TÜNDE CSEPELYI
University of Nevada, Reno

Their Words and Worlds:
English as a Second Language Students
in Adult Basic Education Literacy Programs

The focus of this article is on adult literacy in adult basic education (ABE) programs with special emphasis on English as a Second Language (ESL) students. The article intends to highlight several relevant points in ABE ESL literacy instruction. It focuses on (a) the nature of adult learning, (b) the structure of ABE programs, (c) who the students, in particular ESL students, are in ABE programs, and (d) ESL students' instructional needs. It also refers to the Generation 1.5 phenomenon and describes studies comparing native and nonnative English-speaking students' literacy development. Finally, it proposes some recommendations for future research projects and underlines the necessity of developing literacy programs with a focus on adult ESL learners.

Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world … this movement from the word to the world is always present; even the spoken word flows from our reading of the world. In a way, however, we can go further and say that reading the word is not preceded merely by reading the world, but by a certain form of writing it or rewriting it. … For me, this dynamic movement is central to the literacy process. (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 35)

Freire and Macedo grasp the essence of literacy instruction: The relative closeness of the relationship between the real world and the literacy instruction of the students may lead to success or failure in literacy education. If classroom instruction incorporates students' lives into instruction, if students can take school words home, that is the movement that Freire and Macedo described as "central to the literacy process" (p. 35).

But what do the world and words of students look like to their teachers? How different are the world and words in the case of immigrants in mainstream classes? "In ESL learning contexts, teachers must be cautious about making assumptions about the cultural or language backgrounds of ELL" (Ediger, 2001, p. 156). Thus, teachers should investigate their students' world and words to bring their reality—as opposed to the teacher's reality—into classrooms.

Native and nonnative English-speaking adults can find literacy classrooms

"through a wide range of venues such as adult schools, community colleges, community-based organizations, libraries, workplaces, or in their own homes through one-on-one volunteer programs" (Weinstein, 2001, p. 174). However, the majority of adult literacy learners enroll in federally funded adult-education literacy programs (Weinstein, 2001), which serve a wide range of learners, from native English-speaking students to nonnative students. In many cases, the students' goals are common: to improve literacy skills in order to leave a dead-end job and obtain a better position (Weinstein, 2001). Nonetheless, the ways to advance their literacy skills might be very different—as different as their worlds and words are. Yet all the differences end up in the same classroom with the same curriculum, which predictably cannot fit all the worlds and words that meet in ABE literacy classrooms.

If we believe in education, if we believe in Freire's notion that knowledge helps people liberate themselves from social oppression (2006), we need to scrutinize instruction in adult literacy education to find the best practices and meet the world and words of the students. In my classes, I attempt to bring the different worlds and words into a close proximity on behalf of adult ESL learners who through their improved literacy hope to better their immigrant life in a new country. The vignettes in this paper are from my own language-learning experience in an ABE ESL class. Through my personal stories I intend to highlight some experiences from the point of view of a former ABE ESL student who lived firsthand the discrepancy between theory and practice in ABE ESL classes. My ESL story started in 1993:

> I arrived in the US at the age of 24 without a word of English. I was recommended to take a free English class in town where I could learn some language skills. So I enrolled. The placement procedure was as follows: An ESL teacher asked a couple of questions that I, of course, could not understand, let alone answer. Still, I wanted to take an intermediate class, as my educational background—holding a dual-major BA in Hungary, my native country—assured that I would work hard and learn quickly. Nevertheless, I was placed in a beginning class where the curriculum was to teach the ABCs from scratch.

Focus

The focus of the article is to summarize the findings about adult literacy studies with special emphasis on adult ESL students. The focus is on nonnative English-speaking adults in ABE literacy programs for two reasons. One reason is this population does not get enough attention in the research. The second is that just recently some researchers (Burt, Peyton, & Duzer, 2005) advocated for establishing literacy programs for nonnative English-speaking adults separate from those for native speakers. Further, this paper intends to highlight several relevant points in ABE ESL literacy instruction. It focuses on (a) the nature of adult learning, (b) the structure of ABE programs, (c) who the students, in particular ESL students, are in ABE programs, and (d) ESL students' instructional needs. I also refer to the Generation 1.5 phenomenon and describe studies

comparing native and nonnative English-speaking students' literacy development. Additionally, I will recommend some future research projects. The vignettes are to illustrate the points this article intends to make.

A Theory in Adult Learning

A crucial point in adult education programs is to understand the cognitive processes that adults employ while learning. I have chosen Allwright's (2006) framework of learning and teaching in adult institutional settings because my theoretical belief—an ethic of care (Noddings, 1984)—can be traced in these concepts. Combining an ethic of care and the principles of adult learning may result in learner-centered instruction.

Tseng & Ivanič (2006) explained Allwright's (2006) "six major sets of factors affecting learning-teaching events" (p. 138), which are:

1. Participants' beliefs;
2. Participants' intentions and resources;
3. Learning and teaching resources;
4. The political and institutional context;
5. Sociocultural factors; and
6. Issues of inequality.

1. Participants' Beliefs

We all—instructors and students—enter classrooms with presuppositions about education. Based on previous experience, instructors hold their beliefs about incoming students, and students also hold their beliefs about their instructors based on their previous experience. Whether the experience was dreadful or not will influence the quality of instruction and learning. Most times these beliefs are not likely to be directly articulated by the learners nor the instructors; however, hidden agendas can be uncovered. One way to uncover what the learners bring to classrooms is to become engaged instructors who use an ethic of care in their teaching (Noddings, 1984). Revealing and addressing the different ideas learners have toward teaching and learning "can be seen as a starting point for pursuing better understandings of the complexity of learning" (Tseng & Ivanič, 2006, p. 139). Also, Tseng and Ivanič cautioned instructors that participants' beliefs should be seen not as problems but as part of their learning.

2. Participants' Intentions and Resources

"Participants' intentions for learning are an important part of the complexity of adult literacy classrooms" (Tseng & Ivanič, 2006, p. 140). Intention refers to the goal that learners want to achieve by taking literacy classes. It is not the goal itself but the inner motivation to achieve that gives learners the determination to remain in school (Brown, 2002). Instructors should learn the goals and motivations of their students and use them in a positive way to encourage students to stay in school. For instance, using children's literature in an adult literacy class might be beneficial for students who are parents but not for others

whose literacy goal, for example, is to become a secretary.

Students come to class with a wide range of backgrounds. They might differ in age, socioeconomic status, jobs, self-esteem, goals, family circumstances, cognitive styles, motivation, identity, and education. Additionally, access to literacy—from books to computers—might vary greatly. Therefore, instructors should explore the individual student's access and incorporate those resources into instruction. My personal experience demonstrates the necessity of this exploration.

> I was a high school teacher in my native country teaching history and geography. Indeed I spoke no English at the time of my arrival in the US; however, I was not illiterate nor uneducated. My goal was not to learn how to form English letters but to learn English as fast as I could. Nevertheless, my first ESL teacher made me trace As and Bs and Cs. Needless to say, I did not last long in that program. What I needed academically was not explored, nor were my learning needs accommodated.

3. Learning and Teaching Resources

With the learning and teaching resources, Tseng and Ivanič (2006) wanted to bring policy makers and curriculum writers to a similar platform with adult literacy learners: Adult literacy curricula must incorporate learners' interests and available sources. For instance, a learner's reading-interest inventory is intended to explore the learner's reading choices, which then are employed in the curriculum. We all read books with great pleasure if they interest us. The same principle applies to adult literacy learners. On a personal note, I once had to drop a class because of my lack of learning sources.

> In the second year after my arrival, I signed up for a listening class. The curriculum sounded fabulous: Among the assignments were watching TV shows, renting movies, and listening to a radio show. All these activities required writing a weekly log. There was only one problem for me: I owned neither a TV nor a radio, and I could not afford to invest in them.

4. Political and Institutional Context

"Learning and teaching are political acts operating in a context largely determined by particular policies, inscribed in policy documents" (Tseng & Ivanič, 2006, p. 142). It is important to notice the political component of teaching when literacy is taught to immigrants. Certain subjects may result in objection to participation in discussions (Murray, 2005). Some delicate topics might be, for instance, recent political moves on illegal immigration, American-Arab conflicts, or any comparison between the US and other countries.

5. Sociocultural Factors and 6. Issues of Inequality

It cannot be emphasized enough that literacy curricula must be culturally diverse and cannot represent only one social class's values (Banks, 2004). The learners may come from different social classes and with different presupposi-

tions that the curricula can strengthen or, conversely, weaken, creating a gap between the students' lived experience and the instruction (Eskey, 1997). The former case may benefit the students while the latter may create a mismatch between students and school. Hence the last factor: 6. issues of inequality. Curricula must strive to close the gap and make every effort to diminish inequality in adult education. My experience is as follows:

> In my ABE ESL class, I had classmates from Mexico, Switzerland, Thailand, China, and Guatemala with educational levels ranging from 6 years of elementary schooling to college. We all were taught by the same curriculum regardless of our previous education.

Recognizing these variances among learners, instructors, and curricula is essential in the process of teaching and learning, particularly in adult contexts. One curriculum will not fit all. Consequently, incorporating these factors in curricula of ABE programs is essential and a crucial prerequisite of success for their students. A word of caution: Ignoring all cultures and focusing only on the American one is as big a mistake as not recognizing the differences at all. Most times, a variety of sources from the students' and the teacher's cultures represented in the curriculum reconcile the sensitivity to and an appreciation of sociocultural factors existing in ESL classrooms.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

"Adult basic education programs … typically serve adults over the age of sixteen who do not have a high school diploma and are no longer eligible for traditional secondary education programs" (Kruidenier, 2002, p. 1). Therefore, ABE teachers serve a wide variety of students from teenagers to the elderly, who come to these programs with a broad range of literacy and life experiences. Thus, these teachers' role is no less than that of a genius in choosing the right materials and teaching practices to serve their students. Moreover, these ABE programs also serve adults with—very likely undetected—learning disabilities.

Further, according to Davidson and Strucker (2002), 42% of literacy students speak English as a second language. Therefore, in addition to learning-disability theories and literacy development, theories from second-language acquisition should be incorporated in the assessment procedure. Moreover, standardized tests should be used with care, as they are in English, which is the learners' second language; therefore, their validity may be questioned. An example demonstrating this mismeasurement comes from the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), a standardized test widely used in ABE programs to measure English skills. The student needs to decide whether the piece of dessert in the picture is (a) pie, (b) cake, or (c) a muffin. Those students who never had a piece of pie in their lives will miss this and similar culturally biased questions on tests. Obviously, this question does not measure English skills but cultural exposure. As an alternative, Schwarz and Terrill (2000) proposed the introduction of portfolio assessment, which seems to be the most reliable method for measuring English skills, especially for second

language learners. My experience validates this notion:

> Tests both in my native Hungarian and my nonnative English languages frighten me. In Hungarian, I have developed plenty of strategies and I can always fall back on my native speaking skills. On the other hand, taking a test in English or writing an essay assessment on the spot, after these many years of teaching English, are still terrifying. The first time a portfolio as testing alternative crossed my learning path was in graduate school: I was required to put a portfolio together for my midpoint assessment. I needed to show writing samples and other representative pieces that I had completed in the program. Without a sweat, I completed this portfolio, which truly represented my work for the past year and a half. They were not answers for some test questions but results of hours and weeks of hard work.

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2005) reported that in 2003, across the US, approximately 3 million students enrolled in ABE programs that included instruction in reading, mathematics, and social studies. These students either wanted to obtain a high school Graduate Equivalency Degree (GED) or improve their reading skills (Winn, Skinner, Oliver, Hale, & Ziegler, 2006). Furthermore, participation in ABE programs is of free will, except for some military exceptions. Therefore, "because of the voluntary nature of participation, it is not surprising that only about 8% of eligible adults take part in basic education programs" (Sheehan-Holt & Smith, 2000, p. 229). One implication of this statement is that only those ABE programs that employ learner-centered curricula and exceptional instruction can attract learners. Otherwise, students might leave. Another implication is that voluntary participation makes research in adult literacy extremely difficult, as voluntarism neither necessarily represents the target population (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006) nor indicates who is not represented (Rogers, 2004). Finally, "there has been much debate over the teaching of literacy with adults, yet there is little research on which to draw" (Rogers, 2004, p. 275).

ABE Literacy

"[L]iteracy is more than reading, writing, and computing with efficiency and understanding" (Kruidenier, 2002, p. 2); literacy is "reading the world" (Freire, 2006). These notions are evident in Anderson's article (2001), which stated that lack of literacy may result in such situations as "one out of three mothers on welfare is unable to read … people with fewer than six years of schooling are four times more likely to end up on welfare than are those with at least nine years of schooling" (p. 5). Anderson outlined a specific recommendation: States should take responsibility for literacy programs by establishing stable courses and paying close attention to hiring and by employing quality instructors (Murray, 2005). The current system nationwide typically contains 94% part-timers and unpaid volunteers, which raises fundamental concerns regarding the quality of instruction in any program (Anderson, 2001). While ABE programs struggle with part-timers and volunteers, student enrollment

keeps increasing from one year to the next (Sheehan-Holt & Smith, 2000).

Anderson's objective was further strengthened by Winn et al.: "Instructors in ABE generally have had very little preparation for teaching reading skills to adults" (2006, p. 196). Sheehan-Holt and Smith's (2000) findings shared the same causes as Anderson's:

[A]dults who participate in basic skills instruction fail to demonstrate literacy skills superior to those of nonparticipants. Although participants may achieve a number of personal learning goals, such as earning the GED, being able to communicate more effectively with their children's teachers, or simply reading the Bible, attaining those idiosyncratic goals does not lead to pervasive improvements in literacy abilities. Therefore, although adult basic skills education may be achieving some of the goals relevant to human capital investment … it does not appear to be accomplishing the broader social benefits … i.e. increasing general literacy. (p. 242).

Referring to Anderson (2001), increasing general literacy may result in achieving higher social status via obtaining a better job because of improved literacy skills. Meanwhile, the causes of failure might be found among the procedures employed by ABE literacy programs, in instructional practices, or perhaps in the discrepancy between instruction and the learners' needs. Venezky (2000) discussed the latter concern that "while the literacy needs of the adult center primarily on obtaining information from non-fictional texts, literacy instruction in the schools concentrated almost exclusively on fictional texts and literary appreciation" (p. 20). He further argued that "[t]he competencies required to obtain information from IRS forms, from automobile warranties, from operating guides of microwave ovens, and from the telephone book front-matter are of a different ilk from the literary skills which dominate present-day reading instruction." He did not question the values of the literacy instruction in schools today; however, he emphasized:

Finding the main idea of a short story has marginal application to understanding science descriptions where no single main idea exists; building character descriptions has little application to comprehending math story problems where the characters, if they exist, are usually irrelevant to the problem solutions; and predicting outcomes of fictional tales has no application to reading charts and graphs. (p. 21)

Venezky concluded that the chasm between adult literacy needs and what schools teach can be bridged by teaching "a certain set of literacy skills for success in everyday life" (p. 22) and not by "something else [that] isn't leading to what adults need" (p. 23). What I needed as an ESL student was to learn the U.S. way of thinking when it came to reading. I miserably failed my first and last reading class:

As a bridge ESL class, I took a reading class in an intense university Eng-

lish language program. In my nightmares, this reading class still haunts me. I failed every single test that I was given in that class. I simply could not grasp the main idea that my U.S. teacher thought was in a passage. My interpretation was different. Also, contextual clues to find out a meaning of a word did not help. I looked at the word in a sentence and without a dictionary I could not figure out what it meant. My teacher insisted that I not use a dictionary, let alone a bilingual one, but I needed my bilingual dictionary for comprehension and certainty.

Kruidenier (2002) also recommended several points that instructors should employ in teaching adult learners. One particular point is that in addition to improving literacy skills, adult learners progress more when they are involved in their own assessment. For instance, a survey of students' self-perception regarding class participation would motivate their actual class participation. Further, appropriate feedback that is respectful and encouraging also promotes learning. Kruidenier further recommended that adult prior experience—life and learning—should also be incorporated in instruction. Rogers (2004) strengthened the preceding ideas: "Constructing programs and instructional practices that provide the context for learners to see literacy as connected to their lives and to see themselves as being successful with literacy is important" (p. 295). If literacy curricula lack this feature, then "[e]ducators need … ask learners to step into a position of agency with literacy" (p. 295) to find out where adults use literacy and in what social milieu. My own successes and failures in learning English unquestionably remind me to constantly communicate with my students to find out what their learning needs are. Only then can I tweak the curriculum to successfully fit their necessities:

> At the beginning of my ABE ESL classes, I always do an interest inventory to learn what the actual class is interested in. As a result, I have taught topics from "My child in elementary school" (Csepelyi, 2006) through "Leisure-time activities in our city" to "Health-related words for women." Collaterally, the student retention rate was 100% many times in these classes.

Students in ABE Programs

As Ferguson observed, "Questions of who the students are and what they want to become is the basis for learning" (1998, p. 5). It cannot be repeated enough, we, instructors, need to know who our students are and what they want to accomplish in the literacy program they are enrolled in (Csepelyi, 2006; Rogers, 2004).

The Native Speakers

The estimated number of illiterate Americans varies from source to source, as obtaining precise numbers is unfeasible. According to the newest report on adult literacy levels released by the U.S. Department of Education on December 15, 2005, "five percent of U.S. adults, about 11 million people, were termed 'nonliterate' in English." As U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said,

"One adult unable to read is one too many in America" (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). However, another 30 million Americans are functionally illiterate. This latter group lacks the basic literacy skills for filling out a job application or balancing a checkbook.

The Nonnative Speakers

The 2000 Census documented nearly 47 million people (approximately 18%) who speak a language other than English at home. Data from the U.S. Department of Education indicate (2004) that the number of foreign-born students from kindergarten to higher education has been steadily increasing. Although not all are ESL students, the data unquestionably describe the phenomenon of having nonnative English-speaking students—and their cultures—in U.S. classrooms. Estimating the number of ESL students in ABE programs is difficult because of the high mobility of immigrants and, in some cases, lack of documentation (Bailey, 2006). According to the National Center for ESL Literacy Education, "42% of the enrollment in federally funded, state-administered adult ESL classes" (Bailey, p. 116) are nonnative English-speaking students. Many researchers (Cronen, Silver-Pacuilla, & Condelli, 2005; Hafernik, Messerschmitt, & Vandrick, 2002; Manton, 1998; McKay & Tom, 2006) urge teachers to educate themselves about their students' background knowledge and to learn strategies "that enhance the learning process for English as a Second Language (ESL) students in … classrooms" (Ernst-Slavit, Moore, & Maloney, 2002, p. 118). In their words:

> ESL students may be very different from other learners in their background, skills, and past experiences. Some may come to the U.S. having attended school regularly, and they will bring with them literacy skills and content knowledge, although in another language. … The resources and the needs individual students bring are therefore likely to be very different. It is imperative that we find out who our students are and where they come from before we can begin to appreciate the resources they bring and to understand their needs. (Ernst-Slavit et al., 2002, p. 118)

The nature of immigrants' residence—refugees or (un)documented—their educational background, the prestige gap between their new job and their former profession, and the relation of the native language to English are only a few examples to demonstrate the complexity of learning a second language (Murray, 2005). Fitzgerald (1995) reported that ESL learners in ABE programs have more formal education than their native-speaking counterparts. Moreover, Ernst-Slavit et al. (2002) also brought attention to Cummins's concepts of the layers of knowledge in a second language. According to Cummins's theory (2000), second language learners are able to communicate in a second language fluently within 2 years in everyday situations, but it takes much longer to learn academic language; the language that colleges require from their attendees can take as long 6-11 years. The former is referred to as basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS); the latter is known as cognitive academic language

proficiency (CALP). Ironically, many adult ESL students fail college classes as they do not recognize the layers in language learning. They can be fluent in their work, but they might not be able to read academic texts (Ernst-Slavit et al., 2002). Unfortunately, once these ESL students reach fluency, they are no longer eligible to attend ABE programs where their language learning would be supported (Ernst-Slavit et al., 2002; Murray, 2005). I personally did not want to stay in the ABE program as I quickly recognized that if I wanted to improve my academic English, I needed to enroll in academic classes:

> After 1 semester in ABE and 1 semester in a university bridge class, I took a graduate-level class (the history of the English language) with native speakers while my English was still inadequate—by the measurement of any language tests—for academic classes. I studied day and night, I translated every word in my textbook, I attended study groups, and I spent hours and hours on homework assignments. At the end of the semester, I was among the few students who finished the class with an A. That 1 intensive semester, 16 weeks, funded the academic vocabulary that allowed me to enroll in a MA-TESL program.

Generation 1.5

Within the group of adult ESL learners, the Generation 1.5 forms its own faction (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999). These students are the children of first-generation immigrants and they were either born in the US or were brought here at a very early age. Most of them go through the American elementary and high school system as ESL students, exit the ESL programs sometime before graduation, and hold a high school diploma, yet their academic English is not developed enough for attending college classes, especially English 101 writing classes. The reasons for this phenomenon are manifold. The most common reason is the parents of these students did not master English; consequently, there is a discrepancy between the minority home language and the school language, English (Harklau et al., 1999). Hence the 1.5 label—these students are not fully bilingual but are somewhere between the two languages. They are fluent in English, but their reading and writing have stagnated somewhere at the early elementary level. Many more studies must be performed to approach an understanding of this phenomenon (see Chung, 2000; Harklau et al., 1999; Nero, 1997; Park, 1999).

In summary, ESL students may differ in many ways from their native English-speaking counterparts in ABE programs. I recommend these differences be perceived as learning resources, not obstacles. Their unique circumstances indicate that another route should be established within ABE programs to serve ESL students' learning needs.

Native Versus Nonnative Literacy Students

Another aspect of literacy improvement was described by Kim (2005): "Understanding language learning and literacy development in a broader context has raised an increased awareness of social, political, and cultural aspects

of language and literacy" (p. 24). Therefore, literacy instruction for language learners and native speakers indeed brings different needs. In Kim's words: "As the role of learners is redefined as subjects in the learning process, an emphasis has been given to learning practices that promote communication, interaction, meaning-making, and negotiating meanings and knowledge in classrooms" (p. 25). Although these aims on one level coincide with what Venezky suggested about adult literacy instructional practices, namely teaching for real reading situations and not "mastery of discrete skills" (Kim, p. 24), they target the necessities of culture and language learners and not native citizens. Additionally, Wiley (2005) summarized the importance of acquiring literacy to ESL students: "Second language literacy/biliteracy is vital for language minorities to have access to employment and to access the social, political, and economic life of the prevailing society as well as in their local communities" (p. 530).

Burt and Peyton's study (2003) brought attention to the characteristics of adult ESL learners in literacy and ESL classes. They described various conditions in terms of English-language proficiency, literacy development in the first language, and cultural background. Burt and Peyton focused on the influence of the first language and distinguished two major categories in literacy: 1. Limited literate learners who may be (1a) preliterate learners, having "come from cultures where literacy in not common in everyday life" (p. 10), (1b) nonliterate learners who "have not had sufficient access to literacy instruction" (p. 10) in their native country, and (1c) semiliterate learners who "have not achieved high level of literacy in their native language" (p. 11) for various reasons, such as low socioeconomic status for example. The article listed Generation 1.5 students under this latter group. 2. The other major category is the literate learners who are further sorted into three subcategories: (2a) the nonalphabet literate languages such as Chinese, (2b) the non-Roman alphabets such as Cyrillic or Thai, and (2c) the Roman alphabet. These students have different literacy backgrounds; therefore, they have different literacy necessities. However, as Weinstein argued (2001), these categories "do not distinguish between the Cambodian peasant farmer who had never held a pencil and the Russian engineer with a Ph.D. who had not yet added the Roman to the Cyrillic alphabet in her repertoire of symbol systems" (p. 173). In another study, Burt et al. (2005) described several literacy-teaching techniques that "are not useful with non-native English speakers" (p. 4): using nonsense words, presenting synonyms and antonyms, or summarizing passages. My experience aligns with this finding:

> I never understood why my ESL teachers wanted me to decode nonsense words when I knew only a few real English words. For me, the learner, even real words looked nonsensical because I could not distinguish or recognize them from made-up ones. Also, summarizing a passage without adequate vocabulary easily leads to plagiarism, as once I unintentionally did. Lacking the appropriate vocabulary, I copied the words I understood and liked from the passage and simply put them together to form a shorter version of the original paragraph. I was very proud of my work until my teacher told me I had just committed the biggest academic crime.

Another point is that ESL and literacy teachers should have a clear awareness that the different first-language background should be perceived and taken into special consideration in literacy instruction. A highly literate Roman alphabet–using nonnative speaker still can be working on her English skills but no longer on literacy skills. The instruction should focus on improving vocabulary, hence working on comprehension skills, and not on teaching the ABCs from the beginning. In Anderson's words (2003), "You only learn to read once" (p. 68); therefore, basic literacy skills can be taught only once. As a former ESL student, I especially emphasize this aspect: Tracing letters while the learner is highly literate in the Roman alphabet likely damages the learner's self-esteem. The matter is delicate. Therefore, I continue to emphasize the need for instructors to take the students' first-language background into careful consideration.

Davidson and Strucker (2002) presented a significant study to establish instructional needs for ESL and native English-speaking literacy students. Their study investigated "word recognition, phonemic awareness, and in some instances the spelling abilities" (p. 300) of native and nonnative English speaking adults from a number of ABE programs across the nation.

Four research questions were posed:

1. Would the pattern of relatively stronger print versus meaning skills in non-native English speakers emerge in the grade equivalent (GE) 4 to 6 data?
2. Would the pattern of relatively stronger meaning versus print skills in native English speakers emerge in the GE 4 to 6 data?
3. When matched for word recognition and pseudo-word decoding, would the patterns of word recognition errors made by native English speakers differ from those made by non-native speakers in the GE 4 to 6 data?
4. Do the patterns of word-recognition errors of non-native speakers differ depending on whether their exposure to English took place before or after age 12? (p. 301)

The participants were randomly selected by lottery from among 30 centers. The researchers used proportional stratified sampling—"the number of participants from each class was proportionate to its enrollment" (p. 301). The first selection resulted in 676 students enrolled in ABE and adult secondary education (ASE) whose reading levels varied from beginning to high school and above (p. 300). The researchers further selected 212 of the 676 whose word-recognition levels were between grade equivalent (GE) 4 and 6. Moreover, among the 676 students, 42% were nonnative speakers of English; of the 212 learners, 25% were nonnative speakers of English. Based on reading behavior, researchers matched native and nonnative students according to GE level, but actual capabilities "may not be identical" (p. 300). Out of the 25% nonnative students (77 all together), some came to the US as adults, some as children. The researchers wanted to know if exposure to English before or after age 12 caused any difference in reading skills. Hence the fourth research question.

The whole group of participants was divided into three subgroups: native speakers of English (NSE), nonnative speakers of English (NNSE) who started learning English before age 12 (NNSE < 12), and nonnative speakers of English who started learning English after age 12 (NNSE > 12). Their reading performance was compared using individually administered 66-item questionnaires and 17 different reading assessments. The reading assessments included word recognition, oral reading, silent reading comprehension, word meaning, word attack, and spelling.

Word attack and silent and oral reading were analyzed and compared between students who were NSE and NNSE. According to the results:

1. NSE substitute more unfamiliar words with real words than NNSE. This is perhaps because the latter group has a limited vocabulary.
2. NNSE decode unfamiliar words faster than NSE.
3. NSE comprehend more from silent reading than NNSE do.
4. For younger NNSE (those who began learning English before age 12), language decoding is closer to that of older NNSE; however, their comprehension is closer to that of NSE.

With respect to the first two questions, "the NNSE in ABE classes more resemble normally developing younger readers whose skills are developing evenly in both meaning and print area, whereas native speakers more resemble children with reading disabilities whose print skills lag behind their meaning skills" (p. 308).

Referring to the third question, the article states that "the native speakers' preference for real-word substitutions may be rooted in the decoding difficulties that have plagued them since childhood" (p. 308). Further, "NNSE … rely more heavily on decoding than on real-word substitutions. … they know the meanings of fewer English words than the native speakers. … and thus they may have fewer real English words available to substitute" (p.309). As for the fourth question, "the before-age-12 group showed a similar preference to that of the native English speakers for real-word, as opposed to phonetically plausible, substitutions" (p. 310).

Davidson and Strucker explained their findings as "[i]t is likely that NNSE approach decoding a new alphabetic language by chunking letter strings into pronounceable syllabic units" (p. 310). Consequently, instructors should not neglect English syllabication instruction, especially for those students whose native language is phonetic and the syllabication similar to that of English. Those learners should be taught to recognize the English-specific syllabication. Based on their findings, the researchers recommended that ABE literacy programs should separate NSE and NNSE according to their needs. NSE need more phonemic-decoding instruction, whereas NNSE need more instruction on comprehension and, therefore, on vocabulary. Nevertheless, more research in silent and oral reading patterns is recommended to further explore this topic regarding NSE and NNSE.

Also, NSE seem to have difficulty decoding words, whereas NNSE have

problems with their lack of vocabulary. Therefore, where it is possible, ABE programs should offer separate literacy classes for NSE and NNSE based on their learning needs.

Kim (2005) described an advanced ESL literacy class that contained 25 students in a southwestern ABE program. Their daily literacy practice included journal writing "on any topics, such as their families, their life in the U.S. and home countries, communities, and many others that are relevant and meaningful to them" (p. 24). One immediate benefit of the daily journals that Kim depicted was improved communication between the instructor and the students. The instructor gained a better understanding of the students through their journal reflections.

Kim concluded that another advantage was the improvement of critical thinking. Through the journal entries, the class conversed about everyday life, exchanged ideas, and imparted feedback. These elements all contributed to the improvement of critical thinking.

Finally, Kim acknowledged that teachers could learn much from their students' journal entries about which issues engaged the English language-learning students in various areas. As Freire (2006) suggested, the journal-writing activity embraced an authentic dialogue between teachers and students.

In conclusion, within ABE programs, nonnative English-speaking students constitute a special population with their unique linguistic and political backgrounds. Although the cognitive processes of learning may be the same across the world, assumptions about learning, teaching, and, in our case, literacy will distinguish the instructional needs of native and nonnative English-speaking students. Therefore, literacy instructors who are trained to teach native English-speaking students need to obtain further training in teaching literacy to nonnative English-speaking students.

In my experience as an ESL student, I have encountered many examples of instructors' different assumptions about learning. I find the example of my biggest failure with a writing assignment in my only reading class to be the most significant:

> I needed to read and then write a paper about Charles Lindbergh, the pilot. I read the material and copied the sentences into an essay, just as the assignment instructed: Read and write. I copied the entire assignment not being aware of the crime of plagiarism. In my home country, the concept of plagiarism did not exist in the way plagiarism is perceived in the US. In my mind, I completed the assignment by reading the assigned pages, translating, understanding, and putting the sentences together in my paper. Luckily, my instructor recognized this unintentional criminal act, and instead of failing me, she explained what I had done wrong.

Literacy Training in MA-TESL Programs

Trained ESL instructors have a clear vision of second-language acquisition, cultural differences, and vocabulary instruction, but only a few of them have a clear understanding of literacy instruction (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003):

Teachers need to understand the reading process in order to help adult English learners develop reading skills and strategies, to evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogical techniques designed to build reading proficiency, to implement those techniques in their instruction, and to understand and help learners who have reading difficulties. (p. 23)

Unfortunately, very few MA-TESL programs train their future ESL teachers in the reading process (Bailey, 2006). The foci of many MA-TESL programs are on second language acquisition, bilingual education, sociopolitical issues, and methodology. Although all are essential to teaching ESL, MA-TESL programs also should recognize the importance of training future ESL teachers in literacy studies. In their article, Grant and Wong (2003) supported my notion as "… work required in order for literacy practitioners to gain knowledge of (and then use) effective approaches and resources to meet language-minority students' literacy needs" (p. 391). Consequently, literacy and MA-TESL programs should work together toward more rounded teacher-training curricula.

Furthermore, Crandall (1993) described the painful situation of ESL literacy within ABE programs:

Large multilevel classes, limited resources, substandard facilities, intermittent funding, limited contracts with few benefits: This is the context in which ESL literacy practitioners work. Adult education is a stepchild of K-12 education and an afterthought in U.S. educational policy. That fact is made obvious each time a public school which is no longer needed is reassigned to adult education (often with the same small, children's desks inside) or when adult education classes are conducted in inappropriate facilities that during the day have other functions as elementary or secondary classrooms (p. 497).

Since Crandall's description in 1993, the situation has not changed. For instance, ESL literacy class sizes have a median of 20, whereas other adult programs have 12 (Murray, 2005). Moreover, as of fiscal year 2006, ABE ESL programs can no longer serve their high-advanced students who score 235 points or higher on the nationally used standardized Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) test (http://literacynet.org/nevada/sdocs/glos .pdf). These students, although they have reached fluency in everyday communication, have not yet achieved accuracy in academic English (Cummins, 2000). Therefore, predictably, they would not yet succeed in college classes. Thus, these students fall between ABE and college programs and have no place in the current educational system.

My opinion that MA-TESL programs should focus on training future ESL teachers in literacy studies developed when I took my first literacy class after teaching ESL for years:

I never had a literacy class in my MA-TESL program but finally did in my PhD program. After those literacy classes, I felt ashamed for having taught

ESL for all those years without knowledge in literacy. Phonological awareness, decoding, and literacy circles were all new to me.

What Works and Why

No doubt many adult literacy programs employ a balanced approach to literacy instruction, which refers to instruction that incorporates students' words into literacy curricula (Campbell, 2003). This approach derives from Freire, who urged educators to connect their instruction to their learners' background (Campbell, 2003; Rogers, 2004). Furthermore, the word "background" refers not only to a sociopolitical and economic environment, but also to the learners' multicultural settings. Other researchers (Venezky & Sabatini, 2002) also remind ABE curricula developers and instructors that if instruction ignores the students' learning needs, they will leave the literacy program without hesitation.

Purcell-Gates, Degener, and Soler (2002) reported a study on adult literacy classes that employed real-life literacy activities. They sought to explore "the degree to which students and teachers share decision making" and if there were any "changes in students' out-of-school literacy practices" (p. 76) after receiving real-life literacy instruction. Because the study was correlational and not experimental in design, "we cannot claim a straightforward causal relationship between the degree of authenticity in adult literacy class activities and tests and change in frequencies and types of literacy practices of the students" (p. 86). The selection procedure followed the process of snowball sampling. Both native and nonnative students were selected under certain criteria: Nonnative English-speaking students were not accepted if they self-reported high-level literacy skills in their native language or had obtained a GED. For native English-speaking students, holding a GED did not disqualify them, "but they needed to be in their adult class to improve their literacy skills" (p. 76). The study was carried out employing 159 adult literacy students in 22 states, aged 18 to 68. The study concluded that authentic, real-life materials and activities would greatly contribute to adults' learning. Reading newspapers and books relevant to students' lives and discussing them can lead to substantive changes in the ways that students create literate lives outside of the classroom. Also, it was suggested that instructors in these programs should stay away from "authority and power" (p. 75) and teach collaboratively with their students instead.

In conclusion, the researchers recommended that more real-life practices in adult classes for literacy skills should be employed beyond classrooms. Strong literacy learning is created by the quality of the exposure students have; they require numerous experiences with comprehensible language and texts. If this exposure is minimal, then they will not have adequate experiences to learn the oral or written vocabulary they need.

Rogers (2004) focused her study on why relevant and authentic instruction is important for adult learners. Observing and interviewing 15 participants in an ABE literacy program, she identified several themes. First, all of her participants wanted to be more involved in their children's academic lives. "It is clear from this research that the adults' sense of self is the most open

to change in relation to their children" (p. 295). When the adults perceived themselves as teachers, they perceived themselves with positive self-images. Thus, literacy programs should include parenting education in their curricula. Second, learners allowed to bring their own discourses felt appreciated, which resulted in active involvement in learning. Third, Rogers's participants reported how important it was that "their present teachers give them positive messages and feedback and are very liberal with their time and resources" (p. 295). She concluded her study by stating that "[f]indings point to the need for awareness of the multiple and complex outcomes of adult education participation in adults' lives and of the limitations of traditional assessments in measuring these outcomes" (p. 296). I add to this point that incorporating an ethic of care (Noddings, 1984) in literacy instruction could respond to students' overwhelming need to construct positive self-images.

In conclusion, for successful literacy instruction, teachers should know their students' backgrounds.

Literacy Tutor Training

Auerbach, Arnaud, Chandler, and Zambrano (1998) described an intriguing experiment with students whose first language was not English and who had participated in literacy programs as students. They eventually were trained to become ESL and literacy instructors. The project was a reaction to the rapidly growing number of ESL students in ABE programs in the Boston area. Three community colleges participated, providing trained and experienced ESL teachers as mentors who worked with the preservice interns. The interns were former ESL and literacy students who were compensated first for their training and then for their tutoring hours. The project was based on several "beliefs" (p. 214) such as:

1. "[S]tudents learn best when content is related to their own experiences" (p. 214);
2. "The relationship between teachers and students must be one of mutual respect in which they each learn from each other" (p. 214);
3. "Literacy practices vary according to cultures and social contexts" (p. 214);
4. "Literacy education means more than just teaching students to read and write" (p. 215);
5. "Students' first language should be seen as a resource, not an obstacle, for literacy or ESL acquisition" (p. 215), and finally;
6. "People who share the culture, language, and life experiences of the learners are uniquely qualified to teach them" (p. 215).

The experiment resulted in multilayered outcomes. Among them, "[t]he project also led to changes in interns' confidence about their own skills and their views of possible job futures" (p. 225), as well as to similar projects that, as Auerbach described, can be a solution for struggling ABE ESL literacy programs. As the article concluded, employing interns from the community

proved to be more viable than employing native-speaking volunteers.

The following paragraph outlines one obstacle nonnative English-speaking teachers, such as myself, often encounter:

> In the TESL field, there is a growing body of nonnative English-speaking professionals within the US. Although numerous studies on this topic have been carried out showing how beneficial a nonnative ESL teacher can be, there is still a myth that these teachers are not capable of teaching English. I know I can teach English from experience and training. The experience comes from my own English language learning, and the training comes from my MA-TESL studies.

Further and Future Research Areas

While vast research is done on children's literacy development, the same is not true for adult literacy development (Venezky & Sabatini, 2002). There are many reasons as to why it is problematic to collect data from adults. Among these is that the existing data have been collected from less than 10% of the population; therefore, they do not accurately represent the needs of adult learners. Secondly, the dropout rate can be as high as 74% (Quigley, 2000) in ABE literacy programs, which makes any research problematic. Third, a high percentage of adult low-literacy students have undetected learning disabilities, which skew any literacy-focused research. All these are reasons why adult literacy research is difficult and problematic.

Grant and Wong (2003) identified and discussed two other major issues as barriers for English learners. The first obstacle can be found in the teacher-education programs that fail to adequately prepare reading specialists to work with language-minority learners. The other barrier is the limited number of research studies on adult English language-minority learners and their literacy development. Further, Grant and Wong identified the following five traditional roadblocks: English-only movements, limited resources and personnel within ESL, controversy about bilingual education, the type and duration of language services for children, and cultural- and linguistic-deficit models.

Responding to the first barrier, teacher-education programs, Grant and Wong explicitly stated, "ESL educators will need to know more about literacy development" (p. 389), and ESL teachers should educate themselves about literacy instruction. This notion is supported by Murray's (2005) recommendation that for adult ESL learners, teacher and staff development on literacy should receive the foremost priority. On the other hand, reading specialists in adult education also should examine first- and second-language acquisition in depth.

Responding to the other barrier, namely, that more second-language reading research should be performed to make information about ESL reading accessible "for those in the literacy field" (p. 391), the question arises as to what kind of research or teaching method researchers and practitioners should apply in ABE literacy programs. As many variances play important roles in adults' returning to school and their learning, it has been suggested that qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, studies should examine the special circumstances

from which adult students arrive in ABE programs. Moreover, Grant and Wong (2003) revealed the political and attitudinal issues as to how second language learners are marginalized in education (also Murray, 2005). One example is that although the number of ESL students has been increasing, the popular journals for practitioners have not paid increased attention to this phenomenon. The article further recommended areas in which studies should be conducted, for example, to "develop a clear position on the danger of language loss and benefits of maintaining students' first languages" (p. 391). I believe the positive notion of balanced bilingualism—that is, both languages equally developed—has still not been perceived as a reachable goal even among ESL and literacy instructors.

Grant and Wong (2003) also urged for more and stronger advocates for biliteracy. "A high level of literacy in the first language correlates to development of literacy in the second language … reading specialists need to understand the issue of language loss" (p. 391). Because in the US bilingualism is associated with fervent political overtones, the advocates of bilingualism can indeed find themselves in trouble. Exactly for this reason, Grant and Wong insisted on "reexamine[ing] personal and professional attitudes about teaching language-minority learners" as "we have not achieved educational equality for our linguistically diverse populations" (p. 391).

Further, "[a]dult literacy students in the United States are excellent informants for those who wish to understand the failures of the schools to teach children from all sociocultural groups to read and write to equal level of achievement" (Purcell-Gates et al., 2002, p. 1). Therefore, participatory action research—in which the curriculum is formulated during instruction based on the students' and instructors' learning and teaching experience—could reveal significant characteristics in literacy teaching (Campbell & Bunaby, 2001; Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000).

Winn et al. (2006) also pointed out the need for more research in adult reading development, especially because "[l]ittle research has been conducted to determine if [K-12] 'borrowed' instructional strategies benefit adult learners" (p. 196).

Nevertheless, many more areas would warrant further coverage. This review did not even attempt to describe the assessment procedures that ABE literacy programs employ nor did it suggest alternative solutions for adult literacy instruction, such as learning communities and family literacy. Another area that would be worthwhile to research further is teacher-selection methods for adult literacy programs, as, clearly, not everyone is able to work with nonnative English language learners (Csepelyi, 2006).

Conclusion

The intent of this article was to highlight several relevant points in ABE ESL literacy instruction: (a) the nature of adult learning; (b) the structure of ABE programs; (c) who the students, in particular ESL students, are in ABE programs; and (d) ESL students' instructional needs. It has also referred to the Generation 1.5 phenomenon and described studies comparing native and nonnative English-speaking students' literacy development. The paper concludes

that (a) ABE programs should offer a separate literacy program for ESL students to sufficiently address their literacy learning needs and (b) MA-TESL programs should train their future ESL teachers in literacy.

As a final comment I quote Weinstein's description (2001) of the circumstances of ABE ESL programs:

> Anyone who goes into adult ESL literacy instruction for the money or prestige is tragically misguided. Those who are adventurous, curious, able to tolerate ambiguity, anxious to make a difference, and willing to learn about the world from others' eyes, however, are in for an extraordinarily rich experience. (p. 182)

ESL literacy instruction has a stepchild status within adult education. Nevertheless, teaching adult ESL literacy is as rewarding as teaching in general. Further, as I believe in education and in Freire's notion that knowledge helps people recognize oppression and, consequently, liberate themselves from it, adult ESL literacy programs indeed can make a difference in their learners' lives. I believe that for adult immigrants, education is the only way out from poverty and from dead-end jobs and for social rising. That is why I advocate programs where the worlds and words of the students can meet the world and words of mainstream society. I do this on behalf of adult English as Second Language learners who, through improved literacy, hope to better their lives in their new country.

Author

Born and raised in Hungary, Tünde Csepelyi is a nonnative English-speaking ESL teacher and former ABE ESL student at Truckee Meadows Community College, in Reno, Nevada, where she teaches now. She is a PhD student at the University of Nevada, Reno, and her research interests include an ethic of care in adult ESL, adult biliteracy, and transitioning from ABE to postsecondary education.

References

Allwright, D. (2006). Six promising directions in applied linguistics. In S. Gieve & K. Miller (Eds.), *Understanding the language classroom* (pp. 11-18). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Anderson, N. (2003). Reading. In D. Nunan (Ed.), *Practical English language teaching* (pp. 67-86). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Anderson, S. (2001). *Overcoming adult illiteracy utilizing the community college system.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED459895)

Auerbach, E., Arnaud, J., Chandler, C., & Zambrano, A. (1998). Building on community strengths: A model for training literacy instructors. In T. Smoke (Ed.), *Adult ESL: Politics, pedagogy, and participation in classroom and community programs* (pp. 209-228). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bailey, K. (2006). Issues in teaching speaking skills to adult ESOL learners. In J. Comings, B. Garner, & C. Smith (Eds.), *Review of adult learning and literacy: Vol. 6* (pp. 113-167). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Banks, J. A. (Ed.). (2004). *Diversity and citizenship education: Global perspectives.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, H. D. (2002). *Strategies for success. A practical guide to learning English.* Harlow, England: Longman/Pearson Education.

Burt, M., & Peyton, J. K. (2003). Developing the reading skills of adults learning English. *ESL Magazine, 6*(2), 10-12.

Burt, M., Peyton, J. K., & Adams, R. (2003). *Reading and adult English language learners: A review of the research.* Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Burt, M., Peyton, J. K., & Duzer, V. C. (2005). *How should adult ESL reading instruction differ from ABE reading instruction?* Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Campbell, P. (2003). *Teaching reading to adults: A balanced approach.* Edmonton, Alberta: Grass Roots Press.

Campbell, P., & Bunaby, B. (Eds.) (2001). *Participatory practices in adult education.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Chung, H. D. (2000). English language learners of Vietnamese background. In S. L. McKay & S. C. Wong (Eds.), *New immigrants in the United States: Readings for second language educators* (pp. 216-231). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Crandall, J. (1993). Professionalism and professionalization of adult ESL literacy. *TESOL Quarterly, 27,* 497-515.

Cronen, S., Silver-Pacuilla, H., & Condelli, L. (2005). *Conducting large-scale research in adult ESL: Challenges and approaches for the explicit literacy impact study.* Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. Retrieved November 1, 2006, from http://www.air.org/news/documents/AERA2005 ESL.pdf

Csepelyi, T. (2006). When the instructor is a non-native. *CATESOL NEWS, 38*(3), 16-17.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy.* Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Davidson, R. K., & Strucker, J. (2002). Patterns of word-recognition errors among adult basic education native and non-native speakers of English. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 6*(3), 299-316.

Ediger, A. (2001). Teaching children literacy skills in a second language. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3rd ed., pp. 153-169). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Ernst-Slavit, G., Moore, M., & Maloney, C. (2002). Changing lives: Teaching English and literature to ESL students. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 46*(2), 116-28.

Eskey, D. E. (1997). Models of reading and the ESOL student: Implications and limitations. *Focus on Basics, 2*(A). Retrieved December 8, 2009, from http://www.ncsall.net/?id=459

Ferguson, P. (1998). The politics of adult ESL literacy: Becoming politically visible. In T. Smoke (Ed.), *Adult ESL: Politics, pedagogy, and participation in classroom and community programs* (pp. 3-16). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence

Erlbaum.

Fitzgerald, N. B. (1995). *ESL instruction in adult education: Findings from a national evaluation.* Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED385171)

Freire, P. (2006). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.). New York: Continuum.

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world.* Westport, CN: Begin & Garvey.

Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2006). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (8th ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Grant, R., & Wong, S. (2003). Barriers to literacy for language-minority learners: An argument for change in the literacy education profession. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 46*(5), 386-394.

Hafernik, J. J., Messerschmitt, S. D., & Vandrick, S. (2002). *Ethical issues for ESL faculty: Social justice in practice.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Harklau, L., Losey, K. M., & Siegal, M. (1999). *Generation 1.5 meets college composition: Issues in the teaching of writing to U.S.-educated learners of ESL.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Kim, J. (2005). A community within the classroom: Dialogue journal writing of adult ESL learners. *Adult Basic Education, 15*(1), 21-32.

Kruidenier, J. (2002). Literacy education in Adult Basic Education. In J. Comings, B. Garner, & C. Smith (Eds.), *Review of adult learning and literacy* (Vol. 3). [Electronic version]. London: Lawrence Erlbaum. Retrieved December 8, 2009, from http://www.ncsall.net/?id=574

McKay, H., & Tom, A. (2006). *Teaching adult second language learners* (8th ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Manton, J. (1998). The relationship between knowing our students' real needs and effective teaching. In T. Smoke (Ed.), *Adult ESL: Politics, pedagogy, and participation in classroom and community programs* (pp. 41-54). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Murray, D. E. (2005). ESL in adult education. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 65-84). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Nero, S. (1997). English is my native language … or so I believe. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*(3), 585-593.

Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2005). *Adult education and literacy.* Retrieved January 19, 2010, from www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae

Park, K. (1999). "I really do feel I'm 1.5": The construction of self and community by young Korean Americans. *Amerasia Journal, 25*(1), 139-163.

Purcell-Gates, V., Degener, S. C., & Soler, M. (2002). Impact of authentic adult literacy instruction on adult literacy practices. *Reading Research Quarterly, 37*(1), 70-92.

Purcell-Gates, V., & Waterman, R. A. (2000). *Now we read, we see, we speak: A*

portrait of literacy development in an adult Freirean-based class. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Quigley, B. (2000). Retaining adult learners in the first three critical weeks: A quasi-experimental model for use in ABE programs. *Adult Basic Education, 10*(2), 55.

Rogers, R. (2004). Storied selves: A critical discourse analysis of adult learners' literate lives. *Reading Research Quarterly, 39*(3), 272-305.

Schwarz, R., & Terrill, L. (2000). *ESL instruction and adults with learning disabilities.* Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED443298)

Sheehan-Holt, K. J., & Smith, C. M. (2000). Does basic skills education affect adults' literacy proficiencies and reading practices? *Reading Research Quarterly, 35*(2), 226-243.

Tseng, L., & Ivanič, R. (2006). Recognizing complexity in adult literacy research and practice. In S. Gieve & K. Miller (Eds.), *Understanding the language classroom* (pp. 136-162). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *United States Census 2000: Your gateway to Census 2000.* Retrieved January 19, 2010, from http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2005, December). *New report on adult literacy levels, first since 1992, shows needs for high school reform.* Retrieved December 19, 2005, from http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/12/12122005.html

Venezky, R. (2000). The origins of the present-day chasm between adult literacy needs and school literacy instruction. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 4*(1), 19-39.

Venezky, R., & Sabatini, J. P. (2002). Introduction to this special issue: Reading development in adults. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 6*(3), 217-220.

Weinstein, G. (2001). Developing adult literacies. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3rd ed., pp. 171-186). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Wiley, T. G. (2005). Second language literacy and biliteracy. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 529-545). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Winn, D. B, Skinner, H. C., Oliver, R., Hale, D. A, & Ziegler, M. (2006). The effects of listening while reading and repeated reading on the reading fluency of adult learners. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 50*(3), 196-206.