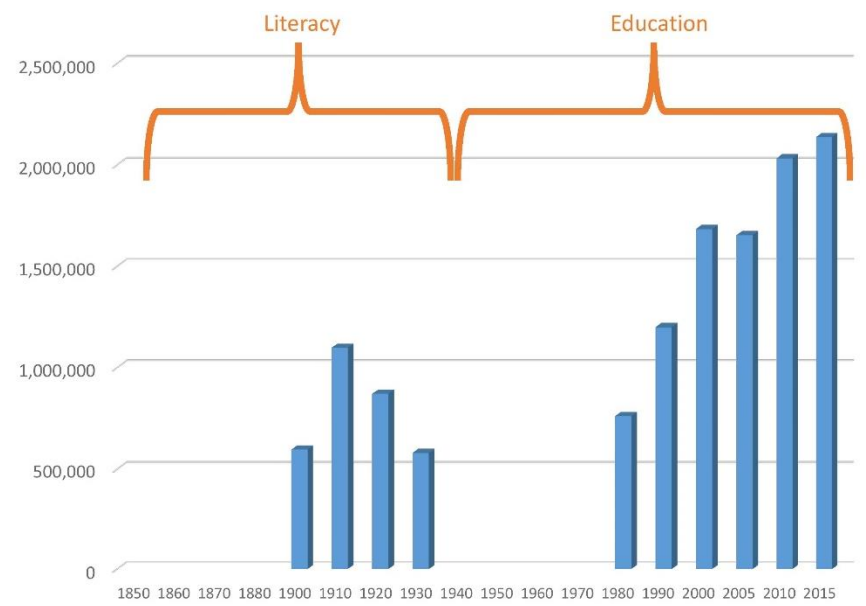


Figure 11: LESLLA adults in the United States.

The estimated number of LESLLA adults in the United States in 1900, the first year these data are available, is slightly over a half million. That number doubles to over one million a decade later in 1910. It thereafter declines back down over the next two decades to one half million in 1930. A half century later in 1980, when these counts are next available, the number of LESLLA adults has increased to about three quarters of a million. The numbers thereafter steadily increase until they exceed two million LESLLA adults in the United States in 2010 and 2015. As a percentage of the total adult (age 16 and above) population of the country, the count of LESLLA adults peaked at 1.8% in 1910 and has been relatively steady at 0.8% in the years since 2000.

A number of things affect the changing counts of LESLLA adults in the United States from one time period to the next. There are processes that add to the counts of LESLLA adults: the arrival of new LESLLA adult immigrants; the coming of age of immigrant children not counted as LESLLA adults at one time point but later enumerated as LESLLA adults at a subsequent time point. There are processes that decrease these counts as well: adults classified as LESLLA at one time point acquiring sufficient literacy, education or English proficiency as

adults to no longer be enumerated as LESLLA adults at a subsequent time point. LESLLA adults dying or emigrating back out of the United States also diminish the count of LESLLA adults at later time points. It is the net results of these additive and subtractive population processes that are reflected in the changes shown across time in the counts of the LESLLA adults.

Some further insight into the role of continuing immigration of LESLLA adults in these processes can be seen in Figure 12. Figure 12 breaks down the counts of LESLLA adults in the United States by recency of immigration. The bottom portion of each bar represents the number of LESLLA adults who have been in the United States 5 or more years at the time point, whereas the top portion of the bar represents the number of recently arrived (i.e., in the United States less than 5 years) LESLLA adults at that time point.

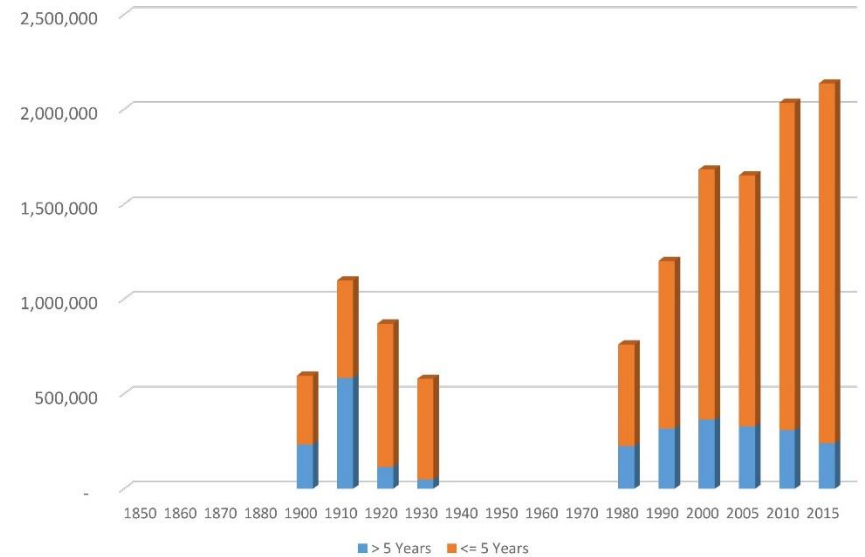


Figure 12: LESLLA adults in the United States by recency of immigration.

Several important points can be glossed from Figure 12. Most LESLLA immigrants in recent years have integrated/assimilated into the United States within 5 to 10 years after arrival and no longer are classified as LESLLA adults using data in subsequent census or ACS surveys. A relatively large group of recently arrived LESLLA adults seen at one time point are no longer enumerated as LESLLA adults at the next time point. Much of this is likely due to their improved English speaking ability, but there may also be some gains in education during their late adolescent and adult lives that remove them from the LESLLA category at the next time point. There is a much smaller but relatively stable sized population of LESLLA adults who evidently do not acquire sufficient English speaking ability or education and thus remain in the LESLLA category.

An example may help illustrate this interpretation of the data. Consider the LESLLA adults in the U.S. shown in the 2010 bar of Figure 12. This bar displays the relatively large number of LESLLA adults who had been in the U.S. for less

than 5 years in the top portion of the bar and the relatively small number who had been in the U.S. for 5 or more years in the bottom portion of the bar. The population of LESLLA adults in the U.S. for less than 5 years in 2010 will have been in the U.S. for 5 or more years in 2015 unless (1) they died, (2) they emigrated out of the U.S., or (3) their educational attainment or English proficiency increased between 2010 and 2015 so that they are no longer counted in the LESLLA category. Stated another way, the top portion of the 2010 bar should be included in the bottom portion of the 2015 bar, unless (1), (2) or (3) occurred between 2010 and 2015. Since the top portion of the 2010 bar is much larger than the bottom portion of the 2015 bar, many of the 2010 LESLLA adults evidently followed path (1), (2) or (3). Additional research is needed to confirm the working assumption here that relatively of the recently arrived LESLLA adults enumerated in 2010 died or emigrated between 2010 and 2015, implying that the vast majority of LESLLA adults who had been in the country less than 5 years in 2010 evidently integrated into the U.S. by 2015 to the extent that they are no longer classified as LESLLA adults.

DISCUSSION

A rough initial portrait of LESLLA adults living in the United States has been sketched out over time, using very broad brush strokes. But it is nevertheless clear that the LESLLA population has been growing dramatically in recent years. By and large it appears that most LESLLA adults acquire sufficient English language speaking ability and/or additional education to “move out” of the LESLLA category by the next census or ACS survey. This hardly means that they have all the language and literacy skills they may need to meet their goals as new Americans or that they are successfully integrating into society in the ways they wish. This portrait needs to be filled in with additional research and analysis. Finer brushes utilizing other variables that are available such as detailed age, years in the United States, economic and social outcome indicators, and the like can help flesh out the patterns of immigrant integration and suggest better policies, supports and services to help them better resettle in their new home. Other census variables that would be useful in painting richer portraits of the integration of LESLLA immigrants would include employment, earnings, housing and linguistic isolation.

The preceding interpretations of changes over time in the LESLLA numbers must be considered tentative because the underlying trends and processes described need further documentation and analysis by incorporating more details available in the census data into the analyses. Demographic characteristics including age, national origin and mother tongue, can identify “synthetic cohorts” of LESLLA adults that can be followed across the series of census cross-sections available as they age and acculturate/assimilate to the United States. A complete population model of these cohorts of LESLLA immigrants would be particularly valuable, incorporating estimates of LESLLA immigration, English language acquisition, educational development as well as mortality and outmigration.

Table 2

United States Decennial Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data available for selected characteristics of adult immigrants, 1850-2015.

Year	Census	ACS	City/ County/ State	Age	Sex	National Origin	Mother Tongue	Lang. Spoken in Home
1850	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
1860	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
1870	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
1880	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
1890								
1900	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
1910	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1920	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
1930	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1940	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
1950	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
1960	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
1970	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
1980	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
1990	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2000	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2005		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2010	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2015		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Table 2 displays the availability of some of the additional census variables that would be helpful in better modeling and understanding the experience of these LESLLA populations. These include more detailed specifications of the national origin, mother tongue and year and age of immigration, gender, language spoken in the home and linguistic isolation, among others. The combination of more information about national origin and mother tongue would be very

helpful in examining specific streams of LESLLA migration and resettlement at different historical times.

Another extension of the analyses reported here would disaggregate the U.S. national LESLLA population by various geographical domains. As indicated in Table 2, geographical identifiers of such entities as towns, cities and states are available in all of the decennial census and ACS data sets. Certainly such analyses would need to pay close attention to the subsample sizes and accompanying sampling errors associated with population estimates for smaller geographical areas.

These are some of the ways in which future research, advocacy and policymakers can utilize these freely available data sets to better understand and support the growing numbers of LESLLA adult immigrants in the United States. A richer research-based portrait will provide better understanding of and support for LESLLA adults in the United States.

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A Blended Approach to Second Language Learning at the Workplace: Also Suitable for LESLLA Learners?

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ABSTRACT

Workplace language learning provides a powerful, task-based learning environment for adult L2 learners, which allows the embedding of SLA in real life situations and job-related tasks. Considering the advance of technology in educational settings, this paper wants to explore if and to what extent workplace language learning can be further improved by blending the prevalent face-to-face instruction with technology-mediated learning. What are the possibilities and benefits of technology in task design and the planning of L2-learning paths?

To this end, we conducted field experiments with technology-mediated tasks as an enrichment of the language learning process in five different workplaces. A needs analysis enabled us to tailor functional online tasks to the specific context of each workplace. Results show that blending online and face-to-face tasks enhances learner control, interaction and motivation and also increases the flexibility and intensity of the learning process, provided that the digital devices and tasks correspond closely to the context of the learners and fill gaps in the face-to-face approach.

INTRODUCTION

Second language learning at the workplace

Workplace language learning provides a powerful, task-based learning environment for adult L2 learners, which allows the embedding of second language acquisition (SLA) in real life situations and in job-related tasks, thus establishing a direct relationship between instruction and the practical needs of the learners. In that way, workplace language learning fits in seamlessly with one of the most important insights from empirical research into SLA, which is that adult L2 learners should be provided with learning opportunities that are challenging and connected with what they want and need to do with the language in real life (Doughty & Long, 2003; Ellis & Shintani, 2014). Moreover, in the context of the workplace, L2 learners are exposed to rich and extensive input in the target language and they are provided with frequent opportunities to produce output themselves, two other imperatives of successful SLA.

Building on this, the government of Flanders has invested heavily in courses ‘Dutch in the workplace’ in which a teacher, starting from a thorough needs analysis, develops a language course that is highly customized to the specific language and language needs of the workplace and that responds to real life situations in the workplace and to the linguistic interaction (with colleagues) that goes with it (Lanssens et al., 2001). While this approach has a number of pronounced strengths with regard to how languages are learnt as stated above, it also features a number of gaps (Droogmans, Van Dooren, De Cuyper & Van Waeyenberg, 2015), mainly due to the fact that these courses are often restricted to twenty teaching hours spread over five weeks. Twenty hours of language training is often insufficient for learners to gain enough self-confidence to effectively seize the more implicit practice opportunities the workplace offers, and to make full use of them. Due to this limited teaching time, the moments of feedback are limited as well, although feedback is of paramount importance for the language learning process. Additionally, there are also some practical constraints. Workplace language learning is often difficult to schedule and for some professions, such as night workers, taxi drivers and shift workers, it is nearly impossible. Because of the limited amount of time the teacher is present at the workplace and because there is little contact with the teacher in between sessions, the teacher cannot give the ‘just-in-time’ support that is needed when the employee encounters a language problem beyond the teaching hours.

Can technology enhance workplace language learning?

Here is where blended learning – and, more in general, the use of technology in the (language) learning process – comes in. Given the strengths of blended learning as stated in the literature (Graham, 2006), our hypothesis was that the use of technology – and more specific a blended approach – could help to fill the gaps mentioned. According to Graham (2006), one of the strengths of blending a face-to-face approach with online tasks is that it increases the flexibility of the learning process (in time, place, pace...). Also, additional practice opportunities are created, outside of the official teaching hours. Finally,

the use of technology creates the possibility to have contact with the teacher outside the class.

However, blended learning does not automatically lead to success. Studies have indicated learners need help to develop independent study skills, persistence and motivation for work in an online environment where they operate without direct teacher control (Grgurovic, 2017). In addition, students may lack the necessary advanced computer-literacy skills to participate in high-tech blended classes that would employ, for example, video-conferencing and podcasting. For lower educated and lower literate profiles in particular, the lack of both self-regulating skills and computer-literacy skills is found to be an important threshold to engage successfully in blended learning activities (Grgurovic, 2017; Van Laer, 2016). At the same time, in the context of workplace language learning, these lower educated and lower literate profiles – which we will from now on refer to as LESLLA learners – form an important target group. Question is if and under which conditions blended learning – and, more in general, the use of technology in the language learning process – can also be beneficial for these LESLLA learners.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Research questions

The present study aims to assess the added value of meaningful online tasks in the context of workplace language learning, with special consideration for the group of LESLLA learners. The research questions are threefold: (1) To what extent can technology-mediated tasks enrich the language learning process of (low-skilled and low-literate) employees? (2) What are the possibilities and benefits of technology in task design and the planning of L2-learning paths? (3) Which existing tools are sufficiently accessible and user-friendly (with special attention to adult learners with less digital skills)?

Method

In order to answer these questions, we firstly conducted a needs analysis among the project stakeholders of the courses ‘Dutch in the workplace’ – learners/employees, teachers and employers – to gain a general overview of the gaps in the current face-to-face courses and of the possible added value of a blended approach. Secondly, five field experiments were set up in a variety of workplaces, each with different learner profiles. Each field experiment again started with a needs analysis in which we mapped the workplace context, the learner characteristics and the language needs. Based on this analysis, which will be further discussed in the section below on WhatsApp, an intervention was set up introducing meaningful online tasks as an enrichment of the existing face-to-face approach of the courses. After each experiment, all project stakeholders were questioned using the technique of a semi-structured interview. In these interviews the tips and tops feedback method was used in order to find out which aspects of the blended approach were perceived positive, and which could be further improved.

In this paper we will discuss the design and the results of the field experiments in which LESLLA learners were involved. As an introduction to this discussion, we will explain the general pedagogical framework that we set up as a guideline for the powerful technological interventions we wanted to achieve. We will show that the success of blending online and face-to-face tasks depends above all on a complex interplay between student- and teacher-related factors but also on the quality of the tools. This applies in the context of workplace language learning but we will demonstrate that these insights are also applicable in other, more formal, contexts of language learning.

BLENDING ONLINE AND FACE-TO-FACE TASKS: PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

A thoughtful Integration of online and face-to-face learning

As stated above, the degree to which students have sufficient self-regulating and computer-literacy skills determines the extent to which they can engage successfully in blended learning activities. But, another and maybe even more important predictor of successful online SLA is the pedagogical approach of the teacher. One of the most consistent insights into the field of blended and technology-enhanced language learning is that teachers should rethink and adapt their teaching practice to the new possibilities these technologies bring (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). As for blended learning, this is already suggested in the definition. Blended learning has proven difficult to identify but in the most general terms, blended learning is defined as a combination of face-to-face and computer-mediated instruction (Graham, 2006). More specifically, it is the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences and online learning in which online learning moments and contact education complement each other and together form a powerful, learner-centred learning environment (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). The idea of ‘integration’ is an important component of the blended learning definition. If blended learning is to impact positively on the quality of teaching and learning, as is the case for other technology orientated teaching endeavours, an integrated rather than superficial approach will force reexamination of existing approaches and subsequent adoption of new or enriched strategies (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). Studies into blended learning explicitly refer to a lack of integration between online and face-to-face components as one of the major challenges to overcome (Grgurovic, 2017). In the section “WhatsApp!? Examples of low-tech interventions for LESLLA Learners” below, we will discuss how we have operationalized this idea of ‘integration’ in the present study as a cyclic model of learning.

Technology as a lever for new tasks, previously inconceivable

The idea that teachers should rethink and adapt their teaching practice to the new possibilities these technologies bring, is also present in the SAMR model (Puentedura, 2018) which states that the use of technology in educational contexts should open up new possibilities and should allow for the creation of new tasks that were previously unthinkable. To illustrate this, Puentedura’s

model categorizes technological interventions in education on four levels (Figure 1). On the first two levels technology acts as a tool substitute, with no or restricted functional improvement. On the third and fourth level of the SAMR ladder, technology allows for significant task redesign and even for the creation of new tasks, previously inconceivable. For instance, when students collaborate with students on other locations (around the world) on a common writing project using VoiceThread and a blog and then share the final project on a social network, technology is used in such a way that a task arises that would not have been possible without technology. Using a word processor program such as pages to type a story, on the other hand, is exemplary for the first level where technology acts as a tool substitute with no functional improvement.

Again, this model has strong implications for the teacher who plays a crucial role in rethinking the kind of tasks that can be performed by using technology. In the present study, a needs analysis was conducted to detect the gaps in the current face-to-face approach of Dutch in the workplace in order to define the added value and the new tasks that could be created by using technology. We will briefly discuss the results of this needs analysis below.

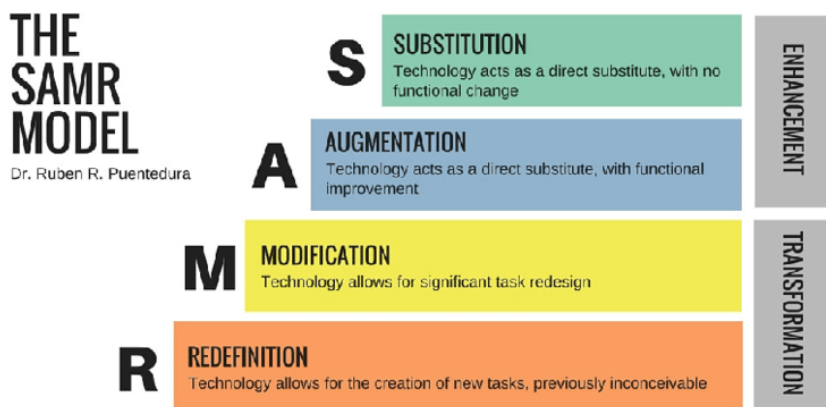


Figure 1: The SAMR model (figure copied from Puentedura, 2018)

Building blocks for the successful design of online SLA

For online SLA to be successful teachers should not only rethink their teaching practices as clarified above. They should also take into account the findings from empirical research on SLA as well as on online education (Nielson & Gonz  les-Lloret, 2010). Nielson and Gonz  les-Lloret state that, when designing (online) tasks for L2 learning, teachers should integrate the building blocks for adult SLA as derived from research. In short: adult L2 learners need to perform tasks in which they get access to significant amounts of authentic input in the target language – i.e. written and spoken texts that offer rich examples of language as produced by native speakers – and in which they get the chance to produce the language themselves and to interact and negotiate with fluent (native) speakers. During those tasks, adult L2 learners should be provided

with both implicit and explicit feedback on their language performance and the tasks themselves should provide them with learning opportunities that are connected with what they want and need to do with the language in real life. Finally, adult L2 learners need substantial practice opportunities in a variety of (safe) contexts in order to build up their language skills.

To be mutually reinforcing these building blocks for adult SLA should be combined with research findings about the conditions under which online education can be successful. These conditions include that you should create an online environment in which learners can experience a sense of community and in which they can interact – synchronously and asynchronously – in the target language, with each other but also with native speakers through tasks that require collaboration; an intuitive and easy-to-use online environment in which learners are in control of task selection and task execution, thus customizing the content to their own specific needs and contexts. These building blocks were taken into account as much as possible in the present study when designing tasks for the different field experiments. This will be further illustrated in the section below on WhatsApp.

ADDED VALUE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE COURSES ‘DUTCH IN THE WORKPLACE’: A NEEDS ANALYSIS

Population

As a first step in the research process, a needs analysis was conducted among 20 companies that organised a course ‘Dutch at the workplace’. The group of participants consisted of 20 managers and 42 employees that participated in the course. The participants worked in diverse professional fields like construction, hotel, cleaning, transport and retail, the majority having a technical background. Based on the self-report data of the participants, more than a quarter of the learners were LESLLA-learners.

Questions

The needs analysis focused on the following main questions:

- Which devices do the learners have at their disposal, and which of them are allowed to be used during working hours?
- Which digital tools and programs are they familiar with?
- What is the opinion of the learners and the employers towards a blended approach of the course? Which possible added value do they see?

Results

Results showed that a large majority of the learners (83%) uses a smartphone and/or a laptop (79%). A smaller part uses a tablet (38%) or a desktop (26%). Most of these devices are personal and not business property. For almost half of the smartphone users it is allowed and possible to use their device at work. For the other devices this is respectively 24% (laptop), 21% (tablet) and 12% (desktop).

More than half of the learners already makes use of websites and apps to practice their L2 Dutch. 83% uses technology to interact with others, e.g. with their family abroad. Programs they are familiar with are Skype (77%), and WhatsApp, Facebook and Viber (49%). Handling these programs and apps is no problem for most of the users: 91% finds them easy to very easy to use. For the course 'Dutch in the workplace' however, most of the learners do not employ these technologies. Half of them even reports to have no contact at all with their teacher in between the classes, nor by mail or by telephone.

A large majority of the participants favours a blended approach of the course 'Dutch in the workplace'. 81% of the learners thinks that it is a good idea to have more online contact with the teacher in between the face-to-face sessions. 79% is prepared to perform online tasks outside the teaching hours. Also the employers stand positive towards blended learning: 85% thinks that a blended approach has an extra value for the employees and for the company. Most mentioned as a potential additional value are the flexibility in place and time, the creation of additional practice opportunities, and the possibilities for the follow-up of the learners after the course.

WHATSAPP!? EXAMPLES OF LOW-TECH INTERVENTIONS FOR LESLLA LEARNERS

In this section we will discuss the three field experiments in which LESLLA learners were involved. A first experiment, conducted in a small-scale family hotel, will be described in detail. The other two experiments – in construction and in a thrift store – will be discussed more briefly insofar as they confirm or further differentiate certain insights.

Dutch in the workplace in a housekeeping team

Method. Prerequisite for effective course design is a thorough analysis of learners needs (Long, 2005). This applies in particular to workplace language learning where language requirements vary greatly depending on the workplace and on the position and the tasks that someone performs. Therefore, conducting a needs analysis in order to list the linguistic goals the employees must work on is the starting point of each course 'Dutch in the Workplace'. Information is obtained through various sources (workplace documents and artefacts such as work schedules, safety signs and welcome brochures) and methods (interviews, questionnaires, participant and non-participant observations and language proficiency tests). In function of the interventions that we wanted to set up with meaningful online tasks, the existing approach was further extended by an interview about which digital devices and apps the students were already familiar with and the possibilities on the work floor to get started digitally. In other words, the needs analysis as described above was briefly repeated for each workplace.

Results needs analysis. A first workplace in which we set up an experiment was a small-scale family hotel. As a first step we conducted a needs analysis as described above. Results contained detailed information about the characteristics

of the target audience, about the language learning goals they had to acquire and about the added value and possibilities to work with online tasks.

- Target audience were five hotel housekeepers who had in common that they were all low-educated. Three of them were also low-literate. According to the language assessment conducted by the teacher, their Dutch language proficiency was limited to level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).
- Course participants had to be able to answer customer questions and to solve customer problems in an appropriate manner. Also important was the internal communication with the supervisor and with colleagues: this concerned for instance giving and understanding instructions, passing on the work schedule, and giving an explanation to a colleague about the work that has to be done.
- For the internal communication such as work instructions, questions and changes in the work schedule, the hotel made use of the app WhatsApp. This meant course participants were able (and allowed) to use their mobile phones during working hours. This also meant that, although some of them were low-literate, they were all familiar with a number of basic digital applications and devices which implicated they did possess some digital literacy skills.
- For both the employer and the course participants it was important to have additional and customized training opportunities, on top of the moments in class. These training opportunities had to address real-life tasks the course participants had to perform at the workplace in between classes. As far as the use of technology was concerned, nor the teacher nor the employer considered it feasible to experiment with this group of learners with 'high tech' tools such as a full-fledged Learning Management Systems (LMS) and Video conferencing (VC) tools which are commonly used in a blended learning trajectory. This required us to search for an alternative approach with more low-threshold apps.

A WhatsApp task a day. Based on the information from the needs analysis, a second step involved the design of tasks and the planning of these tasks in a L2 learning path in which face-to-face and online tasks complement each other and together form a powerful, learner-centred learning environment (as described above). The elaboration of the blend was accompanied by the selection of the digital tools we were going to use and which also had to be custom-made. The fact that we had to look for more low tech interventions – as an alternative for the high tech interventions with an LMS and a VC-tool – together with the fact that the housekeepers were already familiar with WhatsApp, brought us to the idea to experiment with WhatsApp as a learning tool and to create WhatsApp tasks as an enrichment of the classroom-based instruction.

We designed a WhatsApp task for each day when there was no face-to-face class. Tasks were posted into the WhatsApp group in which every course participant was represented. Tasks included for instance real-life and authentic questions and problems from the hotel guests which they had to answer or solve

in an appropriate way (see Figure 2 for examples). Tasks were presented as well orally as written, thus differentiating between course participants who did have already sufficient literacy skills to read and write the assignments themselves and those who did not. Course participants could choose when and where they performed the task during the day. The teacher was actively present in the online environment, giving feedback on the assignments as soon as possible and encouraging the participants to interact with the teacher and with each other. Thus, the building blocks for as well adult SLA as online education (as described above) were embedded in task design to a large extent.

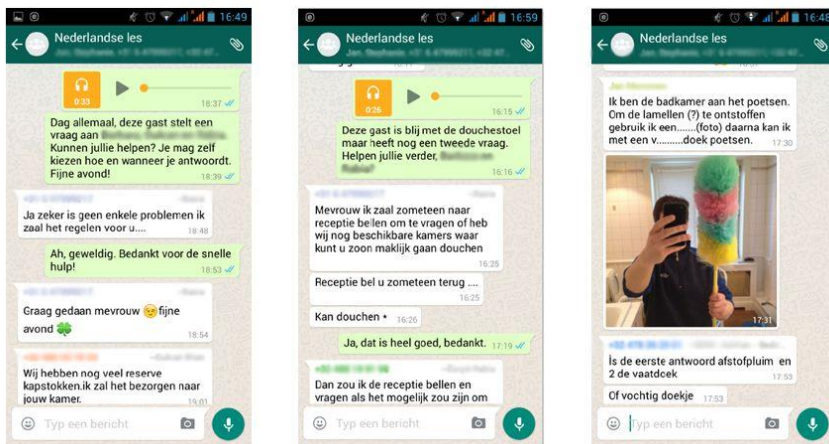


Figure 2: Examples of WhatsApp tasks from the housekeeping experiment.

As far as the planning of the tasks in a L2 learning path is concerned, a cyclic model of learning was developed in order to integrate in-class practices and students' outside-class self-learning with the aid of technology. In this model online tasks serve as a preparation or as a further reflection or consolidation of the face-to-face classes, thus allowing for a more strategic use of classroom time in the sense that teachers can focus on more active and meaningful activities during the face-to-face sessions. Figure 3 illustrates how we have operationalized this cyclic model of learning for the experiment with the housekeeping team. The WhatsApp tasks were used as input for an in-depth discussion in class about the different types of customers questions and complaints in a hotel, and about appropriate ways of responding to them. After the face-to-face session, WhatsApp was used again for a post-task in which the more difficult questions and answers were further practised.

Besides the WhatsApp tasks we also experimented with video reports in which course participants gave a tour in a room and explained to a new colleague how the room should be cleaned.

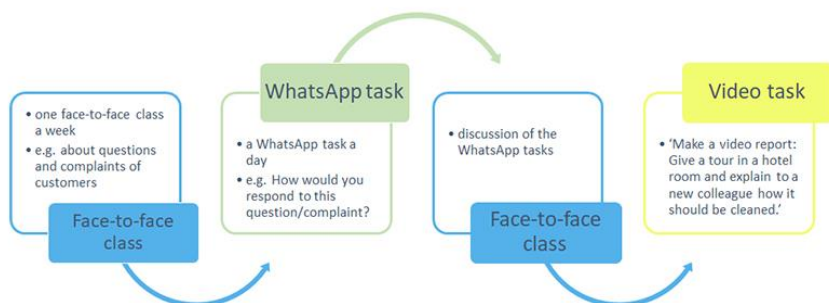


Figure 3: Operationalisation of the cyclic model of learning for the housekeeping experiment.

Pros and cons. The engagement of the course participants with the WhatsApp tasks was high and afterwards they evaluated the tasks as very motivating. One of the course participants formulated it this way: ‘a (WhatsApp) task a day helps to practice and remember’. They also thought the interaction with peers during the online tasks was very instructive. The employer was also positive about the additional learning opportunities the WhatsApp tasks created in the sense that ‘online tasks facilitate a more intensive training’ and that ‘students are activated, also in between face-to-face classes’. The teacher thought the WhatsApp tasks were a very accessible and practical way of giving homework in which language as well as digital competences could be practised.

Dutch in the workplace in construction and in a thrift store

After the first field experiment in the hotel, we set up similar experiments with LESLLA-learners in two other working contexts, namely in construction and in a thrift store. The target population was almost identical as far as language proficiency and the degree of education and literacy is concerned.

In the construction case, the participants were 12 low-educated construction workers, all working at different construction sites. Unlike most courses of ‘Dutch in the workplace’, this course could not take place at the workplace itself, due to organizational and safety reasons. Therefore the weekly face-to-face classes were scheduled on Saturday morning, in a classroom at a central location. The main language learning goal of the participants was to give and understand work and safety instructions to and from their colleagues.

The course in the thrift store was an individual L2 training for a low-educated worker whose task was to sort clothes in the procession center of the store. His main language goals were spoken interaction with colleagues (e.g. during the lunch break) and with the employer (e.g. calling in sick, requesting vacation), and the understanding of written instructions.

As to the added value of the blended approach, the needs analysis for both cases showed similar results as in the first field experiment in the hotel. Also in these cases there was a need for additional practice opportunities in between the face-to-face sessions, and for low-threshold online pre- and post-tasks. Therefore the cyclic learning model with the WhatsApp tasks from the first

experiment was repeated and customized to the specific context of both workplaces. In the construction case for instance, learners had to take pictures of safety signs they came across during their work and share them on WhatsApp (see Figures 4 and 5). In the following face-to-face class, these pictures were used as input for an interactive task about safety instructions, and for an online consolidation task on Quizlet afterwards. Then a new WhatsApp task was introduced (e.g. sharing pictures of dangerous situations at the construction site and recording an adequate safety warning for a colleague in this situation), and the cycle of pre- and post-tasks could start again. An additional benefit of the WhatsApp tasks was that the collection of shared pictures and other authentic materials enabled the teacher to bring real-life situations from the workplace into the classroom, which was in this project more difficult than usual because the course did not take place at the workplace, as normally is the case, and because all participants worked at different locations.

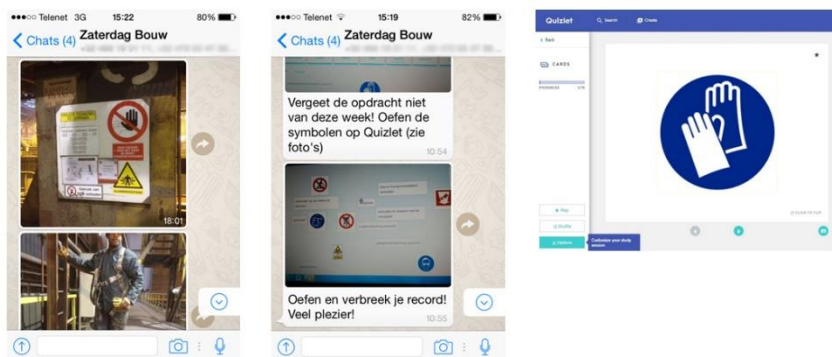


Figure 4: Examples of WhatsApp tasks from the construction experiment.

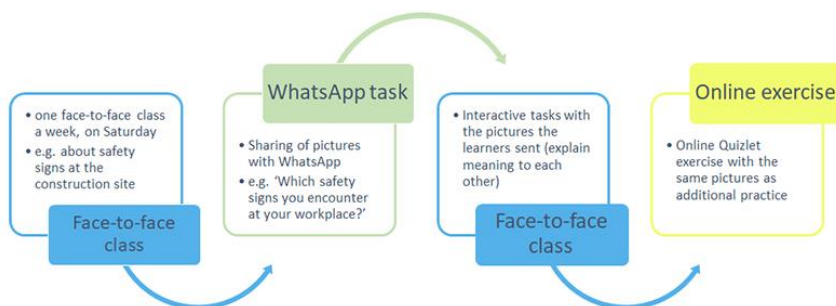


Figure 5: Operationalisation of the cyclic model of learning for the construction experiment.

In the thrift store another tool was added to the blended cycle. To meet the need for additional language support in between the face-to-face sessions, a virtual class through Skype was set up, as this tool was already familiar to the

learner because he used it to communicate with his family abroad. In these virtual sessions not only speaking tasks were performed (e.g. making a phone call to call in sick), but also written input could be discussed by sharing a document on the screen (e.g. looking up information in the work regulations).

Just as in the first experiment, the reactions of the project stakeholders in the construction case and in the thrift store were very positive. Although the learners, teachers and employers stressed the importance of the face-to-face interaction and coaching moments, they reported that the combination with online learning had been very beneficial for the learning process. Especially the flexibility of the approach and the increase of self-regulated practice opportunities and interaction in between classes were appreciated.

LESSONS LEARNT

In general, what we've learnt from the three field experiments with regard to our research questions, is that technology-mediated tasks can enhance the language learning process, also of LESLLA-learners, provided that you take into account certain conditions that contribute to successful online and blended SLA. Consistent with insights from previous studies into blended learning these conditions are situated at the level of the learner, the teacher and the didactic approach of the teacher and the tools. Below we will discuss our main insights for each of these key factors.

New teacher roles: need for adequate training

As stated in the section above on blending online and face-to-face tasks, one of the most consistent insights into the field of blended and technology-enhanced language learning is that teachers should rethink and adapt their teaching practice to the new possibilities these technologies bring (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). The argument is that making information and communications technology present does not result in meaningful learning or increase student satisfaction unless the instructors make online learning an integral part of pedagogical practices. This requires new teacher roles, including the role of course designer and organizer, of discussion facilitator, of social supporter, of technology facilitator and assessment designer (Hung & Chou, 2015).

The experiments we set up confirmed that instructor expertise is one of the most significant factors for the successful implementation of blended or online SLA. While teachers should inspire students to have a positive attitude towards online learning activities and while their own attitudes toward e-learning and control over technology should be exemplary (Sun et al., 2008), our field experiments have shown that teachers themselves are often reluctant to start using new technologies, even more than their students. In the same way, they appeared to be even less familiar with some 'low-tech' digital applications – such as Skype and WhatsApp – than their students who often use these kind of apps to communicate with the home country, also the LESLLA learners. Teacher's high threshold to get started with online activities blocked in some cases a positive output of the experiments. We have learned that teachers need extensive

training and time to grow in order to implement online SLA successfully and in order to rethink their existing teaching practices and roles. At the same time, we have found that teachers who were involved in the experiments became easily inspired by the small-scale interventions that were set up with support of the research team and that afterwards they were more inclined to experiment further and to set up more extensive interventions, also with more high-tech tools. Rehearsing an online class with peers was found to be another good practice to overcome the digital threshold.

In general, our experiments also confirmed some guiding principles for teacher's behavior in online environments, namely that teachers should be actively present in the online environment by stimulating the interaction and by giving frequent and personalized feedback, that they should develop meaningful online tasks that require collaboration, that they should plan carefully and integrate online pre- and post-tasks into a cyclic model of learning and that they should adapt the tools to the needs and requirements of the audience, as will be further explained below.

High-tech versus low-tech tools: one size does not fit all

Before setting up the field experiments, our methodology with regard to the selection of tools was to reduce a long list of possible tools to a short list of tools that met a number of clear criteria in terms of usability and accessibility for LESLLA learners and which would be further tested during the field experiments. However, this approach proved inadequate in three areas. First, while there is an abundance of LMS- and VC-systems, few turned out to be sufficiently low-threshold to deploy in the specific context of language learning in the workplace and with LESLLA learners. Second, the threshold to get started with high-tech tools such as LMS- and VC-systems concerned the teachers and employers in the first place – as was the case in the experiment in the housekeeping team – which obliged the research team to search for more low-tech alternatives. Third, the specifics of the workplace – the language goals the course participants had to acquire and the tools and devices that were already used in the workplace, as derived from the needs analysis – had to be taken into account when selecting the tools: this implied not only the tasks but also the tools had to be tailor-made for each workplace.

These insights have led us to discover new possibilities and alternative approaches by using more low-tech apps – that the target audience was already familiar with such as WhatsApp and FaceBook – as learning tools. While the usability of tools stays an important prerequisite for the successful implementation of online SLA, this also proves the paramount importance of the pedagogical choices the teacher makes and how tools are selected in order to support these choices and to make them possible. Thus, the following four questions can serve as a guide when selecting tools in the context of language learning in the workplace: (1) Which tools are the students already familiar with?; (2) which tools do they use in the workplace?; (3) What are the learning goals? and (4) What added value does the teacher want to achieve with ICT?

Student-related factors: how to stimulate the self-efficacy and motivation of LESLLA learners

The success of online learning programs is influenced by the people who use it, i.e.; the teachers (as argued above) but also the students. As for the students, their cognitive belief and socio-motivational aspects, such as self-efficacy and self-regulated learning skills, are important factors present in the works of many researchers. As stated above, for LESLLA learners, the lack of self-regulating skills as well as computer-literacy skills is found to be an important threshold to engage successfully in blended learning activities. However, our field experiments have proven that the self-efficacy and the motivation of the LESLLA learners can be positively influenced by starting from a solid pedagogical framework and by supporting the pedagogical choices of the teacher by the selection of tools that are tailor-made for the specific context of the workplace and that match the added value the teacher wants to accomplish by using ICT. Moreover, by choosing for low-tech tools learners were already familiar with and by using them as learning tools, a positive effect was generated on the motivation and persistence of the LESLLA learners to accomplish their online tasks. Our field experiments also showed that teachers often underestimate the LESLLA learners and that most LESLLA learners do have some basic digital skills. Also, by challenging them to perform online tasks in the context of language learning in the workplace, they develop digital skills as well as language skills, which is a good example of how you can work in an integrated way on linguistic and digital competences. After all, in a 21st century society, it is necessary more than ever that developing digital competences is stimulated in all possible ways.

BLEND YOUR OWN LANGUAGE COURSE

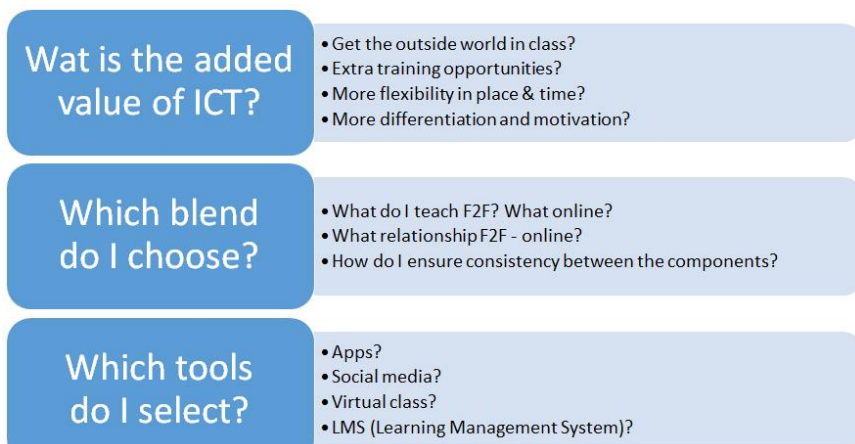


Figure 6: Operational framework: added value of information and communications technology (ICT), choice of blend and selection of tools.

To conclude this paper, a more operational framework is provided in Figure 6 which can serve as a roadmap for whom wants to build his own case and experiment with a blended L2-approach. The roadmap consists of three major steps or questions you have to ask yourself before you start experimenting. First, you have to define the added value of the use of technology for your specific project. For instance, do you want to get the outside world in the class or do you want to create additional practice opportunities? As demonstrated above, a thorough needs analysis can help you define the added value for your project. Once you have a clear idea of this added value, you can choose your blend, meaning that you decide which topics you are going to teach face-to-face and which ones online, but also how you are going to ensure consistency between the different components. Only as a third step, you are going to select the tools that can help you realize your pedagogical choices and the added value you want to pursue in your specific context and with your specific audience. As stated above there is no one size fits all and with LESLLA learners it might be more rewarding to work with low-tech tools that they are already familiar with and that can form a starting point to further develop linguistic as well as digital skills. This step-by-step plan again shows the common thread throughout the paper, namely that didactic choices prevail over the choice of one or another tool which only serves as a vehicle to realize your pedagogical project.

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Second Language Proficiency, Academic Language, and Digital Literacy for LESLLA Learners

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ABSTRACT

This research highlights the challenge of providing digital literacy instruction in a second language to adult learners who may have had limited formal education. Animating the work is the view that success in classroom learning is linked to proficiency with linguistic structures constituting the academic language of a context (Schleppegrell, 2004) and that instructional strategies and resources mediate learning (Vygotsky, 1987). Two questions guided the study: what are the linguistic structures evident in classroom discourse on basic computer skills; and what instructional strategies promote proficiency of this academic language? The goal of the analysis was to develop an awareness of the linguistic features defining the ‘field’ of the context (Schleppegrell, 2004) and then to identify interactions whereby teachers made them accessible to learners. Findings support the strategy of explicit vocabulary introduction preceding or provided in correspondence with computer skill instruction, and provision of ample opportunities to practice and deepen knowledge of skills and vocabulary to a conceptual level.

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the issue of English as the primary language of instruction in computer classes held in community technology labs and frequented by English language learners (ELLs). Taking a functional approach to describe language use, I investigated instructional strategies employed to teach computer skills and the academic language used to do so. This study was motivated by the idea that learning specific academic content requires learning the language used to describe it and that if teachers recognize where and how vocabulary and specific linguistic structures are central to success with academic content, they can determine how to best provide support for comprehension (Lemke, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2013). Schleppegrell (2004) suggested such success is characterized by command of the language used in specific academic contexts. Learner identity and investment in learning are deeply connected to command

of academic language, including not only the vocabulary and language structures but also a broader communicative competence accomplished through use of language. Hence, in order to best support adult ELLs in digital literacy learning opportunities, teachers and tutors must be made aware of academic language and be prepared to scaffold learning to make use of it (Fitts & Bowers, 2013).

In the US, many adult English language learners study in formal adult education programs, with trained or licensed teachers. Because these programs are often full, community-based organizations offering more informal programming, work hard to fill gap and provide much needed educational opportunities; however, the teachers working there are often minimally trained and struggle to support the learning needs of adults for whom English is not a first language. Additionally, because they lack funding and expertise for materials development, CBOs depend on an assortment of web-based learning resources developed for literate English-speaking, learners. This research sought to better understand how to maximize the positive impact of the resources that are there – including how to best support volunteers or AmeriCorps member who often serve as teachers there – particularly around issues of language and the role of language instruction in support of digital literacy skills development.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Because I am considering how teaching and how learning is mediated, I rely on sociocultural theory that rests on the work of Lev Vygotsky, where the organic (the brain) and the cultural both impact the mind, leading, over time, to development and learning (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008). More practically, I draw on the research of Silver-Pacuilla and Reder (2008) and their literature review defining minimal skill level for learning online. Their research determined that what is needed is an equitable distribution amongst three areas: learner skill, support available, and the demands of a task (see Figure 1). One of the goals of this study was to determine how to provide an equitable distribution amongst these three components when working in the particular context of this study: CBO computer labs supported by minimally trained teachers attending to a diverse range of adult ELLs.



Figure 1: Minimum requirements for learning online (Silver-Pacuilla and Reder, 2008)

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review begins with an introduction to Academic Language (AL), touching on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a theoretical framework for elucidating how meaning in AL rests within context. What follows then connects ideas from AL and SFL to current thinking about vocabulary and what it is to truly know a word. Finally, I show how these frames, taken together show how a functional approach is important for understanding the role of language in digital literacy skill development.

Academic Language

Academic language, the language of schooling, serves as a means to support learning of academic content (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavits, 2014). The concept of AL stretches from early cognitivist work of Basil Bernstein (1971) and Cummins (1981) to the current work of Jeff Zwiers (2007; 2013), whose rich contributions to academic language in K12 setting show how support around academic language proficiency can support development of critical thinking skills and academic success. The approach drawn on here is Schleppegrell's functionalist perspective that connects AL to SFL, which was a turn in linguistics that shifted focus from structure of language to functions and meaning (Halliday, 1985; Halliday, 1993; Halliday, 2003).

Schleppegrell's (2004) functional approach requires identifying the configuration of grammatical structures that are typical, expected, or socially relevant in any context. By doing so one can define the register, "the configuration of lexical and grammatical resources which realizes a particular set of meaning" (p. 46). Drawing on Halliday (1994), Schleppegrell (2004) presented a structure for organizing elements of a register, the language of a social context, which includes the field (representing ideas), tenor (representing a stance), and mode (structuring text). These elements work together within a context to define the shape of discourse that efficiently or accurately expresses meaning within it. By attending to these variables, we can explore or understand linguistic structures evident in different social contexts, and thus define the language of schooling (Schleppegrell, 2004). A functional analysis is necessary in order to elucidate the language required to display knowledge. Though there is some common ground with the more cognitive-based approaches to SLA (i.e., theories that focus on input), a functional approach suggests that the motivation for and utility of teaching academic language is to provide scaffolding that may leverage a learner's prior experience.

Vocabulary

Understanding a parallel line of inquiry on vocabulary teaching and learning is necessary to frame the instruction written about in this study. Though much of it focuses on either K12 or higher-level L2 vocabulary development, it is useful for theorizing the role of vocabulary with low-level ELLs in computer classes, particularly the literature that characterizes what it means to have knowledge of words. Knowing a word is complex endeavor encompassing different types of

knowledge. Graves, August, and Mancilla-Martinez (2012) described it as a mix of receptive and productive knowledge. Knowing a word is also understood as a continuum Beck, McKeown, and Omanson (1987), as illustrated in Figure 2.

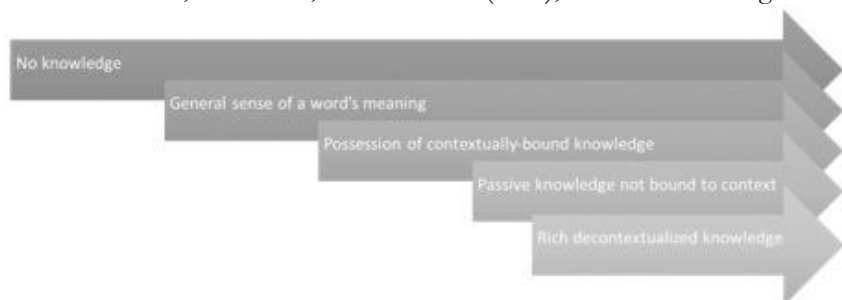


Figure 2: Continuum of word knowledge (Beck, McKeowan, & Omanson; 1987)

A person starting with no knowledge of a word gradually progresses to eventually understand its meaning and make use of it in a variety of settings. Knowing a word may also mean knowing the connection of words to broader concepts, topics, or situational discourse where words are relevant or useful (Miller, 1978 as described in Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2013).

Perfetti (2007) writing on lexical quality hypothesis, articulated specific features required to truly know a word, for example: semantics, phonology, orthography, morphology, and syntactic rules. Perfetti also suggested that if one could draw on relevant prior knowledge, he or she was essentially providing a form of familiar context, cuing a personal schema to support understanding the word. This is problematic for ELLs with no prior computer experience before they began working on digital literacy concepts.

Why AL for this Study?

AL is a promising means by which to scaffold adult ELLs engagement as a both a learner and legitimate participant in broader world, which is increasingly found online. An AL study can elucidate the language required to fully participate in learning and daily living. In that sense, AL serves as social capital. Zwiers (2013) wrote that such capital is critical for knowing what to say, do, or write in an educational setting. This sentiment is the motivation for the study, and because there is a gap in research for adult migrants working in the context of digital literacy classes, the study strives to answer the following questions:

1. What are the linguistic structures evident in classroom discourse of digital literacy?
2. What instructional strategies promote proficiency of this academic language?

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative case study of AL used in basic computer skills classrooms. For this study, I focused on representations of “field,” the ideational choices, or what is actually being talked about (e.g., nouns and verbs). I focused

on the language evident in instruction and by comments about teaching made by focal participants in focus group discussions. Particularly important in this context are those nouns and verbs that constitute the vocabulary of the basic computer skills classes observed. Vocabulary is an important component of ideational choices in language use, because when used successfully, it helps learners display knowledge and show they are part of a discourse community (Schleppegrell, 2001).

Data Sources

To account for the vocabulary required for participation in basic computer classes, I analyzed data from my notes and audio transcripts of recordings of classroom observations (22 hours) and focus group discussions amongst five participant teachers (13 hours). These data included conversations where participants described their beliefs about the role of explicit language instruction in the classroom and the relationship between English language proficiency and digital skill development. I took note of language used to describe the content skills that served as the focus of skill instruction, the explanatory language used to make those content skills clear, and instructional strategies employed to teach them. I also analyzed any artifacts employed in instruction of the focused computer skills.

Table 1

Technology Access Collaborative (TAC) sites' students			
Site/ Facilitator	Students' home language(s)	Education/English level	Program Year(s)
Ascend/ Erik	Mixed Horn of Africa languages	Adult learners with mixed L1	2015-2016
		literacy proficiency and mostly low L2 English proficiency	2016-2017
Newcomer House/ Marty	Spanish; Some diverse African and Southeast Asian languages	Adult learners with mixed L1	2015-2016
		literacy proficiency and ranging from low to high L2 English	2016-2017

* Focus group discussions included up to two additional participants, but because their primary learner audience was not low-level ELLs, I will not include them in this analysis. All names are pseudonyms.

Sites

The participating sites were part of the same umbrella AmeriCorp program, which I call Technology Access Collaborative or TAC. TAC serves over 30 organizations in the metro area in which it is based. The sites I chose represent the range of CBOs that host TAC AmeriCorps members. The two primary informants for this study were the two sites most consistently serving low-level ELLs in the period 2015-2017.

Participants

At Ascend, the TAC member, Erik, offered classes to adolescents and adults. The program’s intent was to support workforce training and computer skills with the goal of helping community members achieve economic and social stability. Instruction in the computer lab was characterized by a rolling cohort with very few learners coming every day and no way of knowing who will attend each day. Marty’s work Newcomer House was a bit different, in that Newcomer House enrolled ELLs in formal English language learning and provided computer classes to supplement language classes. These computer classes were several weeks long and supported a cohort group of students that remained largely intact throughout the course, with new students joining in along the way. It is important to note that neither Erik nor Marty spoke the first language of most of their learners.

Data Analysis

Table 2	
Codes	
Code Sub-codes	Code Sub-codes
1. Instruction of content	2. Student Info
Process of Instruction	Levels
Review	ELLs
Using student home language	Class demographics
Classroom management	
Individual Help	3. Language Analysis
Cohort model	Conceptual understanding
Transferable skills	Teaching vocab
Display questions	Vocabulary inconsistency
Activity	
Resources	4. Needs
Use of Northstar	Multilingual
Articulation of skills	Class logistics
	Differentiation

I qualitatively coded data in a multicycle process (Saldaña, 2012). In cycle one, I applied structural codes, for example Language analysis, Instruction of content, and Needs to draw out data that represented use of language or instruction of the language or digital literacy. First cycle coding also included what Saldaña referred to as attribute codes, used for marking useful demographic information about learners and context, for example: Student info, levels, ELLs, class demographics. I took a second pass still drawing on first cycle codes for as Saldaña (2012) suggests, “a more attuned perspective” (p. 10). During this phase of coding, I applied descriptive codes to flag immediate salient themes within

this subset. Table 2 shows the codes that resulted from both cycles and are most relevant for the research presented here.

FINDINGS

The analysis of these data suggested that determining the bounds of an academic language “field”, or vocabulary, is not a straightforward endeavor. It was clear that the “ideational field” was shaped by vocabulary found in a required assessment, but that the explanatory language meant to support skill development varied. Further, the treatment of key vocabulary became more sophisticated as the project progressed.

The Language of Computer Skills Instruction

As I analyzed field notes, analytic memos, transcriptions of focus groups and class observations, and classroom artifacts to answer the question What are the linguistic structures evident in classroom discourse on basic computer skills? I noticed ample data that informed identification the key vocabulary in this context. In total, the codes “language analysis, vocabulary inconsistency, and teaching vocabulary were applied 203 times, and often marked data referencing the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment. These data suggested that the ‘field’ in this context was constituted by key vocabulary articulated in skills tested in the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment. It was clear that the standards on which the assessment is based motivated the vocabulary used in the classroom. Evidence for this finding was most neatly reflected in a comparison of the instructional materials from the focal site, Ascend, and the actual Northstar standards. The data are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Coincidence of key terms and concepts in course materials and assessment standards

Skill area	Number of times class terms are articulated in both standards and materials	Number of times class terms are articulated only in materials; but implied by standards*	Number of standards not covered in class materials	Number of terms articulated in materials but not in standards
MS Word	24	3	5	2
Computer Basics	26	12	6	0

*Terms used in course materials reflect more detail than what is articulated in the standard, but teaching standard necessitates use of the term.

Table 3 shows that that there was a high correspondence of terms that appeared in both the Northstar Digital Literacy Standards and the course materials for both MS Word and Computer Basics, the classes that I observed several times at Ascend.¹

Varied Language Employed in Explanations. There was not much consistency in the language of explanation that TACs provided to support instruction of the skills. At Ascend and Newcomer House, explanations for different skills generally started with a group presentation led by the teacher and then shifted to individual practice supported by one-to-one help when needed. The one-to-one support that followed depended on the learner’s needs, from casual observation to literal hand holding as the facilitators monitored practice.

Table 4

Transcript excerpts showing varied explanatory language (Classroom observation, April 4, 2016)

Minute	Speaker	Excerpt
17:25	Volunteer	Try swiping that
17:42		Swipe
17:53		Put your cursor here and swipe
18:00		No. Put your cursor here. Now swipe.
20:30 - 21:02	Erik	1 So, highlight all of your text, we’re going to do copy 2 paste and cut. So, if you highlight all of your text. So, 3 you want to click. So, make sure you click and 4 highlight. Try copy. So, if you highlight and try the 5 copy button. Go to the end of that one and then you 6 click right there.

Each corps member seemed to tailor their explanations to their community of learners. Because these students varied, the explanations had to vary too. Additionally, each of the sites had volunteers who came with their own way of describing things. An example of this variation can be seen in the following classroom transcript excerpts from a Microsoft Word text formatting lesson at Ascend represented in Table 4, where Erik used the word “highlight” and the volunteer consistently referred to “swipe” for the same action.

Teaching Vocabulary in Computer Classes

The second focus of inquiry investigated whether or not and how the vocabulary of computer skills was made accessible to learners by answering the following question: *How do service corps members draw on key vocabulary in their*

¹ There were several terms that were included in the standards, but not covered in class. These are less commonly used affordances of MS Word and so were not taught, for example customizing mouse control and adjusting screen resolution.

instruction? The most useful finding is that there was a shift in the corps members' perception of the role of vocabulary development in instruction.

Starting point: Vocabulary not a focus. At the beginning of the study, these data suggest that vocabulary instruction was viewed as secondary to the skills instruction, rather than the focus of instruction. For example, in the first focus group meeting in January of 2016, there was an acknowledgment that language was an issue in teaching computer skills, but there was no conversation about how language instruction or vocabulary support should figure into instruction. In this conversation, Erik framed vocabulary development as a by-product of computer skills instruction, "...the one thing you hope for is that then eventually they start learning terminology to associate with that concept" (Transcript from focus group, January 8, 2016, minute 3:40).

Early shift: Considering vocabulary. A few months later, Erik and Marty appeared to consider the importance of vocabulary in their instruction. Erik shared, "*The first day of my class in particular is just, what is this called? It's called a mouse. What is this called and then to learn the functions before that they have to understand why it's called that...*" (Transcript from focus group, March 18, 2016, minute 9:07). Marty said that she was beginning to think about skills and vocabulary as connected, "*Yeah and so I started integrating okay if we're going to talk about there will be some new vocabulary and I will introduce and say, 'Okay this is the new word for... this is the new... this is a new word'*" (Starting at 11:38).

Recognizing the importance of vocabulary instruction. Data from both Newcomer House and Ascend suggest that as time progressed Marty and Erik began to allow more time for focused instruction and practice of vocabulary and attendant skill development.

Erik's work at Ascend. Data from three parallel lessons taught by Erik show how his thinking about vocabulary building shifted. In the first lesson, taught on April 4, 2016, vocabulary was embedded into the skills instruction. In this lesson, he included key terms on PowerPoint slides projected to a presentation screen, as seen in Figure 3, and introduced as he talked through the slide. This instruction included some provision of definitions and comprehension checks done with display questions, but no practice of vocabulary.

Data from Erik's class on the same topic three months later show that over time, Erik began to integrate activities to support vocabulary instruction. This shift is evident in Table 5, included here to provide an overview of the range of instructional activities observed in the class.

The class taught on June 17 included each of the instructional activities observed in the earlier class, plus a demonstration and extra vocabulary review activities. It also featured concepts presented one at a time, rather than several terms at once, as happened in the earlier lesson. Because there were pauses between the introduction of each concept and a review opportunity at the end, this lesson opened up the opportunity for more differentiated explanations of the skill and vocabulary, and better supported learner needs than the previous lesson.

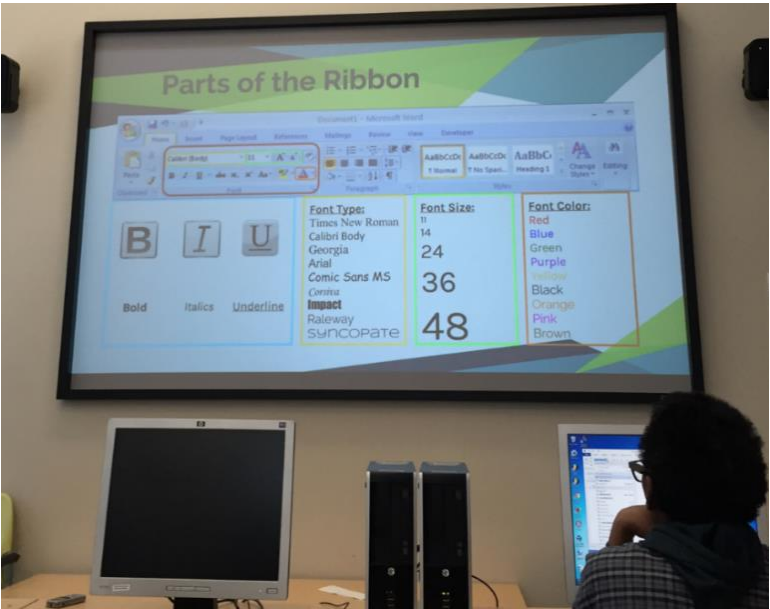


Figure 3: Powerpoint slides shown by Erik at Ascend on April 4, 2016

Table 5

Instructional strategies used in Erik’s parallel lessons on text formatting in Microsoft Word

Instructional Activity	April 4, 2016	June 17, 2016
Vocabulary instruction embedded into skill explanation	x	x
Powerpoint slide showing skill and key words	x	x
Demonstration		x
Several words and concepts presented simultaneously	x	x
One word or concept presented at a time		x
Vocabulary worksheet	x	x
Supplemental vocabulary and review activities		x
Practice skill	x	x

additional practice that provided support with skill and vocabulary introduction, including links to external websites like the one pictured in Figure 4, which is an online activity from a website with numerous lessons on English language vocabulary.

Extra support was also provided in the glossary of computer skill vocabulary built into the Digital Homeroom and made available during this lesson, as featured in Figure 5.

Marty's work at Newcomer House. The shift to incorporating more explicit support for vocabulary building and time to learn and practice it was also evident in a March 15, 2017 class taught by Marty at Newcomer Home. The one-hour class focusing on Computer Basics was almost entirely a vocabulary lesson about the parts of a computer. Marty led the class through six activities, five of which supported vocabulary development. These included: clever use of a document camera and small cards picturing the vocabulary words which were sorted into the categories “hardware” or “software” (see Figure 6) and then naming the parts visible on an actual laptop. She also had the learners pull up the computer basics page of online glossary (shown in Figure 5 above) and click through the words at leisure, which gave the students time to talk in their home languages (Spanish, Karen, and Somali) in small groups. Marty then pulled out an old laptop that had been taken apart and its constituent parts labeled, so that the learners could see a visible example of the interior hardware (see Figure 7).

Marty ended the class with another classification activity using a worksheet, requiring the learners to write the word for the first time. She had learners write their answers on a projected image of the worksheet (pictured in Figure 8). After a word was written, the rest of the students confirmed or contested the choice.

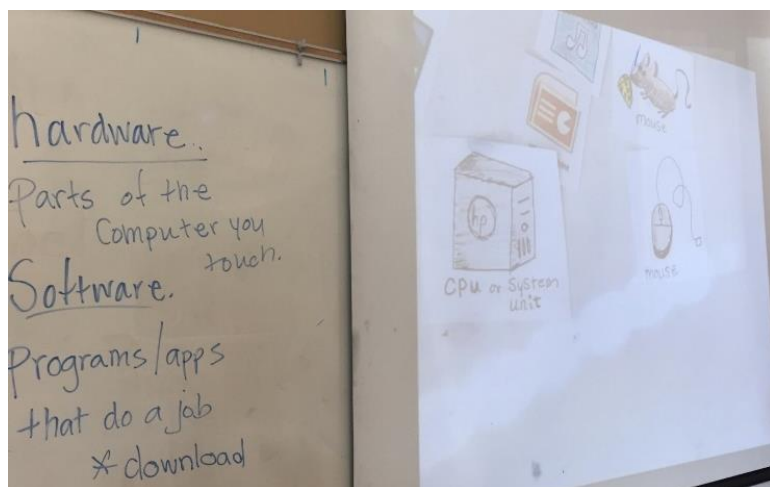


Figure 6: Document camera vocabulary activity



Figure 7: Labeled laptop

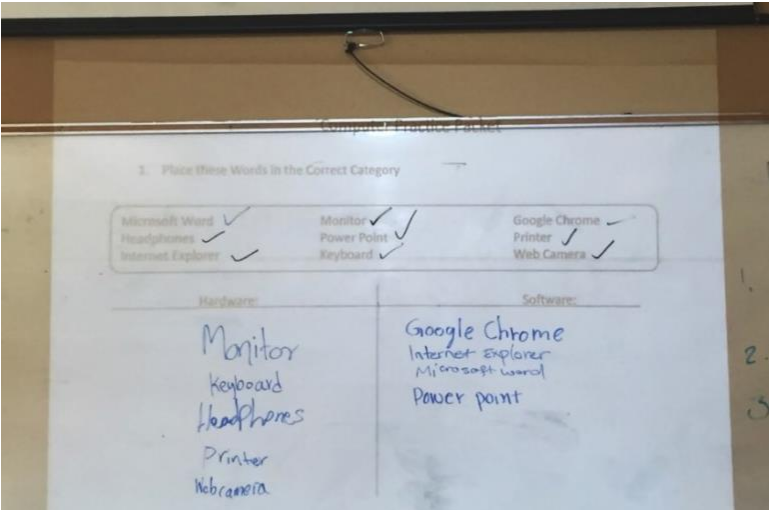


Figure 8: Projected vocabulary worksheet

In field notes documenting a debriefing conversation after class, Marty observed that, over the 17 months she had been at Newcomer Home, she had realized the importance of making time for ample vocabulary support. To make this possible, she said that she had slowed down the pace of the assessment cycle from three instructional hours before an assessment to 40 hours, with nearly half of those hours dedicated to vocabulary development and other language required to make use of computer.

Talking about their work. Data from focus group discussions support observational data provided above, showing that corps members began to think deeply about the role of vocabulary instruction in their work. In the June 24, 2016 focus group, Erik provided a theoretical explanation of what he thought it meant to know a word, which can be seen in the excerpt and the corresponding Figure 9.

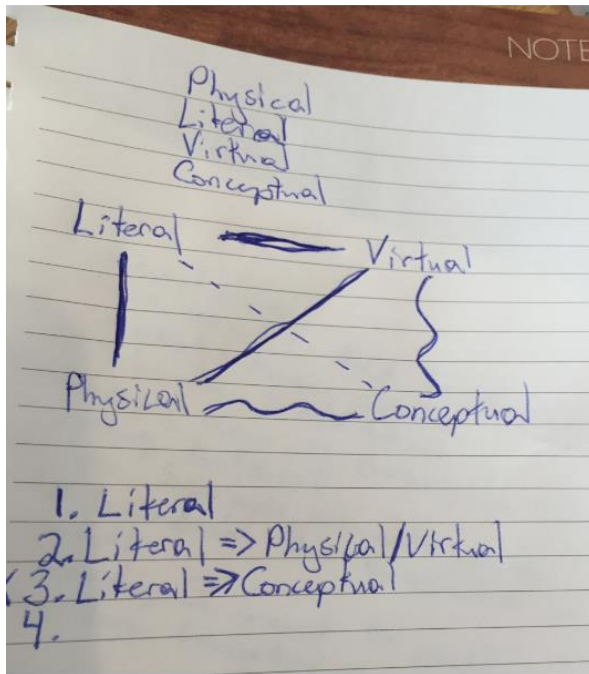


Figure 9: Erik's understanding of the connection between skills and vocabulary

- 1 Erik So, I said **the literal are the words**, the actual words sometimes.
- 2 **The physical is like a computer like this** [demonstrates
- 3 something you can touch]. **The virtual is the presentation I make**
- 4 on a web interface or on a PowerPoint **and then a conceptual is**
- 5 **what they do**. And the literal to the physical and the literal to the
- 6 virtual make complete sense people get that. They know how to
- 7 name things very quickly. We learn that quickly and then I try to go
- 8 to the conceptual, like from the word to the concept and that's the
- 9 least connection, like that's where I'll lose people.

(Transcript from focus group, June 24 2016. Starting at 26.50)

By the literal, Erik meant the vocabulary used to label the skills they were working on. The physical, was mostly just that, a physical object, but also referred to abstract representations of physical as required by the content, he mentioned, for example “hand cursor”, “file” or “folder” (which are not actually a physical hand, file, or folder). Another example mentioned was the “bold” button visible on a computer screen, which cannot actually be touched; rather, it is an affordance that triggers a response from the computer. Erik referred to his verbal and visual instruction as “the virtual” as in, something of the “physical” and “literal” that he had described. Finally, he suggested “the conceptual,” which was the learner’s demonstration of the focus skill - the goal of instruction. By

providing this explanation, Erik showed that he has been thinking about the connection between skill mastery and vocabulary knowledge.

Later in the transcript excerpt Marty and Erik discuss the impact of depth of word knowledge on computer skills learning.

- 1 Jen [Clarifying question about concept map Erik drew] So, for
- 2 example they might be able to succeed in a mousing activity but
- 3 if you asked them to do something in a Word exercise they won't
- 4 be able to do mousing?
- 5 Erik Yeah exactly and to me the conceptual means the ability to
- 6 transfer that knowledge to other things. And that's how I define
- 7 it at least ... So basically, the X is where I kind of lose people.
- 8 So, then after I noticed that words [his literal] to concept doesn't
- 9 work, I'll try to go physical or virtual to concept, so then I try to
- 10 show them this or say, "What does it do?" That still doesn't work.
- 11 And so I'm, I think I've kind of hit a wall in my teaching, is the
- 12 ability to get to the conceptual level.
- 13 Marty Oh, I totally identify with that.
- 14 Jen ...So how do you know that they're not getting there...
- 15 Erik What is it that I noticed? When I introduce a new program they
- 16 basically revert to where we were at the beginning, and people
- 17 just saying, "I don't get it like you show me." I'll very, very
- 18 frequently teach on that.
- 19 Jen So you see them not being able to apply skills across contexts or
- 20 learning to the tasks?
- 21 Erik Yes.
- 22 Marty Interesting
- 23 It's like almost as if each [[new program everything]]
- 24 Erik [interrupted]...
- 25 [interrupts]...[[required]] all new skills.
- 26 Jen Exactly. It's like mousing is not something you learn for all
- 27 Erik computer things it's something that mousing works for
- 28 Microsoft word and my suggestion of this is from people saying
- 29 show me things that they just showed me they did a second ago
- 30 so.
- 31

(Transcript from focus group on June 26, 2016, minute 26:00)

The exchange reifies the finding that their thinking about the goal of their instruction had shifted to include a deeper understanding of what it means to know a word or skill. This level of reflection on the connection between language and skill was not evident in any earlier data. It signals a reflexive practice and the understanding that the goal of instruction is not simply memorizing a list of vocabulary words, or response to commands to replicate skills (e.g., clicks on a computer) but a wish that learners can fully acquire both the language and skills to work independently and across multiple contexts.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Although the functional approach to this research was illuminating, showing the source of the key terms of the “field” in basic computer skills classes and the inconsistency in the language employed to teach the skills, the findings point to a limitation in viewing the language of digital literacy from a strictly lexical perspective. These data suggest that vocabulary is just one aspect of conceptual understanding required for mastering the skills, which, together with knowledge of the abstract representation of a word within the hardware and software of the computer, also includes a broader conceptual knowledge and a physical embodiment of the skill instructed.

What is it to Know a Word? The Sociocultural Perspective

The notion of “concept” was introduced by the corps members several times in data presented above. They used the term as a practical description of the knowledge of a vocabulary and its associated skill in this context. Though they had not intended to, they hit upon a very useful theoretical construct in sociocultural theory. Vygotsky (1987) also used a Russian equivalent of the term; he equated “concept” as a way to frame a word’s meaning, defining concept as a thematically unified entity that encompasses individual elements. He suggested that the meanings attributed to words are abstractions that gain meaning through observing use and interaction (mediation) in a particular context. He wrote that knowing a word’s meaning reflects an understanding of the development of one’s consciousness and an understanding of a concept. Knowledge of a concept develops over time and involves the adoption of the cultural practices of a context in addition to developing systematic and categorical knowledge of words and their meanings. Vygotsky suggested that direct instruction of a particular skill or word is insufficient to support understanding of a concept; rather, a broader more abstracted knowledge of it is developed through ongoing mediated activity and observation or practice.

My analysis suggests that Marty and Erik came to understand this in the final months of the research. Within what was possible at their respective sites, given learner demographics and the environment of the lab, each corps member, in some measure, arrived at the realization that simply knowing a word was not enough to support computer skill development. Consequently, each added instructional strategy provided focus and mediated activities that offered a semblance of the practice or lived experience necessary for the learners to not only understand the vocabulary and skills but also reach the conceptual level of understanding necessary for transferring those terms and skills into new contexts.

Though community-technology labs offer varied affordances for supporting learning (i.e., class duration or frequency, schedule, cohorts or drop-in), no matter the affordance, facilitators of learning in these environments would benefit from professional development that supports understanding that conceptual knowledge of a word is necessary if their goal is to teach transferable skills to learners. To ensure that instruction in such settings is suitable for the

broadest range of students, it should be highly visual, supported by demonstration linking words to skills, and have ample opportunities to practice the key words followed by hands-on practice mediated by tutors or teachers.

These data elucidate what it is to know a word the context of digital literacy:

- 1) recognizing a word supplied in instruction,
- 2) knowledge of how the concept the word references is enacted,
- 3) the physical capacity to enact the skill, and
- 4) knowing when and why to enact the skill, or ability to recognize the vocabulary within and transfer to skill to a new context.

This list is not dissimilar from the process from Beck et al. (2013) articulated in the literature review. On first consideration, point three, “The physical capacity to enact the skill” may seem beyond the scope of language instruction; however, I think it represents an extension or new application of our understanding of what it is to know a word. It adds an embodied use of the vocabulary, the requirement to physically enact the skill, which can complicate learning. For example, mousing requires both physical control of the mouse and spatial knowledge of where things are on the screen and how to move the mouse to direct the cursor. Physically enacting a computer skill is a component of the skill represented by the constituent lexicon of the “field”, so to possess conceptual understanding that is transferable, it can be argued that one must “do”.

This research therefore requires an expanded view of academic language and serves an example of research that pushes SFL in application to new contexts created by technological ubiquity of daily life in countries where migrants and refugees reside. The social practice in which the learners were engaged was not entirely text based, as is most commonly the unit of analysis of SFL, but also included internal or environmental cues for enacting a particular skill or use of a computer.

Schleppegrell (2004) writes:

Students need to gain social experience with the ways of using language that are expected at school and a greater understanding of the linguistic resources available to construe new knowledge. A functional theory of language that links language and social context grounds the characterization of the task that students face at school in the challenges of realizing in language the new contexts and knowledge presented in the classrooms. (p.17)

In this context, meaning is embodied conceptual understanding of vocabulary, not a rote or behavioral response to a command. Meaning in this academic register requires an embodiment. If I say click and drag, it is not enough to understand what the words imply, one needs to be able to physically demonstrate knowledge of and then make use of the skill. In this case, perhaps language supports skill development in that it acts as cues to signal what a learner needs to practice, or can be used to ask for help with skill development. However, simply pre-teaching the vocabulary will likely not in itself support a

learner's skill development. It is important that teachers attend to the meaning that is possible, and to leverage meaning when describing skills by providing more personalized explanations of how to carry out a task.

CONCLUSION

Ensuring opportunities for flexible, differentiated, and responsive instruction can best meet the individual differences in the varied learning needs and challenges with vocabulary comprehension evident in diverse group of learners (Ableeva, 2008). Such instructional settings make possible embodied, enacted, and mediated language and learning. The participant teachers in this study, namely Erik and Marty, grew into expertise that reflected such practice over the course of their AmeriCorps service, leaving resources in place for the volunteers and service members who followed them. Over time and with the support of these resources and adequate professional development, future corps members may come to understand the connection between word knowledge and skill development more quickly - making their service year more feel more efficacious and their learners more successful in their learning.

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Indigenous Knowledge and Literacy Acquisition: A Qualitative Study of Low-Literate Elder Refugees' Educational Backgrounds and Cultural Dissonance

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ABSTRACT

Prior knowledge is central to memory and learning, but many older refugees come to the classroom with ways of knowing and experiences much different from what they find in Western teaching contexts. In describing refugees' prior learning experiences, research often cites ethnological differences between print-based cultures and oral traditions. But relatively few researchers cite adult learners' own words when describing these differences. In this study, elder refugees' narratives illuminate our understanding of indigenous knowledge, which is passed down orally through generations, and is specific to the place where they lived. What happens to this place-based knowledge when they must leave their country? By analyzing themes from a qualitative study with low-literate elder refugees from Somalia, their instructor, and observations within a beginning language and literacy class in the U.S., this research seeks to broaden critical discourse around LESLLA learners in general and elder learners aged 60 and older in particular.

INTRODUCTION

Elders and beginning language and literacy classrooms

Teachers in beginning language and literacy classrooms know how essential it is to familiarize themselves with who their students are and what they know. TESOL International Association recently deemed "Know Your Learners" as the primary component for excellence in English language teaching (2018), and as a central tenet to adult learning theory, background knowledge and validation of prior life experiences in the classroom is essential to literacy acquisition

(Knowles, 1980; Tarone et al., 2009). Research on LESLLA learners also points to a need for understanding the experiences learners' have had before coming to the U.S., as well as how age affects the learning process (Vinogradov, 2013). Educators working with refugee populations know that these learners bring with them a deep knowledge base and a wealth of life experiences, but sometimes this knowledge may be altogether unfamiliar to teachers in Western teaching contexts.

Among refugee populations, elder refugees as non- and low-literate learners present a complex issue in society. Illiteracy is regarded as an abnormality, and the interpretation of the assessments of the cognitive abilities of elders with limited formal education are even mistaken as showing signs of dementia, or nervous system and neurological disorder (Ardila et al., 2000). With such a pathological stance on aging and education in our society relying so strongly on print literacy, if a student is over 65 years old the sentiment among even the most committed educators may be that it is too late for them. The dearth of research exploring the social transformation of elder refugees, as compared with the substantially greater focus and quantity of research on younger refugees whose social transformation comes about more quickly supports this view (Haines, 2010). While the field of research on non- and low-literate ESL learners is growing, research on elder learners is lacking, and most often limited to high-income white populations (Doetinchem de Rande, 2012).

In the community school where the researcher worked, low-literate East African elders represented a significant portion of the most regularly attending students. East Africans comprise one of the largest groups of primary and secondary refugee arrivals to Minnesota (MN Department of Health, 2015). Elder learners who enrolled in ESL programs at low-literate functional levels accounted for the largest portion of students intakes, suggesting that elders from the East African community are most often LESLLA learners (Lepage, personal communication, 2014).

A number of factors contribute to the characterization of elder learners as being "hardest to serve" (Schleppergrell, 1987). Elder learners are almost invariably impacted by mental and physical health and transportation issues. Studies show that language processing, or the speed at which we remember and process language, slows down by our 70s (Borella, Ghisletta, & De Ribaupierre, 2011; Wingfield, Kemtes, & Miller, 2001). Our inhibitory control, or the ability to eliminate irrelevant information when processing language, is also affected (Borella, Ghisletta, & De Ribaupierre, 2011; Stine-Morrow, Hussey, & Ng, 2015). But perhaps most significant among elders is the prevalence of hearing loss. The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) reports that in the U.S., 17% of adults suffer from hearing loss. The prevalence of hearing loss among adults increases as we age-- 25% for 65–74 year olds, and 50% for those aged 75+, and a delay in diagnosis of hearing loss is very common (2016). Aging refugees face additional psychological risk as the upheaval of relocation to a third country itself results in their social isolation and loss of role in the family (Dubus, 2010; Heger Boyle & Ali, 2010), and is further compounded by limited English proficiency, poverty, trauma, and

unemployment which many aging refugees face (Marshall, 2005; Ridgard et al., 2015).

In addition to health issues, elder learners are also impacted by current legislation governing adult education (WIOA, 2014) which emphasizes college and career readiness of all programs receiving federal funding. Employment-based outcomes which are not achievable or simply irrelevant to elder learners makes it difficult for programs to accommodate the needs of elder learners, instead providing instruction and assessments that focus on achieving quick outcomes (Condelli, 2007; Reder, 2013).

Elders and indigenous knowledge

In order to better serve low-literate elder learners, teachers must become more familiar with their students' prior learning experiences. Studies show that recognizing the epistemological diversity in classrooms and knowledge systems possessed by learners is essential if we are to encourage retention and persistence (Smith & Pourchot, 1998; Watson, 2010), and cultural dissonance occurs when students perceive a difference between their prior experiences and current expectations for learning and what is being presented in the classroom. Participants in this study had not attended formal education programs in their country and were not literate in Somali. The history of formal education in Somalia was limited and mostly intended to further colonization of the country by Britain and Italy (Abdi, 1998), and it was not until 1972, when Somali elders today had already reached adulthood, that Somali became the national language and language of instruction.

Text-based formal educational experiences typically characterizes teachers' background knowledge in classrooms in the US. However, the foundation of elder learners' prior learning experiences in this study was indigenous knowledge systems, which are characterized as place-based, orally transmitted, and accumulated over generations (Kincheloe & Semali, 2002). Critical Pedagogy recognizes indigenous knowledge as a primary component to challenging power among marginalized populations. However, indigenous knowledge has long been regarded as superstitious, primitive, or illegitimate, based on oral traditions which are unstructured and less rigorous scholarly traditions based on the written word (Ahmed, 2014; Akena, 2012; Ong, 2002). Considering the current paucity of ESL and literacy research citing oral tradition and indigenous knowledge, the interview responses of this study have the potential to become the sources for citation in future research.

Research questions

In order to know more about the educational background of elder refugees in beginning language and literacy classrooms, we must understand their prior learning experiences within indigenous knowledge systems, as well as elicit their perspectives on different ways of knowing and the expectations of ESL programs in the US.

This study addressed two important questions:

1. What indigenous knowledge do low-literate elder learners bring to the beginning literacy classroom?
2. How does this indigenous knowledge interact with the western teaching and learning context they are currently studying in?

METHODOLOGY

Setting and participants

This study took place at an affordable housing high-rise in a major metropolitan area in the upper Midwest between October to November of 2015. A total of 14 low-literate East African elders (11 female and 3 male) living in this building were interviewed. Participants self-identified as elders between 60 and 80 years old most often gave an estimated age, as their dates of birth had not always been recorded in their home countries. Participants characterized their educational backgrounds as never having gone to school in their home country, and either having gone to school in the US as adults for a limited time or never having gone to school at all.

The researcher of this study had previously worked as an Adult ELL Program Coordinator from 2012 to 2014 at the building, and in that capacity had gotten to know many of the elder participants as learners in on-site English programming. The challenges described by Tarone and Bigelow (2004) in conducting longitudinal studies with low-educated transient refugee populations was thus circumvented by conducting the study in a single housing complex where elder residents of the building also attended on-site English programs. The study also benefited from an interpreter who not only interpreted for the interviews and assisted in recruiting participants, but was also a respected resident of the building, thereby contributing to a positive rapport to the interview process, and likely adding a high level of trust between the researcher and participants (Gonzalves, 2011). It is worth noting that there were in fact more elders who requested to participate in interviews than the capacity of the research project could support.

The purpose of the interviews was to elicit low-literate elder refugees' experiences with informal and formal education. These interviews focused on indigenous knowledge, in order to help educators understand more about LESLLA learner backgrounds. But, great care was taken in eliciting these narratives, as researcher bias was recognized in the fact that the researcher had been a teacher within a learning context that is largely shaped by the Western learning paradigm typical of classes in the US. Further, due to the fact that the researcher did not share a background with the participants in either Somali culture or indigenous knowledge, extra effort was made to ensure that the collection and interpretation of data remained true to the ideas of elder learners themselves, and advised the interpreter not to explain interviewees' responses or explain what the researcher said if the participant didn't understand the question, but rather to alert the researcher to a misunderstanding and then allow the opportunity for follow-up questions and arrive at a clear understanding in tandem with the participant. For this reason, eliciting narratives on indigenous

knowledge was expected to be challenging based on the researchers' relative lack of familiarity with elders' ways of knowing and the students' expectation that perhaps these were not relevant, based on the researcher's position as a white, literate teacher in a Western learning context. Furthermore, as indigenous knowledge is sacred and has been exploited throughout colonial and imperial eras of histories affecting indigenous people throughout the world, critical theory was chosen as the theoretical lens for the study in order to promote change and give power back to marginalized populations.

Once elders expressed interest in participating, the researcher and an interpreter orally explained the purpose and the procedure of the research project. In keeping with university research ethics, participants signed a consent letter stating that their information will be kept anonymous, with each participant and the building where they lived given a pseudonym ("High-Rise A"), and that they could terminate the interview or withdraw from the study at any time without consequence to them.

Measurements / data collection

This study began with one-on-one interviews conducted with 14 elders in their first language at High-Rise A through the help of Somali interpreter, and generally lasted 30 to 40 minutes. In order to ensure that my collection and interpretation of data remained true to the ideas of elder learners themselves, I advised my interpreter not to explain interviewees' responses to me in the event that I didn't understand the response or the participant didn't understand the question, but rather to alert me to a misunderstanding and then allow me to ask follow-up questions and arrive at a clear understanding in tandem with the participant. The interviews sought to elicit narratives of informal education and indigenous knowledge, whether elders perceived any differences between their success in learning prior to going to school and the experience of classroom learning in the US, and whether that and/or additional factors were problematic to their continued attendance. The interviews were flexible and followed a line of inquiry that included the following kinds of questions developed by the researcher to elicit and code elements of indigenous knowledge: 1) Where are you from? 2) What was it like growing up? 3) What were you an expert at? 4) How did you become an expert?; as well as questions about their experiences with formal education: 5) Have you been to school in the US? 6) If so, did you like it? 7) What suggestions would you have to make it better?

After the individual interviews were completed, the interview findings were triangulated with data collection from two classroom observations in which elder participants were students, as well as an interview with their instructor. Classroom observations were completed in order to corroborate themes which emerged from individual elder interviews, and the classroom activities themselves were not modified or selected by the researcher. The instructor interview questions were shared with the teacher and then collected later in the form of written responses, per the teachers' request, and focused specifically on the challenges and strengths of elders as learners, and any observations the

instructor determined helpful through his work with elder learners in respect to their background in informal education and indigenous knowledge.

The interviews and observations were audio-recorded and coded using Dedoose, a qualitative software which organizes and compares data from participants' demographic information and partially-transcribed interviews. From this analysis, themes relevant to the experience of elder learners in beginning language and literacy classrooms were identified. Excerpts from the interviews have been included in this study to support findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Elders as learners

The purpose of this study's analysis was to identify themes which characterize elder learners' perspectives of beginning language and literacy classrooms in the US, and how they related this to their prior learning experiences. In this section we summarize the themes of aging, health, isolation, low evaluation of learning ability, and trauma, as well as themes related to elders' background knowledge illustrated by the themes of indigenous knowledge and cultural dissonance.

Aging and health

Throughout the course of the interviews with elder participants, the researcher sought to understand more about indigenous knowledge and learning experiences. What was revealed was a full portrait of elders as learners, in which several themes relevant to their learning experiences were identified. One might predict that age was a common barrier for elders, due to the widely held belief that the younger a student is, the easier it is to learn-- and that to make an effort at an advanced stage of life is a sincere but futile effort. Of the participants in this study, six elders cited age as a barrier to learning. As one elder regretted, "I don't know anything. I can't learn. I become old. My brain's old. I believe [the teacher] knows everything, but our brain is too old. I wish I could go back in time 5 more years." Poor health was also cited as a major barrier to attendance, and of the four elders who cited poor health, none were currently attending school.

While there are differences between younger and older learners, language development does not stop after childhood, but instead is a lifelong process that continues to present both advantages and challenges to acquiring language for adult and elder learners (De Bot & Makoni, 2005). The instructor interviewed for this study described ways these differences can be successfully accommodated:

For ones with physical problems, I accommodate them using comfortable chairs, large print, things like that. My colleagues take trips with their students to places outside the classroom like the public library. I don't do that because many of the elders have limited mobility. But overall, I don't really approach teaching the elders any differently than for any other student.

In this study, not every elder cited age or health as a barrier to learning. As one elder explained, "It's too hard to learn at the beginning, but if they give time, they will learn even if they're old. [To those who say they're too old to learn] I would say they're not ready to learn. You will learn if you want it." The instructor also noted that he did not perceive that age prevented learning:

Elder students might need some extra encouragement because they may believe that their age makes them unable to learn well. I haven't found that to be the case, but they often believe it, so it's good to help them get past it. Generally, they're really great to work with.

Isolation

Societal expectations around aging in the United States emphasize individual self-sufficiency as a key indicator of success in the late stages of life. However, this is not the reality reported by all elders. Even in a strong, supportive community, like the high-rise where this study took place, which by many accounts looks after their neighbors, elders reported the grave consequences of isolation: "Nobody knocks on your door in America. I can't tell my problems, whatever I have inside." Interdependence, as is found in a collectivist culture like that of the Somali elders in this study, is essential for health in aging (Clark, 1991). A sharp critique of individualist culture was given in one elders' profound indictment:

Why don't you know your neighbors? Somali people and our religion say you have to know your neighbors. What did they eat last night? If they didn't eat, you have to feed them. You have to eat together-- that's what being neighbors means. In America, the only way that they don't know each other is because there is no trust. When one of their American neighbors dies, how do they go?

Prior learning experiences and past success in acquiring skills are central to memory and learning. But, the consequences of isolation have an impact on elders' sense of themselves as learners: "I don't know if I can remember if I was an expert. the reason is I am alone in one room. I don't have anything. If I would have my family, if I weren't lonely, I could remember." Thus, the importance of community, positive emotions, feedback, and the emphasis on significant connections between students and teachers which is well-recognized as contributing to learners' persistence and investment in the classroom (Chinn, 2007), is all the more important for elder learners.

Low Evaluation of Learning Ability

Elders with limited formal education may experience shame, guilt and remorse when participating in formal schooling for the first time at an advanced age. As with age, participants described a belief that they could not learn because they had never been to school. As one elder described it,

Learning is important to me. For myself, I did not learn something, and I feel like I lost something. I feel like I lost something for myself. When I remember that my brother or my sister are educated with degrees, when I see them, I feel sad for myself and guilt-- why didn't I learn? What happened to me? Why didn't I learn?

These negative thoughts impact learners' affective filter and suggest that learners would need positive habits of mind modeled and encouraged in the classroom in order to persist and succeed. The instructor may have implicitly mitigated this by his student-centered approach, and while completing the classroom observations I noted that equal time was given for each student to lead classroom activities, regardless of their level.

Of those participants who reported low self-esteem, one had only attended school briefly, and having had great difficulty, quit after just three months: "I think, 'why do I bother my teacher? I'm not going to bother my teacher.' [*Why do you feel like you're wasting the teacher's time?*] People keep going and I'm going behind. And I will stay home. That's what I decided." It was my perception that poor self-esteem was affecting some elders present at the time of the classroom observations and may have impeded their progress since I had last worked at the school.

Trauma

Six elders in this study cited the civil war and the resulting loss and upheaval as having deeply negative consequences in their life and their sense of self as learners. In one instance, my interpreter signaled to me that a participant likely stopped the interview early because of sad memories she experienced when recounting her life before and after moving to the United States. Jaranson et al. (2004) estimated that 36% of Somali refugees had been victims of torture, and excerpts from this study's interviews reveal that six of the elders referenced trauma and the civil war affecting their memory, their self-concept, and their ability to learn. As one elder described the impact of the civil war on her sense of self and expertise in mathematics, she explained: "If you ask me now I forget. They used to tell me, 'Come on, come on -- you are the expert at adding together.' But now I don't know because of the civil war. Our life was so bad, that's why we forget a lot."

Several elder participants reported that they were bothered by thinking about the past, or "thinking too much." In a report by the Minnesota Department of Health (2014), "thinking too much" was identified as a possible indicator of trauma and PTSD affecting functionality, and this was corroborated by the testimony of several elders in this study. Recognition of trauma is a first step towards incorporating the systemic changes needed to adequately serve students who have been affected by it (Ridgard et al., 2015).

Over the course of the interviews, several participants made reference to the term dark person: "I believe I can only remember the civil war. If the civil war didn't happen, I could remember. [*If you weren't lonely and the civil war didn't happen, you could remember?*] Of course, now I am a dark person." As described by one

elder, “dark person” refers to someone who doesn’t know anything, but as could be deduced from other excerpts, this term may hold deep connotations of the loneliness, hopelessness, and the difficulty of losing one’s sense of self and abilities.

Indigenous knowledge

The elders’ descriptions of prior learning experiences made reference to indigenous knowledge, which is a wholly different knowledge system from that presented in Western educational contexts, and offers insight to a specific facet of knowledge which is place-based, accumulated over generations, acquired through close observation, and transmitted through apprenticeship within families or communities.

As indigenous knowledge is place-based and orally transmitted across generations, each elder was asked about the place where they grew up and what they learned as a child. The majority of the participants (12) grew up outside of urban environments, with parents involved in either a settled agriculture (6 participants), nomadic (5 participants), or semi-nomadic lifestyle (1 participant). One elder succinctly described learning in these indigenous contexts and its contrast with formal education and text-based learning:

You can practice with your parents. You look at your brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers, and your neighbors. How to butcher, how to milk, how to build and move. It’s not something you imagine- it’s something you can watch.

Throughout the course of the interviews, elders attested to the differences between indigenous knowledge (most often referred to as “culture”) and formal schooling. When recounted as memories from their childhood, these instances were often remembered as positive self-affirmations: [*Wasn’t learning the Somali culture a beautiful way (to learn)?*] “Yes, that was. The animals, also, you can take outside, you can milk. You can learn that too. I was good at that way. That’s what I believe.” Indigenous knowledge was also attested to be equal in value to formal education: “I learn from you; you can learn from me too. Take me back to Africa. I can show you,” and another elder described a basis in oral tradition as not inferior to text-based learning:

Everything about the country, you can write. If you don’t know anything, you are a dark person. [*Do you think country people are dark people?*] Country is country, city is city, the education is a different way. Everybody knows what they know. No, everything is good. [*In reference to images of nomadic lifestyles:*] This is education. This is a building that they build. This is their house. Sometimes they move. Sometimes they build. This is learning. See? It’s learning.

It is essential to realize that indigenous knowledge is not “one thing” fixed in time, nor is it something primitive or simple. Of the participants, only three

continued in the lifestyle of their parents, while those participants raised in urban areas stayed there, and the remaining participants who grew up in the country left for occupations in business, trade, or manufacturing, or became housewives in urban areas. Thus, we see that students' relation to indigenous knowledge is dynamic and subject to shifts in lifestyle and occupation.

Cultural dissonance

When learners perceive a difference between their prior learning experiences, expectations for education and their current experience in the classroom, this presents cultural dissonance. While many of the elders in the study identified indigenous knowledge as valid and valuable to them in their experiences as learners, others conceded this belief later in the interview:

Whatever you learn by reading and writing is way different. Something you can do, I can do it. Something you can read, I can't do it. [*What do you think about more watching and less reading and writing?*] When I watch something, I will learn. I don't want it that way. The only thing I want is to read and write. I would love to copy, copy, copy. [*I don't think that works.*] Yeah, it didn't work.

This cultural dissonance was echoed in the instructor interview as he was asked to share his perspective on differences between the class and learners' perceived expectations:

Again, what I'm going to say here isn't limited to elders but is more prevalent in them. [Enrollment] is an ongoing, rolling class situation - so whenever an individual student shows up for the first time, we're in the middle of something. Some students are intimidated by that. They want me to start with A B C as if it was day one for everybody. Provided they stick with it for a few days, they usually get comfortable pretty quickly. Also, students often expect school to be formal, strict, and teacher-centered. They expect to sit quietly, copying, repeating, and memorizing what I put on the board. I imagine this is what they're familiar with in their home culture. I try to give them some of that, but overall my class is informal, student-centered, and frankly a bit chaotic. I encourage them to talk and work together, have fun, think critically, and take turns leading the class. Students really enjoy this kind of class once they get used to it, but at first it can be confusing for them.

The high attendance of elders in the instructor's beginning language and literacy class attests to the truth of his statements and the efficacy of routinization of activities, Whole-Part-Whole methodology, and student-centered instruction for low-literate adult learners (Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010).

Some elders report a cultural dissonance in their belief that the successes that they had in learning were not effective, not preferable, or were not "learning" at all: "Me, I'm not educated. [*You don't see all the things you learned as a resource in your life?*] When you ask me about learning, I always think pen and

pencil. But me, I don't think it was learning." While teachers may wish to access adult learners' deep reserve of prior learning experiences, some elders attest to the dissonance between what they know and the things presented in ESL classes: "English and Somali are different. I didn't even go to duqsi (traditional Quranic school). All the things I've learned wouldn't help me in English class." For elders who do overcome significant barriers to attending school, negative thoughts about their prior learning experiences can follow them into the classroom, raising their affective filter and making it difficult for them to learn and affecting their attendance. Seven participants had gone to school in the US for more than two years, and of those, six were currently attending school at the time of the study. Of the remaining participants, five had attended school in the US less than six months and were not currently attending school, while two had never attended school in the US.

The instructor posited that some of the source of difference between LESLLA instruction and the expectations of East African elders may be due to Quranic education and experience with texts and readings of the Islamic faith. This is undoubtedly a factor, and presents instructors with the need to implement new practices into the classroom to explore and accommodate areas of difference between western classrooms and learners' expectations. Several important frameworks exist to help educators address the cultural dissonance that was cited by participants in this study. Elders as Fonts of Knowledge (Watson, 2015) is one such approach that has shown success. Marshall's InterCultural Communication Framework (1994) also provides excellent methods used to navigate the cultural divide between these populations of learners and their educators. Recognizing and validating elders' expertise may also call on educators to "flip the classroom," and Marshall & DeCapua's Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (MALP) also presents promising tools to incorporate refugee and immigrant learners' indigenous knowledge in the acquisition of new skills (2013).

FUTURE RESEARCH

In this study, I have explored how indigenous knowledge and its interplay in western classrooms as perceived by Somali elder refugees in a beginning language and literacy class. While there was no comprehensive answer to the first research question of this study, that is, "What indigenous knowledge do low-literate elder learners bring to the beginning literacy classroom?", many of the interview responses coded by the major themes and trends discussed in the findings not only attested to the importance of indigenous knowledge and other ways of knowing, but also revealed their significance to elders as learners in response to the second research question, "How does this indigenous knowledge interact with the western teaching and learning context they are currently studying in?". The most obvious area of further research would be to replicate a similar study with another group of indigenous peoples, such as Karen elders of Burma (Myanmar) or Oromo elders of Ethiopia. This would allow for cross-

cultural comparisons and may corroborate themes identified by this study, or produce additional themes which had not been considered here.

Another area for future study would be to delve further into unresolved areas of this study; for example: how much does Quranic education affect pedagogical preferences of learners? Does a greater understanding of Islam inform indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing that could be incorporated into beginning literacy and language classrooms? Most importantly, although a semi-structured interview format was a strong fit for this study, a more in-depth method data collection may aid in eliciting a wider range of examples of ways of knowing that could further account for the cultural dissonance noted by participants here.

It must also be noted that the nature of indigenous knowledge as an epistemological concept makes it a difficult study for outsiders, as I was in this research project, to apprehend. Oftentimes I felt I was at an impasse and didn't know the right questions to ask in order to come to know more from the participants in this study. This study was primarily an exploration of theoretical implications of indigenous knowledge in western learning contexts, application of these ideas in new and innovative classroom activities was outside the scope of this study. While curriculum development and innovation is a clear area for future exploration, indigenous knowledge is not merely a "show-and-tell" project, nor is it available "packaged" as school materials are. indigenous knowledge is abstract, dynamic, and complex, and will require pioneering research to fully explore its potential to reach all learners.

Finally, despite the challenges we perceive as being exclusive to elder learners, their vitality and perseverance suggests that these challenges are not "their" problems or shortcomings, but problems that we face as a society. Isolation and loss exist for us all, but for victims of trauma and elders in particular, these are acutely felt. Learning is a sacred process, and because it is sacred, we must not devalue any who come to take part. While indigenous knowledge may be place-based by definition, to deny its role in learning is to demote refugee elders who have fled their country to "blank slates." One way of teaching and learning may prove effective, but the indigenous knowledge systems which elders have mastered must be recognized and tapped into by educators. For this to be accomplished, we must open up a new discourse-- one in which elders hold prominence and indigenous knowledge can claim power in new places.

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Impact of Language and L1 Literacy on Settlement in Canada

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the interplay between L1 literacy and access to social services in Canada for two LESLLA learners. Participants described the target language and literacy skills as critical to navigating life in Canada. Social and cultural capital were also found to affect access to available resources. While length of residency and increased L2 may reduce the level of support required for day-to-day tasks, the need for language training, support accessing services and access to information remained over time. L2 programs play an important role in enabling access to social services.

INTRODUCTION

Many factors affect settlement for newcomers to Canada. Awuah-Mensah's (2016) literature review found common barriers to settlement in Canada included "social support services, language barriers, social isolation, mental health, patriarchal ideologies, social networks, social class, and racial discrimination" (Awuah-Mensah, 2016, p.20). Settlement needs are gendered and dependent on factors like whether a person has arrived to Canada as a refugee or an immigrant. Settlement needs of Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) are different from those of other class refugees who are more likely to have family connections prior to arrival in Canada. Well-developed second language (L2) and literacy skills are important, but alone do not guarantee successful settlement for newcomers, (see Norton, 2016; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Warriner, 2007; Wood, McGrath, & Young, 2012; Enns-Kananen & Pettitt, 2017; Derwing & Waugh, 2012). L1 literacy may also have implications for adult newcomers who have migrated to a highly literate society.

Literacy development is also affected by many factors, pre- and post-migration. In post-industrialized countries, girls tend to fare slightly better than boys in reading, even though globally the majority of persons who have not developed print-literacy skills are women (Stromquist, 2014). Gendered barriers

to education may continue to exist post-migration (see for example, Folinsbee, 2007; Gonzalves, 2013; MacKinnon, Stephens, & Salah, 2007; Watkins, et al., 2012). Socio-economic status also has a bearing on literacy skills development (Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, & Soler, 2000). Additionally, the very nature of the classroom environment and educational programming requirements are incompatible with what we know to be best practice for teaching LESLLA learners (Reder, 2015).

Literacy Education and Second Language Acquisition for Adults (LESLLA) has created a base of research from which we can draw to inform program design and instructional practice with adult L2 learners with no to little formal schooling. A growing number of studies offer information about how L2 literacy acquisition occurs in adults with no to limited print literacy in the first language (see for example, Kurvers & Ketelaars, 2010; Strube, van de Craats, & van Hout, 2013; Tarone & Bigelow, 2005; Young-Scholten & Naeb, 2009).

In keeping with the Canadian context, the terms *settlement* and *resettlement* will be used in this paper to refer to programs and services available to immigrants & refugees and to Government-Assisted Refugees respectively. Settlement refers to “a long-term, dynamic, two-way process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities” (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, 2000). Settlement services are available to immigrants and refugees. They include language training (largely Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada or LINC), employment training, and supports like settlement counselling (IRCC, 2017). Eligibility for settlement programs ends upon obtaining Canadian citizenship.

The Resettlement Assistance Program available to GARs only includes accommodation at a resettlement center for a short time after arrival, a small temporary living allowance, and a loan to cover the cost of their flight to Canada (Simich, Beiser, & Mawani, 2003). Drawing from Wong & Tézli's (2013) working definition, Integration is used to describe “where groups and individuals have full and equitable access to, and participation in, power and privilege within major societal institutions” (Wong & Tézli, 2013, p.14).

This paper is built on the assumption that access to available services is a critical piece of the settlement process. Drawing on research from multiple disciplines, the following study was viewed through a theoretical framework of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), this paper looks into how two women with LESLLA backgrounds accessed social services by listening to their day-to-day experiences. Interview data was taken from a qualitative study in Western Canada where five women with LESLLA backgrounds, a LESLLA teacher and a settlement worker were interviewed about their work with LESLLA learners or clients. The purpose of the study was to answer two questions. 1) What barriers do LESLLA clients experience to accessing social services and to settlement? and 2) What resources are they employing in order to access these services? The answers to these questions can help us think about

approaches to target language and L2 literacy training for LESLLA learners. They may also provide insight into ways social services are provided to such clients.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to look into the interplay between L1 literacy and access to services for LESLLA learners. A qualitative approach was taken to the questions at hand (see Mackey & Gass, 2005). The data included in the present analysis were part of a larger study (Wall, 2017) involving five women with LESLLA backgrounds, a teacher in a LESLLA-focused program, and a settlement counsellor.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted mainly at participants' classes either with the support of an interpreter or in English. Each participant was interviewed one time for approximately an hour. In exchange for their participation, learners were offered tutoring at a local library outside of class time. Though none of the five participants pursued this offer, several participants asked questions about accessing services during their interviews. With participants' permission, I spoke with a teacher, settlement counsellor or other resource person who could connect participants with the information or resources in question. Interview questions were informed by the literature review and my previous experience working with LESLLA learners. LESLLA participants were asked about language and literacy use. They were also asked about services accessed, as well as barriers to and successful experiences accessing social services and who helped them access services. They were asked how important speaking L2 and literacy skills were to their lives in Canada. Learners were also asked their advice for teachers teaching students with LESLLA backgrounds. Interviews with a teacher and settlement worker offered insight into the service providers' work with LESLLA background clients.

Video recorded interviews were transcribed and coded by types of services accessed, barriers and enablers to those services and the resources employed to access services.

PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT

Two women's stories, those of Abrehet and Tenneh (pseudonyms), were selected for the following discussion. Abrehet and Tenneh both arrived to Canada as GARs. Abrehet had arrived relatively recently, while Tenneh had lived in Canada for approximately 13 years. Both had relocated from the Canadian cities where they had initially landed. Both reported no prior formal schooling or print-text literacy prior to attending classes in Canada. They were enrolled in community-based LESLLA classes that ran twice a week for a total of six hours of class time. Both learners attended two different classes, doubling their class time to 12 hours per week. The ESL literacy classes were offered by an immigrant-serving agency offering a range of Settlement Programs, and the teacher participant not included here, made frequent referrals to the agency's services. Their similar backgrounds and contrasting lengths of residencies made

for an opportunity to look at how LESLLA learners’ experiences of the L2, literacy, and access to services might shift over time.

Table 1

LESLLA Participants: Demographic Information

Participant	Prior schooling	Country of origin	Languages	Length of residency
Abrehet	0 years	Eritrea	Tigrinya, Amharic, some Arabic	3 years
Tenneh	0 years	Liberia	Vai, Mende, Krio, Temne	13 years

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

SLA research has historically been carried out with middle-class university level L2 students (Tarone & Bigelow, 2005). To understand facets of the settlement experience for newcomers with LESLLA backgrounds, this study draws on research related to LESLLA, Information Literacy, and Social and Cultural Capital.

The Role of Literacy for Women with LESLLA Backgrounds

Three studies focusing on women with LESLLA backgrounds (Gonzalves, 2012; Love & Kotai, 2015; Pothier, 2011) are included here. Their participants’ backgrounds are similar to those included in the following study, and participants were also asked about their literacy practices (Pothier, 2011) and the place of literacy in their lives (Gonzalves, 2012; Love & Kotai, 2015; Pothier, 2011). A common thread woven through the women’s stories was their desire for greater autonomy. They wished to be able to perform day-to-day tasks such as talking to a doctor, taking public transportation, completing paperwork for subsidized housing or helping children with their schoolwork. They described limited literacy as a barrier to full participation in the welcoming country, including further education and training, employment, navigating institutions and, in Pothier’s (2011) Toronto study, to obtaining citizenship.¹ Print-text literacy is an expectation of service providers in post-industrialized countries, where completed forms are required to access nearly any service. Participants in Love & Kotai’s (2015) study noted literacy was important in their countries of origin, but did not limit their access to services to the same extent pre-migration as it did post-migration.

Participants felt literacy was needed to improve their quality of life, yet they described barriers to attending classes in the receiving country. In addition to

¹ While participants noted that limited literacy was a barrier to obtaining Canadian citizenship, a person is no longer eligible for LINC programming after obtaining citizenship.

commonly identified barriers such as transportation and the need for childcare during classes, women in Gonzalves' (2012) study described three main barriers to learning. First, domestic demands were sometimes at odds with time spent in classes or studying at home. Similarly, studying was not viewed as an important priority for women. A third barrier was affective in nature: women expressed that they did not feel confident stepping foot inside a classroom, did not believe they could be taught, or that studying alongside literate learners discourages women from continuing classes or even attending in the first place.

L1 Literacy and Access to Social Services

It has been established that second language and literacy development occurs differently for LESLLA learners than for adults who have had access to L1 schooling and have developed print literacy in another language. A Toronto area study (Geronimo, Folinsbee & Goveas, 2001) looking into gaps in services for newcomers who had less than a grade nine education and had been in Canada less than five years found that barriers that exist for any immigrant group, like access to language training and employment, were exacerbated by the role literacy plays in accomplishing tasks and accessing services in Canada. Pathways to services in Canada assume a certain level of literacy is in place, and perhaps also that clients' means of accessing and vetting information is compatible with service providers' information provision.

Information Literacy

Information literacy, "those practices, beliefs and skills which enable engagement with information needed for productive social agency" (Richards, 2015, p. 14), offers us another lens into how services are accessed by newcomer groups. Studies have found access to information to be critical to successful settlement and integration for immigrants and refugees in Canada (George & Chaze, 2009; Ahmed, Shommu, Rumana, Barron, Wicklum, & Turin, 2016).

Making information available does not guarantee it is accessed in a useful way. Participants in a Queensland, Australia study (Richards, 2015) looking into the information infrastructure pre- and post-migration for Bor Dinka South Sudanese described a disconnect between ways in which information was delivered by settlement workers in Australia and the ways in which Bor Dinka community members engaged with information. In refugee camps where participants had lived, for example, information was mainly obtained orally from family and clan members. This means of information gathering continued after participants arrived in Australia, where settlement information was mainly provided in print-text and via an infrastructure less based on relationships or networks. Study participants described the importance of the information source to determine whether it was important or accurate. The stark contrast in information practices to the way information was provided in an Australian context meant that, while social service providers endeavored to provide information to the Bor Dinka community, the mismatch in means of provision to the way community members engaged with information rendered it ineffective.

Service providers are encouraged to other consider means of information provision. One valuable method of seeking and assessing information is “pooling” (Lloyd, 2017), which involves drawing on the collective (e.g., a church group) to piece together information and create a full picture. Social service organizations play an important role in not only providing information, but addressing additional barriers, such as those faced by refugees seeking housing in a Toronto area study (Murdie, 2008). Participants in a Winnipeg, Canada study (MacKinnon, et al., 2007) suggested hiring members of refugee communities could increase knowledge about services available in their community.

Social and Cultural Capital

Effective classroom support for LESLLA learners can only take place when recognizing gaps in language and literacy is counterbalanced with understanding the strengths they bring to the classroom (Bigelow, 2007). Bigelow (2007) exemplified an asset-based approach in her case study involving a Somali high school student in the United States, by applying a framework of social and cultural capital to identify strengths the learner brought to her education experience.

Social capital can be defined as the mutually beneficial relationships that can be drawn on to achieve goals (Coleman, 1990; Social capital, 2014), while cultural capital denotes the ability to navigate systems and knowledge of how systems work (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, as cited in Bigelow, p.2). Bourdieu (1986) hypothesized that cultural capital could help us understand variances in children’s academic performance at a time when children’s academic success was considered the result of merit and aptitude. Cultural capital, “the symbols, ideas, tastes, and preferences that can be strategically used as resources in social action” (Cultural capital, 2014), are passed down from one generation to the next. They serve as a sort of currency that can be converted into social mobility. Bourdieu’s (1986) view of social capital includes a person’s membership to certain associations, families and social groups and acts to multiply an individual’s capital.

Through this lens, Bigelow (2007) identified the social and cultural capital that Fadumo, an 18-year-old high-achieving high school student brought to her schooling. Fadumo’s greatest source of social capital was found in her family. Fadumo’s mother clearly supported her children’s schooling, stopping by the school to talk to teachers, ensuring her children were associating with ‘good’ friends in school and making her children’s studies a priority. Social capital provided by the family was converted to cultural capital in the form of academic success. Fadumo’s family also found social capital within the Somali community, where Fadumo’s mother recruited community members to translate conversations with the children’s teachers. Cultural capital included the strong L2 skills Fadumo and her family had developed and their sense that education was important to their future. Fadumo demonstrated good student behaviours such as strong attendance, asking teachers for help when needed, and consistently completing homework. Bigelow also noted gaps in Fadumo’s social and cultural capital. Fadumo did not mention peers supporting her school

experience, and several challenges – like the college application process and underdeveloped literacy skills – arose as she worked towards high school graduation and her goal of entering college. Bigelow pondered the school's role in supporting the development of cultural capital that would have led to a more successful academic transition.

Supporting Settlement and Integration

The design of target language programs and adult literacy programs makes certain assumptions about adult learning. Refugee background participants in a Calgary, Canada study (Wood, et al., 2012) described the many ways in which settlement agencies and counsellors helped them to negotiate the settlement process. Immigrant serving agencies and settlement workers not only serve as a bridge to resources and information, but also as advocates for clients. However, given decreased funding and increasing demands on settlement workers, high rates of burnout in the sector were also reported. Federally funded language training programs are part of Canada's Settlement Program and are designed to provide language and literacy skills necessary for settlement and integration into Canadian society. These programs, like settlement counselling, however, are available only until a person obtains Canadian citizenship, a change in status which is unrelated to whether or not a person needs help to access services.

Language training programs across Canada are heavily settlement-focused (see Aberdeen & Johnson, 2015 for examples of how settlement themes are embedded into LINC ESL literacy classes). Reder (2015) notes that LESLLA learners benefit from bringing literacy issues they face in their own lives to class and work to solve these literacy problems as a class (2015). Fleming (2015) suggests drawing on Westheimer & Kahne's (2004, as cited in Fleming, p. 71) notion of justice-oriented citizenship for ESL literacy programming. Applied to language training, learners would be engaged in dialogue that challenges existing systems.

Adult literacy programs tend to reflect a K-12 model, where seats are filled, learners retained, and attendance is considered key to learners' academic achievement (Leander, 2009 as cited in Reder, p. 4). Reder's (2015) large-scale longitudinal study on Practice Engagement however, challenges the efficacy of such a model for adult literacy learners and instead confirms Condelli, Wrigley & Yoon's (2009) study disputing the relationship between instructional hours and literacy proficiency for LESLLA learners. Data showed that enrolment in formal literacy programs increases engagement in literacy practices outside of the classroom in the short-term. Literacy skills show minimal improvement. However, engaging in literacy practices over time led to literacy gains long after exiting a program. Progress takes place over long periods of time and is also tied to life events such as the birth of a child or starting a new job. Reder (2015) proposes what he terms a busy intersection approach to literacy, where literacy programs are designed as a resource from which participants take tools for literacy practice in their lives at various junctures in their lives.

Language and literacy skills, gender, protracted periods in refugee camps and information practices are just some of the barriers facing women with refugee

backgrounds and limited no prior access to schooling to achieving their self-defined measures of success. The next section explores how two women with LESLLA backgrounds valued second language and literacy skills and experienced access to social services in Canada.

FINDINGS

During their interviews, Abrehet and Tenneh talked about the value of developing English and literacy skills and their experiences navigating systems. Their advice to teachers concluded the interviews.

Abrehet

Background. Originally from Eritrea, Abrehet spent 14 to 15 years in a refugee camp in Sudan before arriving in Canada. Abrehet spoke Tigrinya, Amharic and a little Arabic which she picked up during her years in Sudan. At the time of the interview, Abrehet had been in Canada for three years. She left her destined city² shortly after arrival when a friend told her more jobs were available elsewhere. Abrehet lived with her young adult son who was studying at a community college. Her interview was conducted in Tigrinya, with the support of a community interpreter.

Abrehet had not accessed schooling prior to her arrival to Canada, though her son attended school while in the refugee camp and Abrehet learned to speak some Arabic. Abrehet reported that she rarely used English outside of school. When asked about her use of L1 or L2 literacy, she said that the first time she had put pen to paper was in Canada and that she did not read or write outside of class. On several occasions during her interview, Abrehet said that she had no one in Canada but her son, though she was engaged in a Tigrinya-speaking church on the weekends.

Taking the Bus. Several times throughout her interview, Abrehet talked about her experiences with public transportation.

[My son is] like 18. With the bus, he used help me, like uh, which bus goes where. Because like before I used to get into bus number 3 thinking it's 4, or I'll get into bus number 4 thinking it's 3, so I used to get lost...It was difficult for my son before. It was very, very difficult, but he's okay now...I do everything by myself. I'm becoming like a native person now...I go to church by myself...I'm like independent now.

Later in the interview, Abrehet spoke of being lost overnight:

Yeah, this was when I was like, new like in Canada, that happened to me. Like I went in a bus and like I went...all the way [to the end of the line], and I got lost in there, so I like spent a whole night there, and like the whole night...I was uh, lost in [the grocery store parking lot] so I saw people

² 'Destined city' here refers to the city where a Government-Assisted Refugee initially lands, as described in Simich et al. (2001).

pressing [the button on the bus] and then like getting off. And when I saw that I, I like did the same thing, pressed it and then get off...So the next morning, I got on on the bus and then I went back [home]. And when I saw people pressing [the button] to get off, I had no idea like that's how you get off from the bus. So, when I saw them press it, and then getting off, I did the same thing and then I got off. Even like the next stop, the next day, I was like circling around the streets, and my son was doing the same thing. Just by some accident, we just met at four, at 4:00.

Abrehet returned to her experience of being lost later in the interview:

In that time I was lost, I thought...the system was like my country, where like, if you raise your hand, the bus driver normally stops. That's... the bus system back home. But that's not how it is. So I just...went along, or the bus just kept on taking me. That's why I kind of got lost. And that time it was summer, so I thought, I will just go out and buy some things and come back. [And that way] there is no way you can just get lost. There is a bus and you just get on the bus and then get off. But like I thought I raise my hand and that's how I end up getting lost. Then when I get off, like nobody can see me. [The people], they didn't notice I was there.

Abrehet relied on members of her ethno-cultural community when she needed directions or had questions about navigating her life in Canada. She approached people who appeared to be from her community en route to her destination for directions or in a medical office to confirm information about her appointment. A previous landlord who spoke her language also called 9-1-1 when she was in a medical emergency. Abrehet felt it was important for teachers to include topics such as these in the curriculum. Given her prior experiences with public transit, it is not surprising that she recommended instruction on how to use public transportation.

Tenneh

Background. Tenneh had lived in Canada for 13 years at the time of this study. Originally from Liberia, Tenneh spent 10 years in a refugee camp in Sierra Leone before moving to Canada. Tenneh reported Vai as her first language, but also spoke Krio, Mende and a little Temne. Tenneh spoke mainly English outside of her home. Tenneh's interview was conducted in English.

Tenneh had not attended school or developed print-literacy prior to arriving in Canada. Soon after landing, she enrolled in a language training program, where she was encouraged to develop print literacy skills, and when a friend took her to a toy store to buy toys for her children, she bought an educational toy that she used to learn the alphabet alongside her daughter. Tenneh lived in her destined city for several years before relocating.

Tenneh spoke about changes in her ability to access services in Canada over the 13 years. While she received very little support from resettlement centre staff when she arrived in Canada, friends helped her obtain important information

about where and how to register her children for school and how to speak Canadian English. It was a friend who took her to the toy store to buy toys for her children, and where she bought an educational toy that she used to learn the alphabet.

Soon after moving cities, friends accompanied her to social service offices. Determined not to rely on friends, she began commuting by herself, asking for help from bus drivers and people on the street when needed. In this way, she learned to navigate important places in the city independently.

Family services. When asked what advice she had for teachers, Tenneh talked about the importance of encouraging students who are new to print-literacy. Teachers should let students know what they are doing right and clearly explain how to perform tasks that are new. As learners in her class came mainly from rural backgrounds, she said that teachers need to show them how to navigate their urban environments, read signs, and understand directions. Tenneh also talked about her experience with family services:

And, the school send, the lady came, 'I'm gonna take your child.' And this guy was talking. I said, 'Why? Why are you taking [my child]?' He said, 'because this country you can't beat child.' I said, 'Africa it's normal.' He said, 'No.' And I talk, they were talking, then they go out, and it's was two lady, came in, and then they go out, and they come back and say, 'Okay.' And the other lady said, 'Oh, you have to go for parent [parenting course].'

Tenneh had just moved into a new home, in an unfamiliar community with her children. After putting her children to bed, she went to sleep – only to be awakened late at night by her youngest child who was asking where his brother was. Tenneh did not know anyone in her complex at the time. When she eventually found her son behind the building, she hit her him. It is unclear how family services came to learn about this event, however, a social worker told Tenneh she was going to remove Tenneh's children from her care. Tenneh advocated for herself, resulting in her enrolment in a parenting course for newcomers to Canada rather than her children being removed from her care. Tenneh found the program invaluable as she learned positive parenting skills that worked with her children. She questioned why she was not made aware of Canadian parenting norms and laws earlier. Tenneh described a travel show she had seen:

[T]he government need to teach people, how you come to this country, how you be like this...[T]hat time I was watching TV, like the lady was going Africa. She go for school. She was in the school. They were playing in the TV. How you, how Africa like this, this food in Africa, Africa different.... everybody here if they going for Africa, they can teach you. Why when we coming they can't teach their culture?...The lady, they were teaching, because they say, "...You going Africa. Africa, go like this..." If you go to Africa, you can't say insult people...You can't say something like that. Africa like this.

The lady, they teach her, explain...in the, like movie...Where Canada, we came, they don't teach me the rule. Now we go in trouble.

Table 2

Summary of Interviews

Partici- pant	Social capital	Cultural capital/ Knowledge and skills	External supports	Language, literacy and numeracy
Abrehet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family: son• Ethno-cultural community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public transportation• Medical appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Settlement counsellor• Medical interpretation• Income tax clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• English language necessary to access services
Tenneh	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family: children• Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public transportation and navigating the city• Understanding directions• How to ask for help• Parenting in a Canadian context• Self-advocacy• Inequity in access to critical information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parenting course• ESL literacy program• Social service agency in housing complex: social worker, settlement counsellor, help reading important documents, referrals to additional services like income tax clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• L1 not readily available• Uses English to access services and ask for help, including to file her social assistance report over the phone• Can fill out a few fields on a form by herself• Life is easier with print-text literacy

Barriers and enablers to accessing services

While coding the interview data, it became evident that the same factors that were barriers to accessing social services could serve as enablers to access. Limited knowledge of L2, for instance, left Abrehet unable to ask for help at the bus terminal. Skillful use of L2 was critical to Tenneh's ability to self-advocate when confronted by family services. Limited literacy and numeracy left Abrehet

unable to read bus route names and numbers. The paperwork required by many social service agencies to access services unwittingly created additional barriers to clients. Lack of information led to Abrehet becoming lost overnight and Tenneh nearly losing guardianship of her children. On the other hand, Tenneh later gained information from a parenting program that led to confidence in parenting skills considered culturally acceptable in Canada. A social network or lack thereof were also noted as barriers and enablers to services.

Social and cultural capital were also found to influence participants' access to social services. Abrehet's main source of social capital was her son, who was more adept at using the local transit system and had stronger English language skills and on whom she relied to get around the city. Members of her ethno-cultural community were also sources of valuable information. These supports enabled her to increase her independence. Like Fadumo in Bigelow's (2007) study, social capital was converted into cultural capital of the dominant class. In this case, Abrehet's source of social capital enabled her to develop skills and familiarity with systems she needed to navigate in Canada. Her son and co-ethnic community provided her with important information about how things were done in her new city, and as she developed this knowledge, she was building the cultural capital of the dominant society in Canada. Her connection to her ethno-cultural community at the time was, however, limited and dependent on seeing people in the city who looked like her.

Throughout her interview, Tenneh spoke of various friends who had helped her over the years. When she first arrived to Canada, a friend filled in the gap left by an unhelpful worker at the settlement center who suggested she find a school for her children on her own. A friend taught her the language she needed to use public transit, and another brought her to a toy store where she bought a children's toy she used to learn the alphabet. Later, friends connected her with resources like language training and subsidized housing. Tenneh determined to learn to navigate these systems with greater independence, preferring not to bother friends whose lives are busy. As in Abrehet's case, Tenneh's social capital was converted into cultural capital.

In addition to relying on relationships in their communities, formal supports were also important for successful access to social services. Institutional supports are critical when Abrehet has questions about documents or how things work. Sometimes those supports were, perhaps, accidental. When she saw a member of her ethno-cultural community in a medical office, she spoke with that person to confirm her appointment time. Other institutional supports, such as medical interpreters for appointments or a settlement counsellor who speaks her language and will have the cultural sensitivity to support her effectively are aides that have been built into service provision by service providers. Abrehet also described her LESLLA teacher as important source of support who helps her read documents and who at the time was teaching the class how to contact emergency medical services.

As described by Wood, et al. (2012), settlement workers play an important part in a refugee's immediate and long-term experiences in Canada. Both Abrehet and Tenneh seem to have missed quality support afforded by resettlement

centers during GARs’ first year in Canada; Abrehet likely moved too early in her settlement to make use of the services available to her where she landed, while Tenneh’s experience shows that the quality of settlement services may vary. While formal institutional supports were important to both Abrehet and Tenneh, the level and type of need for these additional supports differed.

Participants’ need for institutional supports may have been affected by their target language and literacy proficiency. Abrehet, whose interview was conducted with interpreter support, spoke strongly of the value of both speaking the target language and of literacy skills. She felt that if the English language was a potion, she would absorb it and that nothing can be done in Canada without literacy skills. While Abrehet spoke little English outside of class, she was now able to greet people in English. She thanked medical staff at the hospital, who in turn complimented her on her language learning and ask her where she had learned English.

Tenneh, in Canada 13 years at the time of the study, spoke mostly English outside of her home. Unlike the other participants, she spoke some English before landing in Canada. Nevertheless, when she first arrived in Canada, her friend helped her learn Canadian English that would be comprehensible. She believed that when a person knows how to read and write, “everything can be easy for you”. In addition to attending 12 hours of literacy programming a week, she worked on literacy skills with her six-year-old son at home.

Table 3

Participants’ Recommendations to Teachers

Participant	Recommendations to teachers
Abrehet	Lessons involve important knowledge, practical skills, and language and literacy skills. Suggestions included how to use 9-1-1 and public transportation.
Tenneh	Understand your learners. ELL literacy classmates come mostly from rural areas and will learn best with a teacher who is patient. Be aware of what learners are doing well. Newcomers need to be provided with information about Canadian law, how things are done in their new country, to avoid problems later on. Information on issues such as parenting law should be shared with all newcomers.

Both Abrehet and Tenneh’s primary recommendations to teachers centered around sharing information about how things are done in Canada. For Abrehet, including content like how to use public transportation and how to access emergency services were invaluable. And for Tenneh, who had been in Canada for much longer, knowledge of parenting law in Canada was of primary importance. Tenneh also indicated that it is important for teachers to understand their students and to consider their backgrounds. Teachers need to be patient with their students, to explain information ‘slowly’, and to recognize and

acknowledge what learners are doing well. In this way, Tenneh said, learners can feel proud of their accomplishments. Knowing that they are learning and capable encourages learners to persevere despite demands on time and energy.

DISCUSSION

For teachers working with LESLLA learners, Abrehet and Tenneh's experiences are perhaps not surprising. L2 language and literacy skills are important to supporting newcomer integration but possession of L2 language and literacy skills does not on its own lead to full integration in Canadian society.

As Geronimo et al. (2001) suggest, newcomers with no prior access to formal schooling face the same challenges as other newcomer groups, only these barriers appear to be magnified for such adults. For Abrehet and Tenneh, barriers were multi-faceted. Abrehet and Tenneh believed that L2 skills and literacy were important for access to social services. Despite a desire for independence and 13 years in Canada, filling out forms was still something Tenneh relied on support for. A lack of information and 'know-how' about how things are done in Canada, whether that be using the transportation system or disciplining children created difficult circumstances for both participants. Discrepancies between language and literacy skills required by social service providers to access services and those held by the two participants made access difficult without additional supports like teachers, a settlement worker or social worker. If it is surprising that participants were unfamiliar with common information, then service providers might consider whether the ways in which information is shared complements the ways in which members of newcomer groups use information.

And while Tenneh and Abrehet described vastly differing levels of social capital, Tenneh preferred to learn how to do things by herself than bother already busy friends for help. Abrehet and Tenneh also utilized their social capital to increase cultural capital of the dominant culture. Abrehet's son accompanied her to her destinations originally, but now she has learned how to get to familiar places on her own. Members of her ethno-cultural community are valuable sources of information as she navigates life in Canada. Tenneh's friends helped her find a school for her children when she first arrived in Canada. When she relocated to another city, friends took her to social service agencies which she later accessed independently. Social capital was converted to cultural capital in both cases.

Regardless of length of residency, participants required organizational support. Both rely on teachers as sources of information and for help understanding documents. Abrehet, after three years in Canada, was still unsure about what types of information or support she could access via community organizations. In contrast, Tenneh, who was able to access social services more independently, still required organizational supports not only to help her fill out documentation but also to gain the knowledge and skills that would enable her family to stay together. Government policy makes access to social services like

the family literacy program Tenneh applied to and full-time LINC programming unavailable when funding ceases after citizenship.

Language training programs play an important role in supporting settlement processes. Abrehet and Tenneh pointed to the value of language and literacy skills to navigate places and systems alike. They wanted to develop both the skills and knowledge to navigate their environments successfully. Their requests for information about services during their interviews underscores the value of connecting LESLLA learners with existing community resources.

IMPLICATIONS

Both Abrehet and Tenneh found ways to navigate systems and information despite the disparity between language and / or literacy levels and the language and literacy demands placed on them by social services. Gaps in cultural capital led to distressing events for both participants. They believed target language and literacy skills are important to their lives in Canada. They described the importance of learning critical information in their ESL literacy classes. Length of residency did not mitigate their need for support.

Social service providers may consider reducing the demands on LESLLA clients' language, literacy and information infrastructure, while teachers might consider how instruction can contribute to learners' independence and successful settlement. By thinking about the ways in which LESLLA learners do access services successfully, service providers can optimize access to social services as well as language and literacy programming.

Reder's (2015) *busy intersection* model is invaluable to both language training and social services to ensure that LESLLA newcomers can access information and services at various locations and points during a person's life. While ESL literacy programs serve a distinct purpose from that of other Settlement Programs, classes developed for or including LESLLA learners must consider ways to improve access to the very services intended to support their settlement. Programs should consider ways to support social and cultural capital, as Bigelow (2007) suggested. Finally, we should consider Fleming's (2015) recommendation to create learning environments where a critical lens to existing systems is encouraged so that learners are better equipped to understand and address social inequities.

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Teaching with Settlement in Mind

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes one way in which a community-based program for adult learners with limited L1 schooling facilitates the transformative heart of the REFLECT model (based on Freirean principles) within a settlement-focused context.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, second language (L2) and literacy programs developed for newcomers to Canada have been settlement focused. Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) teacher guides suggest content like “Finding a Home” and “Working in Canada” (TCDSB, 2012). LINC is the largest program accessed by adults developing print literacy skills for the first time while learning the target language. Smaller community-based programs also exist to address the needs of such learners. No set national or provincially mandated curriculum framework exists for these programs, which rely on their own sense of learner needs to shape program design. The community-based program described in this paper is, like LINC, settlement focused. However, it draws on a participatory approach to learning and teaching while drawing on a curriculum framework to guide facilitators’ understanding of literacy development. The participatory origin of the program allows for learning opportunities that are responsive to learners’ immediate needs and aims to hold to the transformative nature at the heart of participatory literacy education (Freire, 2007). This paper describes an example of settlement-focused transformative learning for adult newcomers with limited first language (L1) literacy.

Settlement can be defined as the dynamic process through which newcomers “achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society [gains]

access to the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities” (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, 2000). While settlement counsellors work to address the immediate needs of newcomer communities, the continuous nature of LESLLA training programs means facilitators are in a unique position to address settlement concerns of LESLLA learners.

This paper looks into the value of ensuring that learners develop the skills to access settlement services and of instructors considering and removing barriers to those services as part of unit planning and classroom teaching. We describe the small program from which this discussion arose before looking into the REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowering Techniques, Archer & Cottingham, 2009) approach on which the program is based. Next, we discuss models for instruction with a focus on settlement themes. The paper then describes an approach to unit planning used in the author’s classroom teaching. Factors considered in these integrated units are organized into 4 main areas of focus: frontloading, skills-building, identifying available resources, and creating opportunities for connections between LESLLA learners and service providers. We offer examples of ways this has been implemented in their context.

We believe that the 4th area, creating opportunities for connections, is what makes classroom teaching transformative in nature. The outline presented is not meant to be a one-size-fits-all curriculum framework, but rather a tool that may be useful in ensuring all of these aspects are included in unit planning in a L2 literacy programs.

Context and Rationale

In this section, we describe the community-based program in which settlement-focused instruction is implemented. A description of the REFLECT model on which this program is based is followed by a discussion of research on literacy instruction compared with literacy practices and a look at ways in which content-based instruction can be transformative in nature.

The Context. We work with an immigrant-serving agency in Canada. Both work mainly with LESLLA learners: as a facilitator in an ELL literacy program and as a learning support specialist with language training programs. The present language training program is community-based and historically participatory in nature. Target language and literacy skills are embedded in contexts that are relevant to learners’ lives.

In this program, it is not unusual for learners to bring concerns to the group and to program staff. Learners might bring a letter to their teacher for clarification or ask for help to fill out application forms for subsidized transit passes. Others talk to their teachers about concerns at home, like increases in monthly rent or family conflict. Learners initially referred to learning support services may ask questions about finding winter clothes or managing their prescription medication. Some of these concerns can be addressed by program staff. For instance, teachers can work with a learner to complete simple, low-stakes paperwork. Other questions are beyond the knowledge and expertise of program staff and are best addressed by a settlement counsellor, social worker

or family counsellor within the organization or in the community. In addition to helping learners themselves or referring individual learners to the appropriate supports, settlement issues can be addressed within program curriculum in such a way that learners develop skills and knowledge to navigate systems independently. This type of instruction embeds language and literacy skills development in settlement-themed contexts that are relevant to learners' everyday needs. We have not completed research to determine the how effective this approach to instructional design is. The classes in which this model is implemented, however, are generally filled to capacity and attendance rates are high.

Curriculum and Instruction. In its inception, program developers used the REFLECT or Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowering Techniques (Archer & Cottingham, 2009) as a model for the present program. The REFLECT approach is designed to address immediate needs of literacy participants in rural communities in Bangladesh, El Salvador and Uganda. Adherents to the REFLECT approach use materials available in the community or create their own materials rather than use commercial texts or readers. In the present L2 literacy program, facilitators continue to rely on learners to inform class content, though program facilitators generally use a combination of teacher-made and commercially available texts alongside learner-generated texts. At the heart of the REFLECT approach and in keeping with Freirean methods is its aim to encourage learner dialogue about issues important to them and to empower learners to take action in their communities. Learners are viewed as adult decision-makers and classroom content begins from a position of respect for the learners' existing knowledge and skills (REFLECT Action, 2009). In an action research project looking into the efficacy of the (at the time) newly developed REFLECT approach, Archer and Cottingham (2009) found positive outcomes beyond the classroom: learners were more involved in local community organizations and worked to improve economic and environmental conditions. They note that literacy skills unto themselves do not create empowerment, but that the REFLECT approach is successful because of the way it balances literacy skills and principles aimed at empowerment.

Recent changes to federal policy mandate that LINC programs across the country follow a Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) model with the goal of standardizing LINC levels across the country. As a result of changes to the Canadian Language Benchmarks, benchmarks for ESL literacy learners now align to benchmarks for newcomers with prior formal education. The program described in this article, however, refers to the ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework (Bow Valley College, 2010) for several reasons. First, the ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework has articulated 18 reading and writing outcomes that are not context specific. The writing outcome "Fill Out Forms," for example, works in a health, transportation or jobs unit where paperwork is required for access to services or employment. This highly supportive document breaks outcomes down into small increments. This means that teachers are guided as they scaffold instruction for learners at various levels from Foundation to Phase III Adequate. Outcomes are not tied to specific themes and teachers in

the participatory program aim to provide programming that is responsive to the particular class of learners they are working with at the time. For instance, one group of learners described challenges they were experiencing in the workplace: one lost her job as a result of being unable to read her work schedule. Her teacher developed a unit on working with different types of schedules, which falls under the reading outcome of “Interpreting lists, tables, charts and graphs.” When another teacher learned that learners in her class were experiencing difficulty navigating the city, she developed a unit on transportation.

The L2 literacy program described above is community-based and settlement-focused. Grounded in the REFLECT approach to literacy learning and teaching, it also draws on generalized reading and writing outcomes to inform instruction. In this way, the program embeds language and literacy skills development within settlement content in a way that has the potential to improve learners’ lives outside of the classroom.

RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION WITH LESLLA LEARNERS

In this section, we look into connections between L2 and literacy skills and learners’ expressed needs in existing literature. This is followed by a look at combining settlement-focused content-based instruction with a transformative approach to learning and teaching. Lastly, the value of including cultural capital in instructional planning is touched upon.

In her volume on *Cultural Practices of Literacy*, Purcell-Gates (2006) highlights the frequent disconnect between learners’ literacy practices and classroom literacy instruction. She notes we know so little about the literacy practices of various sociocultural groups that we are unable to begin tying learners’ actual literacy practices to design literacy curriculum and instruction in an informed way. There is, however, some beginning research on the types of skills learners wish to develop during their time in L2 language and literacy programs. In Gonzalves’ (2011) interviews of Yemeni women, the overarching reason for attending LESLLA classes was ‘we want to depend on us.’ In a small qualitative study on the interplay between L1 literacy and settlement (Wall, 2017; Wall, this volume), 5 LESLLA learners talked about the roles of L2 and literacy in their lives in Canada. Asked for their advice to teachers, they suggested including topics like parenting norms in Canada, reading signs, and asking for directions.

Given the participatory nature of the present program, there is flexibility in program content, so long as the generalized reading and writing outcomes are addressed. This ‘hybrid’ model, one that draws on learners’ life experiences and goals while following a set of outcomes creates an environment in which program content and target language and literacy skills are complementary. That said, there is an added step to be taken if learning is to be transformative in nature.

Like Canada, much of ELL literacy programming in Australia is settlement focused (Chapman & Williams, 2015). Chapman and Williams note that, when policy directs content, there is a risk of programs transmitting information to

learners rather than engaging learners in skills and content important to them in a way that will improve their circumstances beyond the classroom. Content-based instruction can, however, be transformative when it moves beyond the learning of content and what Kerns (2000) terms available designs (e.g. vocabulary, procedural knowledge and declarative knowledge) toward sociocultural content (Chapman & Williams, 2007; Kerns, 2000).

Bigelow’s (2007) case study of social and cultural capital’s role in a LESLLA high school learner’s academic success presents a convincing argument for the role of schools in developing cultural capital. Cultural capital includes knowledge of how systems work and the skills to accomplish tasks within those systems (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, as cited in Bigelow, p.2). A recent study including LESLLA learners in Canada found cultural capital to be an important factor to participants’ ability to access services (Wall, 2017). Participants shared stories of times when lack of information placed them in vulnerable situations. One described a time she was lost overnight after realizing she did not know how to indicate her stop bus stop and being taken to the final terminal. Another spoke about a harrowing experience with child welfare in which she nearly lost her children. Participants recommended that teachers provide information about cultural norms and connections to community resources in ELL literacy programs as part of their classroom instruction.

Chapman and Williams (2015) note,

Transformative learning is about engaging in practical ways in the environment and community that the students live in. In the building of partnerships, the teacher is an advocate in the community, a participant in the activities and a mentor to the learners. (p.46)

An Approach to Settlement-Focused Content and LESLLA Learning

Frontloading	Background knowledge Language and vocabulary
Related Skills	Skills required to access the service
Identifying Resources	Where and how to access services
Community Connections	Guest speakers Field trips

Figure 1: Outline for Teaching with Settlement in Mind

When working in a settlement-focused context, transformative learning involves improving the circumstances of learners lives outside the classroom (Chapman & Williams, 2015). One way to do this is by incorporating the development of cultural capital into LESLLA classrooms. In the sample unit plans that follow, we have attempted to tie language and literacy skills to the development of cultural capital with the aim of transformative learning and teaching. Section 3 outlines an approach to instructional planning where both

facets are considered. The approach described in this section includes frontloading, skills building, identifying available resources, and creating opportunities for connections between LESLLA learners and service providers.

Frontloading

Frontloading refers to the activation and teaching of background knowledge as well as the specific language and vocabulary that learners require for understanding the theme or topic being taught in the classroom. Frontloading leads to increased learner comprehension and focus (Adams, 2012; Murray Stowe, 2010). To complete the real-world task of finding items and prices in a second-hand store, learners need to have basic shopping vocabulary, understand the local currency, and the ability to read prices.

Building Related Skills

Building related skills is the scaffolding that facilitates learner success in the classroom. Specific skills include such things as addition and subtraction, filling in forms, reading maps, writing messages, following instructions and interpreting charts. These skills need to be pre-taught in order to ensure learner success. For example, to successfully complete the real-world task of finding items and prices in a second-hand store, learners need to have skills in basic numeracy, addition and subtraction, reading receipts and flyers and asking for assistance.¹

Identifying Resources

Introducing learners to community resources that they can access is essential to the integration process. Learners need to know what services are available in their communities. When facilitators share simplified information about agencies, supports and services in their communities, they support holistic integration for their learners. For example, in a unit on financial literacy, information can be shared about tax clinics, basic financial literacy courses and supports in accessing services.

Forming Connections with Service Providers and Community Resources

Connections can be forged with service providers and community resources through both field trips and classroom presentations. This type of exposure helps LESLLA learners feel comfortable accessing services and resources. Presentations from various agencies and community service providers with first language support will ensure that learners comprehend the information and are familiar with how to access services that support positive integration. Field trips have the added value of providing learners with an opportunity to travel to the agency or community resource and to access services for the first time with the guidance and support of a facilitator.

¹ See Vinogradov, 2009 and Vinogradov & Liden, 2009 for more on this and other activities for building L2 and literacy skills)

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: EXAMPLES FROM THE CLASSROOM

Teaching with settlement in mind may not look dramatically different from a well-organized L2 Literacy class that engages students in topics that are interesting and meaningful to them. However, when an instructor plans themes, topics and lessons within this suggested outline, he or she is explicitly seeking ways to address settlement concerns by providing the language, skills, knowledge and connections that learners need for successful settlement and integration into their communities. In addition, the instructor can provide support during, before or after class with brief, simple tasks that learners are struggling with such as making appointments with a counsellor or correctly filling in paperwork. The outline below provides an accessible, practical means of organizing our approach to ensure that we are incorporating the pressing settlement needs of L2 literacy learners into our teaching. We will look at examples within 3 different units: financial literacy, healthcare and community.

Financial Literacy Unit – Shopping for Clothes

Financial literacy is an incredibly complex and wide-ranging theme including the areas of banking, budgeting, and shopping. Regardless of which area of financial literacy the instruction will focus on, there is significant overlap in the background knowledge, vocabulary and skills required by learners, as shown in Figure 2.

Frontloading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic numeracy, local currency, understanding prices and totals• Shopping vocabulary, banking vocabulary, how to ask for help
Related Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addition and subtraction• Reading receipts and bills• Using an ATM• Using a calculator• Reading flyers• Dialogue practice
Identifying Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connecting with a counselor for help in applying for or maintaining financial support• Volunteer tax clinics• Non-profit financial literacy organizations• Where to find interpretation support
Community Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budgeting presentation with first language support• Second-hand shopping field trip• Bank visit field trip• Grocery store field trip

Figure 2: Sample Unit Plan – Shopping for Clothes

Frontloading. In a unit on clothes shopping, the instructor can begin by talking about what learners are wearing to class that day and by looking at images from clothing store flyers in order to activate the learner's background knowledge. This can be the basis for a classroom discussion with questions such as:

- What are you wearing today?
- Are you wearing a sweater? A t-shirt? Socks?
- Where do you buy clothes in your community?
- Which store has the best prices?
- Where do you buy clothes for adults?
- Where do you buy clothes for children?

Even with very limited English language skills, learners are often able to talk at least in general terms about where they shop as it is a necessity of everyday life. This activity also serves as a needs assessment by providing the instructor with information about learners' experiences and present language skills.

The next step is vocabulary building which can be done through a variety of activities, beginning with oral vocabulary. Repeating the names of clothing items that learners are wearing each day is a fun and engaging activity for learners. The use of picture flashcards is another important tool in building oral vocabulary with activities such as the flyswatter game, bingo, categorization activities (winter vs. summer clothes), and oral partner practice. When learners are familiar with the oral vocabulary, they can be introduced to the written vocabulary through flashcards. Learners can match picture and word cards, play bingo with the word cards, and use the cards as a word bank to label images and complete writing activities. Phonics, reading and writing activities can also be incorporated into this stage of the teaching. It is also important to explicitly teach learners what kinds of clothing are required for their safety and the safety of their families during the winter season.

In addition to gaining basic competency with the clothing vocabulary, instruction can be incorporating numeracy into the classroom with activities such as counting learners and classroom items as well as games and activities to build number recognition. When learners have some basic numeracy knowledge, explicit instruction on reading money amounts and using the local currency can begin. Most learners are highly motivated to learn about money as it is essential to their survival and independence. Educational money for use in the classroom is a fun and accessible tool to teach about currency. Activities such as listening to the teacher and showing the amount requested, finding totals using educational money, and reading and writing dollar amounts all build basic numeracy skills and are essential to the process of frontloading.

Related Skills. When learners are familiar with clothing vocabulary and local currency, instruction can move on to the related skills learners need. The use of flyers in the classroom can help learners be familiar with reading money amounts in a real-life context. Practicing adding and subtracting different money amounts by physically manipulating educational money can help make this challenging task more accessible. Teaching learners how to use the calculator on

their phone is highly motivating and provides learners with a tool that supports their independence. In addition, learning to read receipts with the use of instructor-modified or real world receipts is an essential skill for successful integration. When learners have gained competency in the related skills, the instructor can set up a “store” in the classroom with images and prices of clothing around the room. Learners can ask for help, choose items to purchase, and pay with the educational money while other learners can play the role of cashier and sales help. This fun and engaging activity prepares the learners for the real-world experience of a field trip to a second-hand clothing store.

Identifying Resources. In regions that have dangerously cold winter weather, sharing information with learners about free or low-cost winter clothing programs is a practical way to support learners in meeting their basic needs, thereby increasing their readiness for learning. Using speaker mode during class time to phone a program like a clothing bank and find out key information for accessing the program models this skill for learners and serves as a listening exercise. Bringing in a speaker from a financial literacy organization to provide suggestions and ideas of ways to save money supports learner integration. Ideally, this type of presentation is done with first-language support through the use of volunteer interpreters or learners with more advanced listening and speaking skills. These types of presentations enable learners to become more familiar with the supports available to them in the community so they can make informed decisions about accessing assistance for their families. In addition, learning about which organizations provide income tax preparation clinics and how to access this service is integral to successful integration.

Community Connections. A practical way to conclude a unit on clothes shopping is with a field trip to a local second-hand store. There are a myriad of learning activities associated with this type of field trip, before, during and after the activity. Before the field trip, activities can include finding the best route to the location using digital transit and mapping apps, creating a class plan for the day, and making lists of clothing items that learners may hope to purchase for their families. Pictures taken en route to the store and during the field trip can be used later as a tool to prompt the writing of a class story. In the second-hand store, learners can find write the names of clothing items, find prices, and ask for help. When the formal learning activity is complete, learners can be given time to explore the store and even purchase needed items for family members.

Following the field trip, writing a class Language Experience story can lead to many group and individual reading and writing tasks with vocabulary and ideas that the learners are very familiar with. In addition to the formal learning opportunities associated with a field trip to a second-hand store, learners become more comfortable using transit to access an invaluable community resource and are familiar with a new shopping option for finding quality, low cost items for themselves and their families.

Health Unit – Going to the Doctor

As with financial literacy, healthcare is a very complex theme with many different areas of focus including human anatomy, health care systems, healthy

eating, and wellness. In all areas of a health-related theme, the learners will require similar background knowledge, vocabulary and skills in order to be successful in moving towards a healthy lifestyle, which is essential to individual and family integration as shown in Figure 3.

Frontloading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the healthcare system is organized: family doctors, walk-in clinics, urgent care centres, emergency departments, 9-1-1 • Body vocabulary, health vocabulary
Related Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filling out forms • Reading directions • Using a calendar • Calling 9-1-1
Identifying Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning what service to access for different health concerns • How to ask for first language support • Finding help to book appointments
Community Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations on topics such as breast health, sexual health, healthy eating, etc. • Book interpreter support for presentations • Field trip to an urgent care centre

Figure 3: Sample Unit Plan – Going to the Doctor

Frontloading. While the ultimate goal of this unit is that learners will be feel comfortable accessing health care with some measure of independence, instruction needs to begin with the required background knowledge so that learners have the foundation on which to build their competence. Begin with talking about the body, having learners show various body parts called out by the instructor or by naming body parts on themselves. Playing a version of “Simon Says” allows the instructor to assess the learners’ vocabulary while learners are engaged in a fun, kinesthetic learning activity. Picture and word flashcards can be used to develop vocabulary with activities such as bingo, matching, labelling, and partner question and answer exercises.

When learners are familiar with body vocabulary, instruction can begin with health and sickness vocabulary such as headache, fever, and sore throat. Engaging in the same learning activities with the new vocabulary using picture and word flashcards reduces the cognitive load for learners. When learners are familiar with the activities, they can concentrate fully on building their competence with the new vocabulary. In addition, picture and word cards can be used as prompts as learners ask each other, “What is the matter?” Another fun and engaging activity for vocabulary building is to have either the instructor or learners act out various ailments while the class guesses what the health problem is.

Familiarity with the vocabulary of health problems leads to learning about where to access health care services. It is important for learners to know the vocabulary for unique health care access points in their community, including family doctors, walk-in clinics, urgent care centres, hospitals, community health centres and emergency medical care.

Related Skills. There are a myriad of skills related to accessing health care including filling in forms. The complexity of most authentic medical forms and questionnaires may preclude their use with LESLLA learners, but teacher-developed forms can introduce learners to the information needed as well as the types of questions that will be asked. Learning how to use identification to fill in personal information on forms will build learners' confidence in real-life scenarios. Spending 5 minutes daily to practice orally spelling first and last names as well as clearly stating one's address and phone number will develop learner competence. Whole class and partner practice of simple dialogue for a doctor's office will give learners a template for use in real-life scenarios. Setting up a doctor's office role play in the classroom allows learners to use all of the skills they have used in an authentic-type situation. Learners can check in with reception, state and spell their name, fill in the form given them and wait to be called into the doctor's office where they will state their health problem. This type of learning activity is highly motivating as learners recognize its value in their day to day lives.

Identifying Resources. Navigating health care systems is a complex task. Understanding where to access care for what type of problem is key to getting the needed help. For example, many newcomers will go to the hospital for any medical issue that arises, wasting hours waiting in the emergency room for a problem that could have easily been treated by a family doctor or at a walk-in clinic. Specific instruction on health care access points in your particular community is essential. Once learners are familiar with the health care options such as family doctors, walk-in clinics, help lines, emergency departments etc., the class can engage in activities where learners categorize health ailments under the appropriate place to find care for that particular problem. Instruction on how to ask for first language support in hospitals or clinics is also needed. Partner dialogue practice and role play in class will equip learners for their future health care needs. A presentation from an immigrant-serving agency will familiarize learners with help available to them if they need assistance to book appointments or to access interpreter support for medical visits. As a significant point of contact for LESLLA learners, the instructor is in a unique position of providing assistance with brief tasks such as confirming appointments, looking up transit routes to appointment locations and ensuring learners have essential identification and health care documentation needed for their appointments. While these tasks are outside of the realm of literacy and language instruction, spending a few minutes to assist learners with such chores can significantly reduce learner stress.

Community Connections. Presentations on specific health care issues faced by the population of your class can be a useful way to build connections to community services. A dietician can present on healthy eating and managing

diabetes, or a health facilitator can present on screening programs. If it is possible, a field trip to an urgent care centre can familiarize learners with the protocols they can expect, how to access interpretation services, and what documentation is required. This type of knowledge will enable learners to take responsibility for their own and their family's health care needs.

Community Unit - Accessing Community Services

Being able to navigate one's community and access its resources is essential to successful integration. Knowledge of how the community is organized, how to move around in the community and what types of services are available all contribute to the development of a healthy sense of belonging. By building on the key background knowledge, vocabulary and skills that learners require, teachers can create lessons that will promote learner integration as shown in Figure 4.

Frontloading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts of country, city, community, neighbourhood, address, and home • Places in my community: bank, library, swimming pool, etc. • Directions: turn right, go straight, across from, etc.
Related Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading maps • Giving and following directions • Reading signs • Filling out forms • Reading a bus schedule • Asking for help
Identifying Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries • Recreation centres • Immigrant services agencies • Emergency services
Community Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations from an immigrant serving agency • Presentations from city services, such as police and fire departments • Book interpreter support for presentations • Field trip to local library • Field trip to community or recreation centres

Figure 4: Sample Unit Plan – Accessing Community Services

Frontloading. The goal of this unit is for learners to have the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to access community services for themselves and their families. The instructor will begin by talking about community places, using

colour images to elicit responses. The images can support classroom discussion with questions such as:

- Where do you live?
- What is your address?
- Is there a school near your home? A park?
- Do you go to the recreation centre?
- Where is your bank?

This activity permits the instructor to ascertain the learners' background knowledge and language skills in order to determine the needs of the group.

Oral vocabulary can be developed in a variety of ways, such as group games and question and answer activities. For example, learners can use images of various community locations as a prompt to ask and answer the question "Where are you going?" while moving around the classroom. Picture and word flashcards can be used for matching activities, phonics development and writing activities. Developing the concept of where learners are in the world should also be incorporated at this stage in the learning. Using flashcards for activities such as recognizing one's own address, matching common form words such as Address and City with the learner's address and city, and oral repetition of personal information all set the stage for future learning.

The ability to recognize and follow simple directions such as "Go straight" or "Turn right" is also necessary for learners to successfully navigate their communities. Daily practice of direction words using movement is a fun way to prepare learners for map reading and following directions.

Related Skills. When learners have basic competency with community vocabulary, their own personal information and simple direction words, they are ready for instruction in related skills. Map reading, which may be a very challenging task for foundational learners, can be scaffolded by beginning with 3-dimensional maps that can be manipulated. A simple 3-dimensional map can be created with streets drawn on flip chart paper and box "buildings" labelled with image flashcards of community places. Learners can be asked to move from one location to another by following oral directions, to describe the location of the places on the map, and to provide the address of map locations. Simple teacher-created maps, map apps, and authentic maps can be introduced as learners' competency increases. Apps such as Google Maps can provide practice in following directions, as can more low-tech activities such as having one learner read directions to another as they move about the classroom. Using a simple paper or online map to guide a walk around the neighbourhood provides an opportunity to follow directions and to practice asking for help. By practicing in a safe, supported setting, learners will build learner confidence to use this language in real-life situations.

Forms are ubiquitous in highly literate societies and thus literacy learners require this skill in order to access community services. Build upon learners' oral knowledge of their personal information, beginning with very simple and working up to more complex forms. Explicit teaching of how to use one's

identification to fill in the required information on forms is essential to developing this skill.

Identifying Resources. Presentations from immigrant and refugee serving agencies, community organizations such as public libraries and emergency services can help learners to understand what supports, activities and help is available to them. Again, first-language support whenever possible increases learner comprehension and provides them an opportunity to ask questions in their own language. Meeting someone from an agency or a library creates a sense of connection for learners and increased the likelihood that they will access these resources for themselves and their families. If subsidized programs are available in your community, assisting learners to apply for transit and recreation subsidies supports learner integration by reducing the financial burden of traveling to class as well as enabling them to access recreational activities that contribute to learner wellness.

Community Connections. A field trip to a local recreation centre presents many learning opportunities. Before the trip, learners can use maps to plan how to arrive at the destination, read the activity schedule for the centre and practice asking for assistance. If the recreation programs offer financial subsidies for low income clients, forms can be downloaded and filled in with assistance in the classroom. On location, learners can drop off their application forms, take a tour of the facility and even participate in fitness classes or gym activities. By visiting the centre in person, learners are much more likely to feel comfortable accessing the programs, classes and activities themselves or for their families. Again, following the field trip, many group and individual learning tasks can be completed, including writing the directions for travel to and from the centre, creating a future exercise schedule and talking about what learners enjoyed most in their experience.

CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed ways in which the transformative nature of the REFLECT model has been retained in a community-based and settlement focused ELL literacy program. The program described provides explicit L2 and literacy skills instruction, while attending to learners' settlement concerns. As Chapman & Williams (2015) highlight, learning can be transformative, even when programs and funders require specific outcomes or themes, by ensuring that L2 and literacy learning connects to improved circumstances for learners. In our context, this means learners both develop skills and the cultural capital needed to access available if they so choose.

Programs and classroom teachers can reduce barriers to social services by listening to learners' lived experiences and responding with instruction that addresses learners' concerns both in and out of the classroom. Teachers can work alongside learners in their goals to improve their circumstances by working with learners to develop skills and knowledge that will increase their ability to access services. By identifying available resources in the local community and by forging connections with social service providers, programs can support learners

who wish to access services to take the first step in accessing those services. Transformative learning experiences support access to social services and contribute to greater learner independence in the long term.

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