be survival skills or certificate earning. Education that only pursues the acquisition of testable competencies serves to dehumanize the individual and as Freire (1970) states turns people into objects. In addition to providing the basic tools for surviving in our society, ABE/ASE programs must seek to awaken the natural inclination of the individual to grow and to self-actualize, i.e., to become more fully human.

References

Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: The Seabury Press, 1970.

Long, J. A. *Participation motivational orientations of adults enrolled in GED preparation and credit high school completion programs.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Auburn University, 1982.

Maslow, A. H. *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

Wilson, C. *New pathways in psychology: Maslow and the post-Freudian revolution.* New York: Taplinger Publishing, 1972.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING SCALE

GARY J. CONTI

Abstract

A significant portion of the adult education literature endorses the collaborative teaching-learning mode as the most appropriate method for assisting adults in the learning process. However, there are few research studies evaluating the effectiveness of the learning principles which are characteristic of and supportive of this mode. Such studies have been hindered by the lack of an adequate instrument to measure the degree of practitioner support of the collaborative mode.

The Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS) was developed to fill this void. Original and follow-up data indicates that PALS is a reliable and valid 44-item instrument which can be completed rapidly. Its reliability and validity were established by juries, observations, and statistical analysis. PALS has potential empirical and field use.

Introduction

A significant portion of the adult education literature endorses the collaborative teaching-learning mode as an appropriate method for assisting adults in the learning process. Despite the extensive attention given to this mode, there are few research studies evaluating the effectiveness of the learning principles of the collaborative mode. Such empirical studies have been hindered in the past by the lack of an adequate instrument to measure the degree of practitioner support of the collaborative mode.

The major purpose of this study was to develop and validate an instrument capable of measuring the degree to which adult education practitioners accept and adhere to the adult education learning principles that are congruent with the collaborative teaching-learning mode. The collaborative mode was defined as a

GARY J. CONTI is assistant professor of Interdisciplinary Education at Texas A&M University.

learner-centered method of instruction in which authority for curriculum formation is shared by the learner and the practitioner. The items for the instrument were based on adult education principles that are characteristic and supportive of the collaborative teaching-learning mode and which were culled from the literature in the field.

Much has been written in the past two decades about the growing accumulation in the field of adult education of a unique body of theory and knowledge. Bergevin (1967, p. 68) and Jensen, Liveright, and Hallenbeck (1964, p. vii) concur that an appropriate body of adult education knowledge has gradually been assembled. Houle (1973, p. 53) and Knowles (1970, p. 53) point out that adult education has become increasingly sophisticated and specialized. While agreeing with these observations, Farmer (1974, p. 59) adds that in order for adult education to advance in its professionalization, this accumulated body of knowledge must be capable of utilization by practitioners in their work.

A large volume of this accumulated body of theory and knowledge subjectively advocates the collaborative mode as generally the most appropriate method for facilitating adult learning. In order to test this belief, it was assumed that this method must be identified by an instrument which had been substantiated by actual in-class observations. Since the collaborative mode is a learner-centered approach which strives to encourage the learner to seek the maximum amount of trust, self-direction, and responsibility, it is similar to the teacher behaviors which Flanders (1970, p. 35) describes as encouraging student initiating actions. Therefore, the items developed for the instrument were linked theoretically to the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) as an external criterion for systematically assessing practitioner behavior.

Therefore, although adult education is in the process of developing its own distinct body of theory and knowledge, the degree of its acceptance by practitioners and its value, validity, and reliability have not been tested. As a prerequisite to such studies, this research led to the development of an instrument for measuring the degree of practitioner support of the learning principles related to the collaborative teaching-learning mode. In addition, observations using FIAC were conducted to measure the congruency between the practitioners' expressed beliefs and their actual, observable classroom behavior.

Resume of Related Literature

Although there are various modes of instruction (Blaney, 1974), a significantly large portion of the literature in the field of adult education generally supports the collaborative mode as effective and appropriate for teaching adults. The roots for this mode run deep in adult education's history and continue to prosper today.

Support for the underlying principles of the collaborative mode can be traced through the writings of several prominent adult educators. Lindeman (1926/1961) linked Dewey's ideas for active learners to adult education. For him the central driving force for adult education was participation which utilized the learner's experiences. Since "adult education is a process through which learners become aware of significant experience" (1926/1961, p. 109), the curriculum should be organized around situations rather than subjects. In this process, the teacher's task is to assist the learner in applying the subject matter to his/her needs and interests.

In discussing the relationship of adult education to the democratic process, Bergevin (1967) stresses that adult education is a cooperative venture in which the learner is a full partner. To solve the peculiar problems of the particular adults who are involved, the learners are put first. Subjects are then used as vehicles to help people learn about problems which are related to their experiences and interests. Learning is a personal thing in which the teacher helps the student identify problems, set goals, locate materials, and evaluate outcomes. In this process, the learner is dynamically involved, is able to take ownership of the objectives, and grows in maturity and responsibility.

Like Lindeman and Bergevin, Kidd (1976) argued for a learner-centered curriculum which is based on experience. In his view the central purpose of learning is to assist the learner in "being and becoming" (1976, p. 125). This can be accomplished by significantly involving the learner in the educational process and by delegating responsibility to the learner. In this process, the teacher's task is to create a stimulating, nonhostile, supportive environment. In this setting, the learners can engage in relevant activities aimed at increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Houle defines education as a cooperative art (1972, p. 34). In his comprehensive curriculum model, curriculum formation involves the mutual development of educational objectives by instructors and active learners. In this process, the experiences and unique characteristics of the student and situational factors are

considered. The instructor has the obligation of helping the learner understand the educational objectives and the program format and of providing opportunities for the learners to accept the responsibility for their own learning. As the learning program evolves, the instructor may be required to assist the learner in further clarifying or adjusting these objectives to better conform to the individual's dynamic learning needs. After the learning activities are completed, the instructor and learner jointly examine the program and outcomes to uncover possibilities for new educational activities.

In proposing the use of the term androgogy, Knowles (1970) argues that adult learning activities should be based upon the realization that individual maturation steadily increases a person's need and capacity to be self-directing, to utilize experience, to learn for evolving social roles, and to organize learning around life problems. Because of these characteristics, the teacher's role focuses on providing a climate, procedures, and resources for participation and for the acquisition of information and skills. This process helps adults learn

> how to take responsibility for their own learning through self-directed inquiry, how to learn collaboratively with the help of colleagues rather than to compete with them, and especially, how to learn by analyzing one's own experience. (1970, p. 45)

Freire (1970) views education as a vehicle for empowering people to eradicate oppression and ignorance. His educational model is based on a participatory approach. It relies on dialogue between the teachers and learners to stimulate critical thinking, creativity, and reflection upon reality. By means of the cooperative application of problem-posing education, the teachers assist the learners in identifying and clarifying their problems and in locating resources. Through this process, the learners are able to combine action and reflection, and the plans, goals, and actions of the teachers and learners become mutual.

The writings of these prominent adult educators exhibit much commonality in the basic assumptions of adult learning. Each argues that the curriculum should be learner-centered, that learning episodes should capitalize on the learner's experience, that adults are self-directed, that the learner should participate in the diagnosis of needs, the formation of goals, and the evaluation of outcomes, that adults are problem-centered, and that the teacher should serve as a facilitator rather than a repository of facts. While each of these educators mix the educational ingredients somewhat differently, all combined them in formulas that

articulate a comprehensive philosophy supporting the collaborative mode. Their writings can therefore serve as a source of adult learning principles for the collaborative mode.

Instrument Construction

The items in the instrument, the Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS), are based upon the body of theory and knowledge which is advanced in the literature by prominent adult educators who support the collaborative teaching-learning mode. In order to form the items for the instrument, these general and theoretical principles from the literature were reworded in behavioral terms compatible with realisitic experiences of practitioners in an adult basic education setting. One-half of the items were stated positively so that their action was congruent with the learning principles of the collaborative mode. The items were randomly arranged within the instrument.

A modified Likert scale was used as a continuum for recording practitioner responses. Those taking the instrument were asked to respond to the frequency with which they practice the actions described in the items. Responses which were congruent with the collaborative mode were assigned a high value while those which were antithetical were assigned a low value. With six options ranging in value from zero to five, the final 44-item instrument had a possible high score of 220.

Methodology

The field research of this study consisted of establishing the validity and reliabilty of the items in PALS. Although it is customary to first test for reliability, this study addressed validity first in order to elicit help in better sophisticating the items and to increase the discriminating power of the items. The research design controlled for construct, content, and criterion-related validity, reliability, social desirability, and congruence of interpretation of the instrument's items.

The construct validity of the items was established by the testimony of juries of adult educators. The first jury consisted of three adult education professors[1] from Northern Illinois University who analyzed the items, commented on the validity of the constructs in the items, and suggested improvement for various items. The second jury consisted of 10 professors[2] with a high degree of visibility in the field of adult education, with geographic dispersion throughout the country, and with philosophical

heterogeneity. These professors were asked to testify to the validity of the construct in each item.

The content validity of PALS was established by field-tests with adult basic education practitioners in full-time public school programs in Illinois. The field-testing was divided into two phases. Phase 1 consisted of three field-tests to identify items that discriminated between supporters and nonsupporters of the collaborative mode. After Phase 1 had produced an instrument with potentially discriminating items, Phase 2 was conducted. This phase consisted of field-testing the instrument with 57 practitioners in six programs. Two programs were in a large metropolitan area; two were in medium-size cities; and two were in small, rural communities. The scores from the practitioners in all six programs were pooled and analyzed. Since the items had been drawn from the literature supportive of the collaborative mode, an individual's total score was used as the criterion measure of his/her support of the collaborative mode. It was assumed that items which were valid and representative samples of this mode would contribute significantly to the total score and would correlate positively with this criterion measure of total score. Therefore, content validity was determined by Pearson correlations which measured the relationship between each individual item and the total score for each participant.

Criterion-related validity was established by comparing the scores on PALS of those who scored two standard deviations either above or below the mean in the Phase 2 field-testing to their scores on the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC). The FIAC scores were determined through actual classroom observations. The FIAC was selected as the external criterion because it is a validated system for measuring initiating and responsive classroom actions and because the actions described in Flanders' definition of initiating are highly congruent with the characteristics of the collaborative mode. To link these instruments, the national jury members were asked to judge the action in each item as either initiating or responsive. The scores derived from actual observations were used to evaluate PALS concurrent validity and to assess the degree to which accepting a mode and practicing it are congruent.

The reliability of PALS was established by the test-retest method. This measure of the stability of an examinee's performance on the instrument was conducted after Phase 2 of the field-testing with a group of 23 adult basic education practitioners in Chicago. The same form of the instrument was readministered to these practitioners after a 7-day interval, and

their scores were compared by means of a Pearson correlation.

The research design also controlled for social desirability and congruency of item interpretation by practitioners. A social desirability score was calculated for each item by having those who scored two standard deviations either above or below the mean in Phase 2 of the field-testing judge the desirability in other people of the trait described in each item. A nine point scale was used (Edwards, 1957, p. 48), and mean scores were used to calculate each item's social desirability value. During the same visitation, these practitioners were interviewed to ascertain their interpretations of 10 randomly selected items from the instrument.

Findings

Interpretative and statistical data were gathered which established the reliability and validity of PALS. The construct validity of PALS was established by the testimony of two juries. Each jury reviewed the items, made suggestions for improving the items, and judged the type of action inherent in each item. The input from the local jury was used to revise items, and the testimony of the national jurors was used to compute the statistical values for the construct validity of PALS. At least 78% of the national jurors ruled that each item's concept was congruent with adult education learning principles associated with the collaborative mode. Likewise, the majority of the national jurors concluded that the positive items in PALS were associated with initiating actions and the negative items with responsive actions. In addition, the national jurors suggested minor rewordings to strengthen the validity of weak items.

The content validity of PALS was established by field-testing. In Phase 1, 43 practitioners at three different sites were tested. Data from item analyses and information from group discussions were used to improve the instrument after each testing. Information gathered during this phase of the field-testing was used to greatly refine the instrument.

In Phase 2, the same form of the instrument was administered to 57 practitioners in diversely different full-time programs. The scores from these field-tests were used to assess the content validity of each item. The Pearson correlations calculated to evaluate the relationship between each individual item and the criterion measure of total score indicated that 25 items were significant at the .001 level, eight at the .01 level, seven at the .05 level, and four at the .10 level. Of these 44 acceptable items (see Appendix), 24 were positive and 20 were negative.

Criterion-related validity was confirmed by comparing the scores on PALS to the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC). Both instruments measure initiating and responsive actions. Eighty percent of the available group that had scored two standard deviations either above or below the mean on PALS were observed, and their classroom behaviors were evaluated by means of the FIAC. Pearson correlations between PALS and each of the three possible FIAC ratio scores of teacher response ratio (TRR), teacher question ratio (TQR), and pupil initiation ratio (PIR) showed a positive correlation of .85 (TRR), .79 (TQR), and .82 (PIR). These high correlations statistically confirmed that PALS consistently measures initiating and responsive constructs and that PALS is capable of consistently differentiating among those who have divergent views concerning these constructs.

The FIAC ratio scores also confirmed the existence of a high degree of congruency between professing to support a teaching-learning mode on PALS and actually practicing behaviors characteristic of the mode in the classroom. Chi square scores for the three FIAC ratio scores for the group which scored two standard deviations above the mean on PALS were significant at the .001 level. Two of the chi square scores for the low scoring group were significant at the .05 level. The teacher response ratio, however, was not statistically significant. This ratio is an index of the teacher's tendency to react to the ideas and feelings of the student, and it is possible that this ratio was inflated for both groups by the large amount of individualized learning practiced in the observed adult education classrooms.

The reliability of PALS as a stable measure for measuring the degree of an adult education practitioner's support of the collaborative mode was established by the test-retest method using the final 44-item form of PALS. The Pearson correlation for the 23 practitioners in the sample group yielded a reliability coefficient of .92.

A social desirability score was calculated for each item in PALS. Items with a rating of 2.0 or less were considered to be nonneutral and judged as socially desirable. Nine items were rated as socially desirable. Since eight of the items (6, 8, 12, 14, 25, 27, 30, and 31) had high content validity values and since the social desirability literature lacks definitive research findings, these items were retained in the instrument with the caution to potential users to consider the implications of these eight ratings before implementing the instrument.

Individual and small group interviews were conducted with the practitioners who were observed to determine the congruency with which the items were interpreted. By means of open ended questions, the practitioners were asked to express their interpretation of the item's content and to clarify terms or concepts which they introduced into the discussion. As a result of these interviews, it was concluded that each of the participants had interpreted each of the items in the intended manner.

Since its development, PALS has been used in several training sessions and in two research studies. The analysis of 477 additional cases indicates that the descriptive statistics produced by this study are stable and can be used for interpreting individual scores on PALS. In a staff development needs study, Dinges (1980) tested 265 adult basic education teachers in various sections of Illinois with the instrument. Investigating the relationship between managerial style and support of the principles in the adult education literature, Pearson (1980) administered PALS to 99 training directors in American Society of Training Directors chapters in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. In addition, 113 scores were collected from Texas adult education practitioners in the areas of adult basic and allied health education. As the data in Table 1 indicates, the descriptive statistics for each of these groups, which represent a broader sampling of the adult education community than the pilot group, are similar to those produced in the original study. Table 2 indicates that an analysis of variance showed no significant differences between the scores of those in the original groups and the scores of those in the subsequent data gathering groups ($p = .34$). This lack of difference and the similarity between the mean and standard deviation score for the total of all four groups and the pilot group indicates that the norm for the instrument should be a mean of 146 and a standard deviation of 21.

The analysis of the data gathered from the additional samples further substantiates the content validity of each of the items in the final form of PALS. Pearson correlations between an individual's total score and the degree to which each item contributed to that total score indicate that all items are statistically significant ($p = .001$) and that each item contributes to the overall discriminating power of the instrument. Follow-up research and practitioner evidence, thus, support the descriptive statistics and content validity of the original study creating PALS.

Discussion

This study produced a reliable and valid instrument. It is rooted in the adult education learning principles of the established

Table 1
Mean and Standard Deviation
of Group Scores on PALS

Group	Size	Mean	SD
Original Sample	57	145.60	22.14
Training Directors	99	148.76	22.30
Texas Adult Educators	113	143.74	19.95
Illinois ABE Teachers	265	145.14	19.96
Total	534	145.57	20.65

Table 2
Analysis of Variance Between
Original Sample and Subsequent PALS Scores

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	3	1,430.94	476.98	1.119[a]
Within Groups	530	225,893.50	426.21	
Total	533	227,324.44		

[a]$p = .34$

literature and is capable of identifying the degree to which practitioners support and adhere to the collaborative teaching-learning mode. This 44-item summated rating scale has potential uses in empirical studies and as a diagnostic tool for those with definitive philosophical views concerning the collaborative mode.

PALS can be used in empirical studies to assess the credibility of the theories professed in the literature. If the collaborative mode is as appropriate for helping most adults to learn as its proponents claim, then learners exposed to this mode should show significant learning gains. Empirical studies to test the effect of the collaborative mode on student achievement can be designed with PALS serving as the instrument for identifying the experimental and control groups. These studies could examine the relationship of the teaching-learning mode to such variables as learning orientations, cognitive styles, most appropriate degree of

applying the various concepts in the literature, and situational factors. These situational factors could include subject matter, instructional objectives, learner goals, and educational settings such as programs for General Educational Development testing, English as a second language, adult basic education, or competency-based education. If positive relationships are found, PALS could then serve as the mechanism for the compatible matching of distinctive teaching styles with specific learning styles and situations.

PALS could have numerous diagnostic uses by those who have a firm philosophical commitment to the principles of the collaborative mode. It could serve as a tool for targeted staff development by uncovering cluster areas of concepts around which inservice training activities could be planned for either group sessions or individualized learning projects. PALS could also serve as an assessment tool for indicating to learning resource directors needed areas for collecting materials. For an administrator, PALS could serve as a personal professional development assessment tool and as a tool for identifying areas of commonalities and differences concerning views on teaching methods between him/her and the staff. In addition, the learning principles in PALS could be compared to the literature from either child or adolescent education to factor out possible generic principles applicable to learning regardless of age.

Summary

PALS is a reliable and valid 44-item instrument which can be completed rapidly. Its reliability was established by means of test-retest. Construct validity was confirmed by a national jury of adult education professors. Content validity was established through field-testing in full-time public school programs. Criterion-related validity was confirmed by identifying the initiating and responsive actions in the items in PALS and then by comparing scores on PALS to scores on the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories. In addition, the variables of social desirability and congruency of item interpretation were examined.

PALS has potential empirical and field use. It might serve as the measurement device for segregating experimental and control groups in a wide variety of research studies related to learning efficiency in specific teaching-learning modes. Also, since the instrument consolidates many learning principles widely advocated in the literature, it might be used in several ways by practitioners.

Footnotes

[1]Local Northern Illinois University jury members were Drs. P. Cunningham, J. Niemi, and R. Smith.

[2]National jury members were Drs. G. Aker, G. Darkenwald, D. Dutton, M. J. Even, S. Grabowski, M. Knowles, A. Knox, J. Peters, K. Rockhill, and D. Seaman.

References

Bergevin, P. *A philosophy for adult education.* New York: The Seabury Press, 1967.

Blaney, J. Program development and curricular authority. In J. Blaney, I. Housego, & G. McInstosh, *A monograph on program development in education.* Victoria, British Columbia: Education Extension Center for Continuing Education, The University of British Columbia, 1974.

Dinges, R. F. *The degree of utilization of the collaborative teaching-learning mode by adult basic education teachers in Illinois.* Doctoral dissertation, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University, 1980.

Edwards, A. L. *The social desirability variable in personality assessment and research.* New York: The Dryden Press, 1957.

Farmer, J. A., Jr. Impact of "lifelong learning" on the professionalization of adult education. *Journal of Research and Development in Education.* 1974, *7,* 56–67.

Flanders, N. A. *Analyzing teacher behavior.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1970.

Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: The Seabury Press, 1970.

Houle, C. O. *The inquiring mind.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963.

Jensen, G., Liveright, A., & Hallenbeck, W. *Adult education: Outlines of an emerging field of university study.* Washington, D.C.: Adult Education Association of the USA, 1964.

Kidd, J. R. *How adults learn.* New York: Association Press, 1976.

Knowles, M. S. *The modern practice of adult education.* New York: Association Press, 1970.

Lindeman, E. C. *The meaning of adult education.* Montreal: Harvest House, 1961. (Originally published, 1926)

Pearson, T. G. *Managerial philosophy and adult learning principles: Training and development professionals as managers of collaborative learning.* Doctoral dissertation, DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University, 1980.

No.	Positive Items

1. I allow students to participate in developing the criteria for evaluating their performance in class.
3. I allow older students more time to complete assignments when they need it.
5. I help students diagnose the gaps between their goals and their present level of performance.
8. I participate in the informal counseling of students.
10. I arrange the classroom so that it is easy for students to interact.
14. I plan learning episodes to take into account my students' prior experiences.
15. I allow students to participate in making decisions about the topics that will be covered in class.
17. I use different techniques depending on the students being taught.
18. I encourage dialogue among my students.
20. I utilize the many competencies that most adults already possess to achieve educational objectives.
22. I accept errors as a natural part of the learning process.
23. I have individual conferences to help students identify their educational needs.
24. I let each student work at his/her own rate regarless of the amount of time it takes him/her to learn a new concept.
25. I help my students develop short-range as well as long-range objectives.
28. I allow my students to take periodic breaks during class.
31. I plan activities that will encourage each student's growth from dependence on others to greater independence.
32. I gear my instructional objectives to match the individual abilities and needs of the students.
34. I encourage my students to ask questions about the nature of their society.
35. I allow a student's motives for participating in continuing education to be a major determinant in the planning of learning objectives.
36. I have my students indentify their own problems that need to be solved.
39. I organize adult learning episodes according to the problems that my students encounter in everyday life.
42. I use different materials with different students.
43. I help students relate new learning to their prior experiences.
44. I teach units about problems of everyday living.

No.	Negative Items

2. I use disciplinary action when it is needed.
4. I encourage students to adopt middle class values.
6. I provide knowledge rather than serve as a resource person.
7. I stick to the instructional objectives that I write at the beginning of a program.
9. I use lecturing as the best method for presenting my subject material to adult students.
11. I determine the educational objectives for each of my students.
12. I plan units which differ as widely as possible from my students' socio-economic backgrounds.
13. I get a student to motivate himself/herself by confronting him/her in the presence of classmates during group discussions.
16. I use one basic teaching method because I have found that most adults have a similar style of learning.
19. I use written tests to assess the degree of academic growth rather than to indicate new directions for learning.
21. I use what history has proven that adults need to learn as my chief criteria for planning learning episodes.
26. I maintain a well disciplined classroom to reduce interferences to learning.
27. I avoid discussion of controversial subjects that involve value judgements.
29. I use methods that foster quiet, productive deskwork.
30. I use tests as my chief method of evaluating students.
33. I avoid issues that relate to the student's concept of himself/herself.
37. I give all students in my class the same assignment on a given topic.
38. I use materials that were originally designed for students in elementary and secondary schools.
40. I measure a student's long term educational growth by comparing his/her total achievement in class to his/her expected performance as measured by national norms from standardized tests.

41.   I encourage competition among my students.

---

[3]Those taking PALS are asked to respond to the way they most frequently practice the action described in the item. Their choices are Always, Almost Always, Often, Seldom, Almost Never, and Never. If an item does not apply to them, they are instructed to select Never. For positive items, the following values are assigned: Always = 5, Almost Always = 4, Often = 3, Seldom = 2, Almost Never = 1, and Never = 0. The values are reversed for the negative items. Omitted items are assigned a neutral value of 2.5. An individual's score is calculated by summing the value of the responses to all items.

UNDERSTANDING THE ESL LEARNER: LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

RALPH C. DOBBS
VICTORIA RIBACK-WILSON

Abstract

Teaching English to speakers of other languages is more than literacy education. Recent studies have indicated that cultural influences and personality development are primary factors to consider in creating a favorable climate for learning in a classroom with English as a second language (ESL) participants. This article details some of the problems and characteristics shared by many ESL learners and explores approaches which have been found most successful in breaking down learning barriers and in helping nonnative-speaking adults become acculturated without sacrificing their national or personal identities.

Introduction

The increasing number of refugees, immigrants, and international families arriving in the United States has greatly enlarged the awareness among educators of the need for special classes designed to teach English to speakers of other languages. Teachers of adult basic education and literacy in even the smallest communities are no longer surprised to find non-English-speaking adults in their classes or at being asked to teach a complete class in English as a Second Language (ESL). Nevertheless, the initial reaction is still far too often one of panic. It is the purpose of this article to help reduce that feeling by alerting teachers to some of the similarities and differences between an American class and one for nonnative speakers.

RALPH C. DOBBS is a professor and director of the Graduate Studies Program in Adult Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia.
VICTORIA RIBACK-WILSON is a teacher of English as a Second Language.