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## Understanding Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher–Student Relationships in an Adult English as a Second Language Program

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Kymia Dozier-Kessee

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University  
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Abstract

Understanding Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher–Student Relationships in an  
Adult English as a Second Language Program

by

Kymia Dozier-Kessee

MBA, Walden University, 2005

BBA, Texas Southern University, 2001

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

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## Abstract

A decline in retention for teachers and students in an adult English as a second language (ESL) education program has raised questions about restricting state funding for a college located in southeast Texas. The decline has resulted in the program not meeting enrollment requirements by the state, which may be connected to the core relationship between the ESL instructors and their students. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how ESL teachers describe their relationships and interact with academically diverse students enrolled in a local ESL adult education program. Bandura and Thorndike's social cognitive theories were used to guide this study. The 5 voluntary participants were purposefully selected and had 0-6 years teaching experience in adult ESL. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and classroom observation. A thematic analysis, which consisted of open and axial coding, was used to analyze the interview and observation data. Two themes emerged: Teachers struggle when communicating with diverse and multiple-grade students, and teachers limit their interactions with students to those interactive suggestions provided in the textbook and do not include other opportunities for classroom interaction. Based on the findings, a 3-day professional development workshop was designed to improve teachers' relationships with academically diverse, adult ESL students. This endeavor could support positive social change by developing better relationships between ESL teachers and their students to increase retention of adult ESL students, thereby retaining grant-funded programs.

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## Dedication

To my Heavenly Father,

I thank You for your guidance as I ventured on this path in life. I would never have thought that this journey would have brought me to the place that I am at today. I thank you for allowing the Holy Spirit to protect me and provide me a vision to help others. Lord without you I am nothing and with you I am everything. I pray that you keep me near the cross as I begin another journey. I know that nothing that I will do in life will be in vain with the comfort of your love, and the wisdom I will receive through the Holy Spirit. I say this prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

This project is dedicated to my grandmother, Geraldine Brown. My grandmother raised me by herself and taught elementary school for over 40 years. She provided, sheltered and loved me every day. I would not have accomplished as much if it had not been for her care, and support. I also dedicate this project to my son, Donovan Kessee and his father, Dietrich Kessee. My son and I traveled this journey together. I began this program when I was pregnant and now he is able to read my project. I wished to thank his father, Dietrich Kessee. I appreciate all the support you gave me while I worked diligently on this project. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Parent, Dr. Pearce, and Dr. Howe for the edits, suggestions, and continuous support.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

At a local college in southeast Texas, teacher retention in the adult education programs (adult basic education [ABE], English as a second language [ESL], and adult civic education [ACE]) has dropped since 2014. The program manager made efforts to maintain contact with the teachers, and to encourage educators to continue teaching in the program. There were about 20 teachers within this adult education program who stated that it is difficult to teach and communicate well with their students. Instructors' employment had a 60% turnover rate (program manager, personal communication, 2013), also shown by the Texas Education Adult Management System (TEAMS) program report (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012). Horton (2010) suggested, "retention success or failure may be tied strongly to the co-created key student and professor relationship" (p. 40). Therefore, the teacher–student relationship may be a key factor related to the problem of teacher retention at a local community college.

There may be problems that derive when there is a lack of understanding between the teachers and students in an ESL class. Personality differences between the teachers, students, and life experiences of the teachers and students may be some of the problems that hinder communication in an adult ESL program. The teachers may feel they cannot relate and teach the students because of the lack of knowledge on how to teach adult ESL students. These various differences between the teachers and students can become a barrier between teacher and student. Dales (1999) explained that learning might not improve if there are several differences between the persons learning and the persons

teaching. One of the barriers inside the ESL classroom is the lack of communication between the teacher and student (Dales, 1999). When the teacher does not recognize each learner as an individual, the learner's educational growth could be inhibited. For example, the following scenario describes a classroom setting where the communication between the teacher and students is lacking. This scenario relates to the problem of lack of understanding between teachers and students because if there is limited communication between the teachers and students, then it may be difficult to understand the needs of the student.

As the students walk into the classroom, they notice the teacher writing on the board. The teacher writes her name and the learning objectives of the day. The students look with a blank stare because they have no idea what the word "objective" means. The teacher begins to read from the daily lesson plan and provide information about what the students will study in class. Again, the students simply look at the teacher with a blank stare and smile. The classroom is silent, and the only voice that anyone can hear is that of the teacher. The teacher then begins to wonder if the students are listening, or if they understand. Staring back at the students, not knowing what to do next, the teacher begins to pass out information and forms for students to fill out. As the students try to complete the forms, the teacher continues talking. The teacher asks if anyone has questions, but the students do not respond. At the end of the class, the teacher begins to wonder whether a relationship will develop with the students.

Adult educators have struggled with building positive relationships with adult

ESL students because of minimal interaction between teachers and students, the minimal teachers' communication between teacher and students, and minimal teachers' understanding of adult ESL students' social behavior and norms. These challenges of building teacher–student relationships in an adult ESL program may also be the result of limited professional development. In the state of Texas, several grant-funded literacy programs for adults exist, especially in the community colleges, which are required to provide professional development to help adult educators improve their classroom interaction (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012). Adult educators help students who are enrolled in such programs to improve students' language skills. However, students often drop out of these programs because of insufficient preparation on how to use books and other study guides during classroom time, which could also be used to develop a teacher–student relationship (Kek & Huijser, 2011).

Texas requires that adult education programs meet a target percentage rate of improvement at the end of the fiscal year (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012). The students test at the beginning of the year and then retest throughout the year to check for academic improvement. The state requires that 75%–80% of students in the program show improvement as measured by individual score levels (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012). To meet these state requirements, the instructors focus on course content. On the contrary, Dales (1999) suggested that to transform an adult learner, educators should focus on providing what the students need, instead of focusing only on textbook information that can improve standardized test scores. Therefore, an instructor needs to develop relationships with her or his students to increase their interest in the

classroom.

Teachers in the ABE program must learn how to develop an effective curriculum and effective relationships with students to maintain high enrollment and improve students' language skills. According to Schalge and Soga (2008), teaching in an adult class where students have various learning levels can be difficult for both teachers and students. The difficulties can develop when teachers have to be able to teach multilearning students, which are students who learn at different grade levels, and develop a relationship with them. Schalge and Soga also stated that attrition in adult education is a problem because of the lack of helpful, productive, and effective methods to help sustain relationships between students and teachers. If instructors cannot build better connections with their students, then enrollment in adult education programs may decrease (Brown, 2010).

### **Definition of the Problem**

Adult educators have often struggled with building positive relationships with their adult ESL students. A teacher–student relationship may be a problem due to the teachers' minimal understanding languages, or cultures, or due to limited professional development. Currently, in the state of Texas, there are several grant-funded literacy programs for adults, especially in a community college setting (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012, p. 16).

There is minimal understanding on how ESL teachers viewed teacher–student relationships. Teaching in an adult ESL class was sometimes difficult for both teachers and students, especially when there was a lack of interpersonal relationships between the

student and teacher. The teacher–student relationship has been related to causing problems with learning English and affecting retention rates in adult education programs. According to Schalge and Soga (2008), attrition in adult education was considered to be a problem due to the lack of building positive relationships between students and teachers.

In the state of Texas, 1,438,197 people in 2009 spoke English poorly (meaning first-to second-grade-level) or not at all, and only 4.5% of those were enrolled in some type of adult education program (NCHEMS information center, 2009). The most common programs were ESL, ABE, and ASE programs (NCHEMS information center, 2009). ESL and ABE programs were established to help adults develop the skills to become productive in society. The Division of Adult Education and Literacy, under the United States Department of Education, promoted adult education programs and provided aid to help improve the quality and capacity of the programs through grants and special training for the teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Teachers in the ABE program must learn how to develop effective curricula and relationships with their students to maintain high enrollment and improve students' language skills. If the relationship between the teacher and the students is not effective, then enrollment in adult education programs may decrease (Brown, 2010).

### **Rationale**

#### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

Community colleges, vocational schools, and churches usually offered the ESL programs. The ESL programs were created in these learning settings due to the increase of adult non-English-speakers' enrollment (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The

high enrollment of non-English speakers also increased the demand for teachers (Ladson-Billings, 2011).

There are different levels of instructional experiences in an ESL program. The level of experience and training raised some concerns about how teachers form relationships with their students (Chiu-Yin, 2009). Chiu-Yin's study identified that teachers should not be solely concerned about the learning material, but should also focus on how to connect with their students.

Professional development programs were suggested for teachers in adult ESL programs to help them better instruct students (Abbott & Rossier, 2011). According to the Adult ESL Teaching Credentialing and Certification Table (2010), there were no special certifications required to teach an adult ESL class. Instead, the ESL program teacher only needed to obtain 12 hours of professional development if state certified, and 24 hours per year for noncertified teachers. The makeup of the professional development training consisted of courses such as how to teach adults, planning effective lessons, and developing a transition for learning a new culture and language (Coastal Region GREAT Center, 2011).

In a 2012, anonymous adult education and literacy program survey, teachers expressed concerns about high instructor and student turnover throughout the semester (program director, personal communication, 2012). Toward the end of 2012, the program director, who oversees all of the adult education programs at the college, developed another teacher survey related to teacher satisfaction in the classroom. The program manager, who oversees only the adult ESL and GED classes, used the surveys to explore

the turnover rate for teachers and require a teacher–student satisfaction evaluation at the end of each semester.

The results of this second teacher survey showed that there were still many teachers who complained about the program. The major complaints were as follows: (a) the teachers were placed in a class with a large number of students of various language proficiencies and were not familiar with how to interact with them, (b) teachers were not sure how to interact with students who had various learning levels, (c) there were not enough learning materials available for the students; using only text books and CDs were not always effective, and (d) not every adult ESL teacher in this program had teaching experience (program director, personal communication, 2012). The evaluation also showed that the veteran teachers felt a need for a training program to help them improve teacher–student relationships in their classrooms (program director, personal communication, 2012).

An evaluation of the local ESL program (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012), completed at the end of each semester from 2010-2012, showed that 85% of the teachers believed the program’s singular focus was meeting testing requirements (Table 1). The evaluation also showed that in 2010 65% of the teachers agreed, and in 2011-2012 70% of the teachers agreed, that there was low interaction between teachers and students (Table 1).

The attrition rate showed a slight decline since 2010 for instructors’ employment attrition rate and students’ attrition rate (program director, personal communication,



2012), which was also shown by the TEAMS program report (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012).

Table 1

*Evaluation of Local ESL Program from TEAMS (Texas Workforce Commission) Report*

Year	% Employment attrition	% Student attrition	Number of questions	Low interaction between teachers and students	Meeting test requirements in program
2010	62%	50%	30	65% agree	85% agree
2011	59%	52%	30	70% agree	85% agree
2012	60%	49%	30	70% agree	85% agree

*Note.* Data for this table was combined using two reports (Attrition Report, Program Evaluation Report) from the Texas Workforce Commission

### **Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature**

Teacher–student relationships have presented problems, such as developing a curriculum to help build positive teacher–student relationships, at many levels of education (Hughes, 2012). When integrated into the classroom, social and emotional learning environments can influence how a student learns and can change teachers’ attitudes (Donnelly, McKiel, & Hwang, 2009). Teachers can break down barriers for ESL students by showing empathy for students (Stoilescu & Carapanait, 2011). An adult education program not only supplies books and study materials, but also provides support and encouragement for the student (Teranishi, Suranez-Orozoco, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011).

Many organizations, such as the National Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), International Reading Association (IRA), and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), have stated that teachers are not always able to teach basic ELL or ESL students, which can affect the retention rate in these classes (Brown, 2010). This problem not only affects teacher preparation, but can also have an adverse effect on classroom behavior and relationships. Anderson, Nelson, Richardson, Webb, and Young (2011) suggested that keeping daily journals could help teachers build better teacher–student relationships, as journals can help teachers identify strong and weak teaching techniques.

Another problem that affects the teacher–student relationship is minimal motivation (Wlodkowski, 2008). Although professional development provides valuable information on lessons and the classroom, minimal teacher–student interaction in the classroom could lead to diminished teachers’ motivation and could prevent teachers from connecting with students (Mosley & Zoch, 2012). Brown’s (2010) Alabama study identified that, during a study that immediately followed a professional development, 25 of the 47 participating teachers continued to feel unprepared and disconnected from the students.

In addition to minimal motivation, the learning environment can affect the students’ learning outcomes. Kek and Huijser (2011) discussed how the learning environment reflected the social and psychological connection between the teacher and the student and the student’s learning achievement.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how ESL teachers describe their relationships and interact with academically diverse students enrolled in a local ESL adult education program.

### **Definitions**

The following definitions include specific terms that help explain the meaning and scope of this study.

*Connectionism.* A theory explaining how humans interact with one another and the influences in the environment (Thorndike, Bregman, Tilton, & Woodyard, 1928).

*Teacher–student relationship.* This relationship is for students who are considered high-risk students and who have dropped out of school and are in a new learning environment, or are in need of positive reinforcement (Anderson et al., 2011).

### **Significance of the Study**

Adult learning through understanding has been able to “move from an argumentative mind set to an empathic understanding of other views” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 134). The literature on teacher–student relationships suggested that building positive relationships not only encouraged learning but also helped to identify how teachers can transform their ways of thinking and teaching to meet the needs of the students. Bista (2011) discussed how teaching techniques could be developed to address the needs of the learner. This approach focused on understanding students’ culture to help advance their language skills. The ESL teacher would be able to develop a better relationship with his or her students by understanding their background and needs (Donnelly et al., 2009).

In some cases, a teacher and the student may perceive information in different ways. Donnelly et al. (2009) identified that many times, English learners were challenged when learning English because a teacher–student relationship had not been formed and miscommunication occurred. They suggested that interacting with students and learning about their needs is the first step when trying to build positive relationships.

The focus of this study was to explore how adult ESL teachers describe their relationships with diverse students, and how ESL teachers interact with their students. According to Ullman (2010), adult English language programs were the “fastest growing sector of ABE” (p. 4). With the growth of this sector, adult ESL programs have been associated with “immigration and nation-building” (Ullman, 2010, p. 8). When teachers understand this connection, the teachers’ work becomes more valuable.

Perhaps for a future study, interviewing teachers while looking at the teacher–student relationship in adult ESL programs will help to provide a better understanding of the influence teachers have on adult ESL programs. In addition, there is little research on adult ESL programs and teacher–student relationships. Thus, a gap exists in understanding how teacher–student relationships affect ESL programs. The results of this study sought to identify teachers’ beliefs and practices in forming relationships with students. Understanding teacher-student relationships may also promote social change in the adult education community by helping to improve teacher–student relationships.

### **Research Questions**

In alignment with the research problem and purpose, I posed the following research questions:

1. How do ESL teachers describe their relationships with diverse students?
2. How do ESL teachers demonstrate their relationships with their students?

The first research question looked at how ESL teachers view and understand the effects of building relationships with students. The ESL teachers in the study struggled with maintaining enrollment rates required in a grant-funded ESL program at a local community college. The ESL teachers tried to engage students, but at times, students lacked the motivation to participate. The study attempted to identify what motivational techniques teachers used in the classroom to keep students involved, based on teachers' perceptions. In the case study, the researcher looked at a small group of teachers' classroom teaching techniques, and the teachers' points of view and feelings about how building a relationship with students affects both the students and the classroom.

The second research question focused on how ESL teachers interact with adult ESL students. Many different reasons contribute to why relationships do not form between teachers and students. This second research question attempted to help understand what builds or hinders positive relationships between teachers and the students.

### **Review of the Literature**

Since 1970, adult literacy programs have encountered issues with teacher retention rates and lack of teaching experience (Hughes & Schwab, 2010). Teachers in adult literacy programs complained about the lack of attention for multilingual student programs that received increasing turnover rates for their teachers (Ovando & Combs, 2018). Although there are several studies on the experience and knowledge of adult

literacy teachers, there are few studies on turnover for literacy teachers (Hughes & Schwab, 2010). The history of literacy teachers' experiences exposed hidden knowledge that shows how adult literacy programs function (Hughes & Schwab, 2010). This exposure created knowledge of what teachers may need to know to improve teacher–student relationships in adult ESL programs (Giles, 2018; Giles, Smythe, & Spence, 2012). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how ESL teachers describe their relationships with diverse students and understand how ESL teachers interact with their students in a local ESL adult education program.

### **Literature Search**

The literature search was conducted using the following databases: Google Scholar, Ebsco, Education Source, Academic Search Complete, and Eric. The search was conducted using keywords and phrases such as: *social change, understanding adult behavior, learning about adult behavior, relationship building with adults, cognitive learning theories, social behavior, social behavior in adult education, communicating with diverse students, teacher awareness of students, learning behavior in adult education, learning behavior, teaching behavior, adult education, and relationships with cultural diverse students*. I also searched using the names of theorists, such as Albert Bandura and Edward Thorndike, to help understand how learning behavior and social behavior related to how teachers and students understand each other.

## Conceptual Framework

### Cognitive Learning Theories in Relation to Teacher–Student Relationship

When thinking about the teacher–student relationship, the influence of a person’s social connection and behavior plays an important role. Bandura and Mischel (1977) contributed to developing the social cognitive theory, which details how people develop certain behavioral patterns. The study of the social cognitive theory stemmed from both learning about the behavior of people and about individuals’ cognitive orientation (Coleman, 1990; Rubenstein, Ridgley, Callan, Karami, & Ehlinger, 2018). Even though some researchers believe that certain social learning theories are outdated, these theories are still relevant when examining society as a whole. In this study, I examined teachers’ behavior and the way it influenced teacher–student relationships through the lens of social cognitive theory.

**Social learning.** Bandura (1977) was one of the first to introduce social learning theory. People can learn new information and behaviors by observing other human beings through interaction, and exposure to the world (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 282). The three concepts of social learning are: (a) people learn through observation, (b) people learn based on their mental stability and (c) new exposure affects a person’s behavior (Bandura, 1977). Bandura believed that the human brain capacity allowed people to learn and adapt to various environments. By looking at the behavior of the ESL teachers and the learning environment those teachers build, this study attempted to provide insight, from the teachers’ perspectives, into how teacher–student relationships develop.

**Connectionism.** Donahoe (1999) referenced Thorndike, who developed the

connectionism theory based on observation of how humans learn. Thorndike came to the conclusion that what drove adults to learn was the way adults connect with the learning environment (Barrett, 2019; Thorndike et al., 1928). The connectionist approach to learning suggests the transfer of knowledge depends on what is learned, based on the original and new learning environment. From this perspective, ESL learners may know a few English words at the beginning of the program, or the original learning environment (Echiverri & Lane, 2019; Winke, Gass, & Sydorenko, 2013). Giles et al. (2012) discussed that in helping students develop better language skills (the new learning environment), the relationship between students and teachers needs to be through a learning process. Thorndike et al. (1928) used the connectionism theory to identify how human behaviors changed during a learning process. Thorndike's learning theory consisted of three laws: (a) effect and response, (b) readiness, and (c) practice. The three laws entailed that a person responded better through positive reinforcement, that responses can change depending on the given goal, and that connections can be strengthened through practice and understanding (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005; McCall, Padron, & Andrews, 2018).

### **Review of the Broader Problem**

#### **Teachers Using Social Behavior**

The social exchange theory focuses on the positive outcomes of a relationship. People evaluate their relationships based on what they expect and what they receive from the relationship (Bradbury & Kamey, 2010; Muldoon & Zollen, 2019). Bradbury and Kamey also stated that the primary source of expectation is the reward. A person looks



for an acknowledgment for a job well done, and for students, this support encourages students to continue to do a good job. When students are recognized for good work, students may then encounter an increased self-worth as a reward and begin to form a positive connection with the teacher.

The social, ecological model focuses on the external circumstances that influence the relationship between people (Bradbury & Kamey, 2010; Rasmussen et al., 2018). The external conditions include the environment of friends and family (microsystem), neighborhoods (mesosystem), and country (macrosystem) (Awomolo, 2017; Bradbury & Kamey, 2010). A social connection between teacher and student can influence learning. De Bruin (2018) and Salisbury, Jephcote, and Roberts (2009) discussed how diverse teaching influences the social relationship between learning and teaching. A teacher, who has an understanding of students' experiences, creating a social connection, can change the way students learn different teaching styles.

### **Teaching and Learning Diverse Cultures**

Bista (2011) and Li (2018) discussed how teaching techniques develop to address the needs of the learner. This approach focuses on understanding and learning the culture of the student to help advance students' language skills. The ESL teachers may be able to develop a better relationship with students by understanding students' backgrounds. Donnelly et al. (2009) discussed the challenges students face when learning English, as well as those challenges the teachers face. Donnelly et al. showed how nursing teachers used positive relationship reinforcement with the nursing students to help students overcome language learning challenges.

Through this, teachers can encourage students to become more involved and learn from one another through understanding learners' needs. To ease learning, the teacher must understand learners' attitudes. By addressing the needs of the students, teachers recognize that learning a new language can be complex and confusing, and anxiety can become a problem for the students (Echiverri & Lane, 2019; Huang, Eslami, & Hu, 2010).

Along with understanding the learner, the ability to increase teachers and learners' social skills is important. Social skills enable diverse groups to interact with one another. Wlodkowski (2008) discussed that even if adults want to communicate with one another, they may not be able to do so if they lack proper social skills. The ability to increase social skills relates to the ability to respect a person's beliefs and values (Johnson & Chang, 2012; Terziev, Banabakova, & Georgiey, 2018). When communicating, individuals often involve personal views and beliefs. Often, teachers reflect personal views through teaching methods. Driscoll (2005) discussed that personal beliefs affect personal goals, and from a teaching perspective, those beliefs have an impact on a teacher's motivation and teaching philosophy.

Another way of teaching diverse students is to understand the environment that surrounds the student outside of the classroom. Community building between teachers and students is a primary foundation for building human relationships (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018; Jacobson, 2009). Usually, students in grant funded ESL programs have diverse community backgrounds, including those from low-income areas (Brown, 2010; Smith, 2018). Understanding the student's community can help teachers understand the

challenges the learner faces. Jacobson (2009); Shiffman (2018) looked at how human behavior influenced the developmental skills of students learning Japanese in an ABE class. Jacobson discussed that the key to building strong teacher and student relationships came from providing equal opportunities to the students. In other words, understanding each student's challenges may create a connection between the teacher and the student, especially when the teacher tries to help the student with those challenges. Deggs and Miller (2011) discussed community needs affecting learning programs through a "model of community expectancy" (p. 26). The researchers found that a formal education, civic agencies, informal associations, religion affiliations, and home life are needs that adult learners seek to fulfill (Deggs & Miller, 2011). In relation to this model, the researchers did not want to focus only on one point of view of the learners' needs, but how all five will affect learners' current and future lifestyle (Deggs & Miller, 2011; Gay, 2018).

When understanding adult ESL students, a teacher may reach the conclusion that his or her students want to feel a sense of success. The teacher can reach this conclusion by talking with the students, or the students stating their goals (Anderson et al., 2011; Gan & Yang, 2018). This success can come from being able to form a sentence or write a letter in English. However, students best achieve feeling success when the teachers offer some form of interaction to guide students toward reaching goals. Ullman (2010) identified that using a computer to learn English replaces the aide provided by teachers to help students with individual learning styles. Ullman showed that sometimes-English learning students do not always successfully learn English when those students only rely on language computer programs. The teacher can consider internal and external causes

that influence students' learning, which the computer cannot. Sometimes, exposure to external causes presented around the community, such as reading street signs, watching English speaking movies, and classroom discussions about everyday events help language learners cope and learn the language better than only using computer-based programs (Illeris, 2018).

### **Social Motivation**

Dornyei (2002) stated motivation could help people mentally to endure a situation for a longer period of time. Dewey (1980) believed that motivation arises from a person's environment. Mostly, when teachers think about school and motivation, they reflect on the students' motivation (Wlodkowski, 2008). In this case, motivation is a social activity and should not only be a concern for students, but also a concern for the teacher.

Teachers have many different work and classroom teaching experiences that motivate them in the classroom. Wlodkowski (2008) discussed that teachers have their styles and strengths that make the teaching techniques unique. The researcher suggested that positively motivated teachers have relationships with the students built on 4 pillars: expertise, empathy, enthusiasm, and clarity (Wlodkowski, 2008). In positive motivation, the teacher tries to understand a student's strengths and weaknesses and relate to the students. A teacher has a good understanding of why he or she teaches, including what that teacher has learned from the students. Wlodkowski further explained that these 4 pillars not only motivate the teacher, but transformational learning may also occur for both the teacher and the student, which helps both parties adjust to life changes.

### **Developing a Connection**

A teacher–student relationship is set up when a connection is formed between the teacher and student (Anderson et al., 2011; Lachance, Hognigsfeld, & Harrell, 2019). The disconnection between teachers and students causes a lack of understanding of how the students feel, and teachers are unaware of how to create effective relationships with those students (Ma, Du, Hau & Liu ,2018; McDonald, 2009). As stated earlier, diverse students bring different cultures into the classroom. Through the experience of learning about the student’s background, the teacher begins to understand how culture affects student learning. Being able to understand an ESL student’s culture is an important process for teachers when trying to connect with the student. Schalge and Soga (2008) explained that teachers who do not understand the cultures of diverse students would likely cause a communication breakdown with students. Schalge and Soga found that a strong connection between teacher and student could help decrease the student’s anxiety. A student should have a clear understanding of what is available to them that will improve their learning experience throughout the learning process.

Communicating with a student is a complicated process between teachers and students in adult education programs. The complication can occur if the teacher does not understand the learning needs of the students. Dales (1999) suggested that communicating with students could sometimes make learning transitions easier. The transition to learning a new language can be a difficult task for an adult English learner. When the teacher connects with the student, then learning becomes more desirable and less intimidating for the students. Dales (1999) stated that 3 maps toward learning exist

for transformational learning. The first map concentrated on theories of adult development. The second map involved cognitive growth and being able to connect with others outside one's culture. In the second map, the teacher should begin to help and guide the students through the learning process. Dales (1999) called this the support phase of the transition learning. In this phase, not only can the adult learners connect with the teacher, but they also can gain a better understanding of how to connect personal experiences with the world. Lastly, the third map concentrated on intellectual and ethical development (Dales, 1999).

Teachers should try to develop a connection with adult students as people and understand what is important to the students while students are learning (Ullman, 2010). In most instances, adult learners focus on the time they spend learning, and the potential personal and economic gains learning the language could bring to those students. Horton (2010) explored how adults reflected on why they chose to seek high school education as an adult. The reflections on why the adults were learning were, at times, dependent on the relationship those adults developed with the teacher. The teachers learned the behavior of the students and tried to understand how those behaviors affect the way that adult students learn and focus on achieving a goal. Both teachers and students in the classroom can reach a compromising environment through understanding one another. Boyd, Richerson, and Henrich (2011) conducted research and associated Bandura's theory of social learning with how humans adapt to their learning environment. Boyd et al. found that a person's experiences could influence how he or she observed different situations. Even if personal experiences made those individuals biased, they would still adapt to

certain environments, as long as no harm was present. In the teacher–student relationship, a teacher may have issues communicating with students, but if a common interest or belief is reached, a connection can form.

### **Self-Awareness and Classroom Awareness**

The teachers in adult ESL classrooms may have many different occupational backgrounds. Despite differences, the teachers share a common interest—to help students learn English. Learning the best practices in an ESL classroom may not happen overnight, and teachers may not improve teaching abilities through one or two online professional development (PD) trainings. According to Schwarzer (2009), the adult ESL teacher has to realize how the ESL classroom emerges through commitment and building the class together. An ESL teacher may understand that improving how adults learn the English language requires focusing on the student as a person who may need patience and clarity opposed to just teaching a lesson from the curriculum. A term used to describe this realization is whole language learning, which means focusing on the meaning of the language words and where the teacher and the learner work together to improve the learner’s language skills (Saito, 2019; Schwarzer, 2009).

A teacher must be self-aware of his or her beliefs because those beliefs often reflect through communication and teaching styles. Gailbrath and Jones (2008) discussed how teachers should write down personal beliefs so they can view and understand their methods of teaching. Based on the behaviorist theory of learning, it is important to recognize what people can learn from themselves (Shepard, Penuel, & Pellegrino, 2018; Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, & Anderman, 2013). Sometimes the teacher's personal beliefs and

values can hinder the way teachers conduct the class. The prejudgment of students is particularly the case especially when the teacher's beliefs and values are different from those of the student. Wang (2012) suggested the teacher–student relationship was a reflection of the teacher's beliefs and values. Wang focused on how teachers' beliefs and values help develop one's teaching philosophy. The teaching philosophy promotes the learning journey between the teacher and the adult student (Wang, 2012; Yeom & Miller, 2018).

### **Implications**

Adult ESL educators seek to improve relationships when teaching English to the adult learner. While attempting to achieve this goal, the adult educator faces many challenges, such as lack of communication, the decrease in interest, and lack of exposure or experience. Perry and Hart (2012) discussed that sometimes ESL instructors do not have significant teaching experience. In this situation, these educators either figure classroom problems out on their own or try to attend non-related PD classes. A challenging experience can leave an instructor frustrated or unprepared. A teacher's frustration and lack of interest also develop because of the lack of understanding of the reasons that influence diverse classrooms (Chong, Low, & Gob, 2011). These reasons consist of the functions of teaching and learning, being a teacher that leads by example, being a professional teacher, and growing more through teacher development (Chong et al., 2011). For lack of communication between teachers and students, Camp and Oesterreich (2010) discussed using nontraditional methods of sharing or relating the teacher's life experiences with the students. Therefore, a teacher can personalize teaching



strategies instead of only using a standard curriculum guide. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how ESL teachers describe their relationships with diverse students and how the teachers interact with the students in a local ESL adult education program.

This study was intended not only to help ESL teachers connect with students, but also to promote and support learning for the local ESL program. I aimed to provide these improvements through interviewing and observing the classroom teachers. The interviews helped me understand teachers' perceptions regarding their relationships with their students. The observation helped me to view in what ways teachers interact with their students. The social change that can result from this study can affect both teachers and students. Through targeted PD programs using self-reflection to support a better understanding of the classroom, ESL program coordinators can support teachers' efforts toward building good relationships with students, which may encourage new students to enroll into a community college grant funded program. Building better teacher–student relationships will not only help students learn English but also help students learn the necessary life skills to communicate and function using a second language.

### **Summary**

Building a relationship between teachers and ESL students is possible, but can be complicated, especially when there are language barriers (Woollacott, Booth, & Cameron, 2014). The language barrier can be challenging for ESL teachers, but understanding and respecting people as human beings can make the language learning easier. While little knowledge exists about adult ESL programs and about how teachers

connect with their students, research on social behavior can help explain how and why teachers build relationships with students.

The theoretical approach of social cognitive behavior describes an understanding of what teachers may use to build a relationship with their students (Coleman, 1990). Social learning theory was one of the first theories about how people learn from one another (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) believed that people learn mostly by viewing other people. This theory is focused on external reasons that motivate and influence people's behaviors.

Thorndike et al. (1928) developed cognitive learning theory and constructivism, based on how behaviors change because of certain stimuli. The constructivist theory resulted in other ideas about behavioral change based on "stimuli in the external environment" (Anderson et al., 2011, p. 296). I presented the study using these ideas to understand what factors influence teacher–student relationships.

To understand the teacher–student relationship, causes that affect this relationship need to be defined. The social cognitive and behavioral theories identify how ESL teachers use social behavior concepts to connect with students in the classroom (De Jong, Van Tartwijk, Verloop, Veldman, & Wubbels, 2012). Social exchange theory suggests that individuals respond and build relationships based on observations of other people's behavior. Social exchange theory details that the behavior of a person can change depending on the reward (Moolenaar, 2012). A second social behavior concept of the theory focuses on how external factors can influence how people build relationships with one another (Boyd et al., 2011). This theory suggests that the environment influences

experiences and determines when and how people interact with each other.

The social motivation theory partially focuses on what motivates teachers to teach in an ESL classroom (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012). Pianta et al. (2012) explain that not only do students need to be motivated, but also that the motivation of a teacher can help establish a positive learning environment. A motivated teacher not only helps to build a good learning environment but also helps to set up mentoring between the teacher and student.

The process of learning diverse cultures involves the challenges of understanding adult diverse cultures. An ESL teacher realizes that learning a language is not just a cognitive process, but can also be an emotional experience (Brown, 2010). The ESL student learns how to adapt to a new language and culture and apply certain life skills. Along with these experiences, the ESL student still encounters life changes because of his or her environment. The ESL teacher has to understand the learning process of the students in the classroom and attempt to recognize external factors that can influence the students' learning. The process of understanding diverse adult cultures can be the challenge; however, understanding the culture helps ESL teachers to connect with students.

The process of developing a relationship between teacher and student may be how ESL teachers can connect with the adult ESL student. When an ESL teacher encounters a diverse classroom, it is not only difficult because of language barriers but also because of cultural differences. When students feel that a teacher respects the students and the students' cultures, then students are more willing to build a positive

relationship with that teacher. An ESL student not only has to learn a new culture but also how to adapt his or her culture to the society. Dales (1999) explained the process of connecting with the student was part of mentoring. This process can also make the process of learning a new language easier.

Classroom awareness in this research focuses on teacher self-awareness and classroom awareness. In most cases, adult ESL teachers have diverse career backgrounds (Schwarzer, 2009). When teachers have different careers and experiences, they often gain new experiences while teaching an ESL class. Schwarzer (2009) suggested that the teachers in ESL classrooms need diversity in the classroom to build an active learning environment. Besides developing an effective learning environment based on building a relationship with students, teachers must also possess self-awareness as a teacher. The values and teaching philosophy a teacher brings into the classroom affect what relationship the teacher will have with the students (Gailbrath & Jones, 2008).

The ESL teacher is a mentor for many ESL learners. Overall, when considering the five causes that can influence the relationship between adult ESL teachers and students, identifying the objective of understanding the teachers' perspective of the teacher-student relationship is important. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how ESL teachers describe their relationships and interact with academically diverse students enrolled in a local ESL adult education program. The objective of the present study was to identify that ESL teachers were the bridge for adults to learn English and apply the language to learners' everyday lives (Wlodkowski, 2008). With this

objective in mind, not only can ESL teachers build relationships with individual students, but they can also make a difference in students' communities.

In the Section 2 of this study, I discuss how the qualitative research data were collected and how participants were selected and protected during data collection. A qualitative research method was used to understand better how teachers view relationships with students in an adult ESL classroom. The case study allowed a more personal viewpoint based on teachers' experiences and self-motivation. In Section 3 of this case study, I discuss the two findings that developed from exploring how ESL teachers describe their relationship with students, and how teachers interact with students in a local ESL adult education program. Section 4 constitutes an overview of the project study, including its impact, my reflections on the project, and the project's strengths and limitations.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Research Design and Approach**

In this section, I describe how the research design derived from the problem. I provide a description of the qualitative design. The study's rationale for a qualitative research design is also discussed, as well as the processes of selecting and protecting participants, data collection, and data analysis.

#### **Qualitative Research Design**

A qualitative case study was suitable for this study because it allowed me to explore the teacher–student relationship. I was also able to provide an in-depth analysis that helped explain how ESL teachers describe their relationships with diverse students and how the teachers interact with students in a local ESL adult education program. Researchers use a qualitative design to research a particular group of people in order to understand and answer the research questions that may help to resolve a problem (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).

A case study also allows the researcher to become involved and connected to the study and can relate to the value of the case study in explaining an organization, entity, company, or event more than other qualitative studies such as narrative theory, which mainly focuses on individual experience and sequence (Merriam, 2009). Other research designs, such as phenomenological research, grounded theory, quantitative analysis, and mixed theory were not chosen because of the features of those research approaches. Phenomenological research looks at the experiences of individuals and tries to understand the meaning of their experiences (Lodico et al., 2010). In this case study, I looked at a

particular relationship, not solely focusing on experiences in a life event. The grounded theory approach was not used because of the long period needed to complete such research and risk of induced bias. The results of the data in a grounded theory approach may be more subjective and can affect the reliability and validity of the study. The case study provided better descriptive insight than other qualitative studies, regarding the teacher–student relationship in an adult ESL program. A mixed method design would be more complex and may take more time to analyze quantitative results against qualitative results.

This case study involves inquiring about the unknown (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). As the researcher, I wanted to learn more about a specific group—adult ESL teachers in grant-funded programs (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The participants helped me to explore the unknown by engaging in interviews and allowing me to complete observations. The goal of the case study was to gain a better understanding of what influences teachers to build positive relationships with students.

The case study design involved two data sets, generated through interviews and observations. Teachers’ accounts of their relationships with the students were collected using semistructured interviews. Observations were used to understand how the teachers communicate, interact, and engage with their students in the classroom.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study were selected from 40 instructors teaching ESL morning and evening classes at a local college. An email was sent to all 40 adult ESL teachers in the program to invite them to participate in this study. The invitation included

the purpose of the study and details regarding data collection. After the email was sent, the participants could reply if they wanted to participate, “I am interested in participating in this study.” Twenty-six instructors responded to the request for participation, of which 25 met the inclusion criteria described below.

A purposeful sampling technique helped to select participants depending on the years of teaching experience. The criteria for selecting the potential participants was selecting teachers that only taught ESL classes and taught between 0 and 6 years. Robinson (2014) suggested four criteria for selecting a sample size for qualitative research: (a) define the sample size based on who will be included and excluded in the sample criteria, (b) define the sample size based on the theory, research method, validity, and scope, (c) select a sampling strategy, and (d) use sampling sourcing which includes avoidance of bias and ethical concerns (p. 2). The teaching experience of 0–6 years was used as a criterion so that all of the teachers within this adult ESL program could be included, to contain a sample strategy that was purposeful, and to avoid bias and ethical concerns by allowing all the ESL teachers to participate within this study. Based on the criteria 25 potential participants were selected. All 25 potential subjects were invited to participate. Only 5 of the 25 potential participants agreed to participate and confirmed their agreement by email. Once this confirmation was received, I set a date and time for the interviews and observations of their classes at their convenience.

### **Working Relationship**

My method of establishing a researcher-participant working relationship was trying to ensure that the participants were comfortable being interviewed and observed. I



asked the participants if they were satisfied with their response and if they had any questions during the interviews. During the observation I explained again why I was observing the class and the teachers could ask if there were any questions during the observation. The participants were given my email and phone number to contact me if they had any questions regarding their interview and observation.

### **Protection of Participants**

As the researcher, I explained my role at the college, as well as how I protected the privacy of the participants and communicated with them. I was an ESL and General Educational Development (GED) instructor at the college during the collection of data. At the time of this study, I did not hold any superior roles over the participants. Each participant reviewed and signed an informed consent form. The form included the purpose of the study; it explained that no harm would occur to the participants regarding any information collected during the study and the participant's rights as a volunteer in the study. The consent form also stated that participants' names would be confidential, and they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection began after I received consent from the community partner and the required approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (12-18-13-0095207). The collection of data took place during the 2014 spring semester. The period for collecting data was after teachers completed in-service teacher training and late registration for the students. The overall collection of data took 12 weeks, given that participants were available for individual interviews and classroom observation. The

interview sessions took place outside the classroom (library or conference room) at the college. Interviews were conducted after a class session had ended during the morning or evening. The period for the interview session lasted up to 1-hour. The observations were completed during class times and at the classroom sites. The period for the observation sessions lasted 1-hour.

In this study, data were collected through interviews and observations. Table 2 presents data collection as it relates to the research questions. The purpose of the interviews and observations was to gain insight into how the ESL teachers describe their relationships with students and how ESL teachers demonstrate their relationship with students. I explain in the rest of this section how I collected the data from the interviews and observation.

Table 2

*Data Collection Methods and Details of the Research Questions*

Individual interviews	Classroom observation
<i>How do ESL teachers describe their relationships with diverse students?</i>	<i>How do ESL teachers demonstrate their relationships with their students?</i>
The teachers discussed how they related with their students, described their teacher–student experiences, and described the techniques used to build relationships with their students. The teachers also discussed how they relate to diverse students.	What the teacher appears to be doing in the classroom to help build a better teacher–student relationship.

In order to have detailed information from a small group of ESL teachers I used in-depth interviewing. According to Boyce and Neale (2006), in-depth interviews can be time consuming but effective. To record the interviews sessions, I used a recording device and a record-keeping instrument called Livescribe during face-to-face interview sessions. The interview sessions were conducted using an interview protocol found in Appendix B. After each interview, the interview recordings were downloaded and transcribed into the Livescribe software and then copied into a Microsoft Excel document. The Excel spreadsheet helped to keep track of interview notes, times, and dates. As the researcher, I organized all the information in Microsoft Excel.

The participants were asked to review the Excel spreadsheet containing the interview transcripts and to provide clarifications as necessary to ensure data accuracy. The preferred method of communication during the review of the interview transcripts was through email. The teachers received an email with the transcript of their interview session 1-2 days after their interview. They reviewed the transcript and made notes in the Excel spreadsheet in a column titled participant revision. This column was used to identify any changes that were needed in the interview transcript.

The purpose of observation was to examine how the ESL teachers interact with the students in a classroom setting. The observation lasted approximately one hour for each teacher and an observation protocol (Appendix C) was used as a guideline. According to Kawulich (2005), the observation rubric as a data collection instrument should have a protocol of what, when, where, and how to observe. She suggested observations should contain notes of what is happening and why; sorting of regular and

irregular activities; variations in the view of the event; and records of negative cases or exceptions. The observation protocol, as it relates to the suggestions of Kawalich, is detailed in Appendix C.

There were three classrooms observed during the first part of the semester. There was a second observation conducted for two classes toward the end of the semester. A second observation was necessary because the first observation was not completed because on the day of observation the students had to complete oral and written ESL progress tests. The observations focused on how teachers assisted students, encouraged classroom interaction, and described teacher–student communication events. The observation notes were later transcribed and saved in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

### **The Role of the Researcher**

I was employed as an ESL and GED instructor at the local college from 2012-2014. During that time, I taught two GED day classes that contained 20 students in each class. I also taught one ESL evening class that contained 15 students. I was also an Integrated Career Awareness (ICA) trainer in 2014 within this program. The role of the ICA trainer was to provide PD to the adult education teachers on how to help students' transition into the workforce. My professional role as an ICA trainer did not have any effects on collecting data because I did not train any of the participating teachers.

I did have prior interaction with a few of the teachers. My interaction involved attending PDs and sharing classrooms with the other teachers. I did not have any prior work relationship as a supervisor with any of the teachers. My professional relationship with the participants was strictly collegial. As the researcher and during my experience as

an ESL instructor, I considered my interaction with my students to be as needed. I would consider my subconscious bias toward interactions between students and teachers would be that teachers have to give more effort than the students to build a good relationship. It appears to me that the teachers should initiate conversations and interaction more than the students. I tried my best not to allow my biased views of teacher–student relationships to interfere during the data collection.

### **Data Analysis**

A thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview and observation data. According to Lodico et al. (2010), thematic analysis is used to recognize patterns in data and make sense of features in qualitative data that may seem to be unrelated. The thematic analysis consisted of coding the data using open and axial coding. As the researcher, I separated the interviews and observations for data analysis.

The open and axial coding methods were used to organize and review the data. Lodico et al. (2010) suggested that organizing the data as they are collected could lessen analysis errors, which can occur if large amounts of data are analyzed all at once. The open coding analysis was used to create labels from the data. The axial coding was grouped from the interviews and observations and used to combine common labels. The common labels from the data allowed themes to emerge.

### **Interviews**

The data from the interviews were transcribed by myself. There were five participants and I conducted an interview with each separately for a total of five interviews. At the end of the day, after each interview, I downloaded the interview

recording using the Livescribe software. The same day I prepared an email to send the transcripts to the participants for a transcript review for accuracy. I asked the participants to review the transcripts and insert comments for changes within the transcripts or accept the transcript by stating no changes on the first line of the transcript. After reviewing the transcripts, the participants attached the transcripts and responded back to my initial email within 1-3 days. Once I received a return email from a participant, on the same day I reviewed the transcripts and conducted my open coding analysis by manually color coding interview data. I analyzed the interview to search for codes and meaning. Then I copied the codes into a Microsoft Excel document. The process of open coding helped to label chunks of data that identified common words or phrase words from each interview question for each participant. Once the open codes were labeled, I started sorting the open codes to help develop the axial codes. The axial coding method grouped the labels (open codes) based on their relationship with the research questions. The interview axial codes were grouped together with the observation axial codes to develop emerging themes that helped to answer the research questions.

### **Observations**

The observation data were reviewed the same day of the observation. There were five initial observations completed with the participants, and two participants were observed twice for a total of seven observations. The data analysis process included reviewing the notes written on the classroom observation report in Appendix C to help answer the research questions.

The analysis process of the observation data included open and axial coding. The objective of using the open coding analysis was to discern tentative labels for chunks of data pertaining to the coding of the observations. The analysis consisted of manually color coding sentences in the observation notes of repetitive words. After manual color coding, the codes were saved in a Microsoft Excel document. The following day after the open coding was completed, I began the axial coding process. Axial coding was used to help organize and look for relationships among the open codes to answer the research questions. The chunks of data consisted of sets of similar phenomena. I reviewed the phenomena and regrouped the axial codes with similar axial codes from the interviews and observations, after which themes emerged from the axial codes (Appendix D).

### **Evidence of Quality**

To ensure trustworthiness of data analysis results I conducted a member check. According to Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell and Walter (2016), member checking is a process that allows each participant to review the analysis of the data and confirm or disconfirm the accuracy of the analyses. I describe my procedures in the next paragraphs.

For transcript review the participants were emailed transcripts of their interviews prior to the data analysis. After the transcripts were reviewed by the participants, they returned the emails with comments or no comments related to the transcripts. Once I received the emails back from the participants, I began the open code analysis for the interviews.

To also help ensure evidence of quality the participants reviewed the axial codes. After the analysis, the axial codes for the interviews and observations were emailed to all

five participants for review and feedback. The participants were asked to review the codes in the Microsoft Excel documents that are also shown in Appendix D and to reply if there were any discrepancies with this information. The purpose of this form of member checking was to ensure that the participants' views were properly captured during the analysis process.

### **Discrepant Cases**

Another part of analyzing qualitative data is the acknowledgment of discrepant cases. The data should be searched for non-supportive information that would contradict the majority results of the analysis (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008). This is considered a process that refines the analysis until discrepant data can be explained. This process may also revise or expand patterns that relate to the data analysis. In relation to finding any discrepant data, the information obtained during the interviews and observations were not eliminated. There were no discrepant cases. The information from the transcripts were used in their entirety.

### **Data Analysis Results**

Teacher retention rates may be affected by the relationships between teachers and students. When there is a poor relationship between the teachers and students, the teachers and students' participation in the program can decline. In efforts to understand this problem the research questions were how teachers describe their relationships with diverse students and how ESL teachers demonstrate their relationship with students.

A synthesis of the results was completed in order to answer the research questions. To ensure the quality of the data, I reviewed the data repeated times and then



reviewed the results of axial codes as they related to the research questions. Willig (2013) stated that qualitative research could be challenging, and the process of reviewing data may be repetitious. After the findings emerged from the axial coding, I compared them with Bandura's social learning theory and Vygotsky's social development theory. The theories of social learning and social development helped me to support my interpretations of the findings (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Bandura's social learning theory related to retention, context, and state of mind helped me to understand how teachers might reduce various struggles of communicating by understanding how to communicate with diverse learning students (Tadayon Nabavi, 2012). This can occur when they improve the teacher–student relationship by sharing personal experiences and connecting with the students. Vygotsky's social development theory of “cognitive development across cultures” helped to understand how academic diversity can cause an impact on how students learn, and teachers connect with the students (Kozulin, 1998, p. 80-85).

As stated previously, the axial codes from Appendix D were grouped according to similar and reoccurring phenomena. Then the phenomena were labeled with a theme that best described them. The first theme, *Teachers struggle communicating with diverse and multigrade-level students*, was developed from the interviews and observations and was based on the key words *struggle* and *communication*. The second theme, *Teachers use ESL textbooks but do not use classroom interaction activities to communicate with diverse learning students*, was developed using the words *diverse learning students*, *interaction*, and *textbooks*.

## **Theme 1: Teachers Struggle Communicating with Diverse and Multigrade - Level Students**

A summary is given in the following paragraphs of the five participants' interviews and observations which helped to identify that teachers struggle to communicate with their students. The teachers commented that their relationships in their classrooms could be described as disconnected from the students. Based on the observations, the participants did not use a lesson plan that included lessons to help improve communicating with diverse multiple grade level students.

All five participants reported that they were unable to communicate to build better relationships with students. The lack of communicating with students limits the teachers in learning the diverse educational background of their students. The teachers provided insights: "As a teacher, I feel that I should be concerned about a student as a person (Teacher B)." Teacher E stated, "... we should be concerned and understand the diversity of our students. Sometimes they will miss class because of beliefs and practices in their home. As the teacher, I should be aware of these reasons for being absent from class." "Not all students feel comfortable with an instructor, and I think that has to do with how we as teachers make them feel" (Teacher C). In regard to communicating with students, Martin and Loomis (2013) stated that a teacher must first project a positive, motivated attitude with the students. According to Teacher E, "a relationship with students should be encouraging and influence students to communicate with the teacher and other students in class."

Also related to relationship building, four participants (Teachers A, B, C, and E) described their relationships with their students as bonding, and it was important for both the teacher and the students. These four participants discussed that bonding with students made the teachers feel like their jobs were not just about teaching, but also about having an influence on students' lives. "Through a bonding process the students and teachers can feel appreciated" (Teacher A). Also, by "building a relationship there is a stronger desire to teach more students" (Teacher C).

The five participants noted that communicating with students can be difficult but felt that it was necessary to build the students' social skills between the teacher and students. The teachers felt that building social skills could help to develop better long-term relationships. Brophy (2013) suggested that the way teachers help build relationships with their students is to improve social skills and communication.

As related to relationship building, the participants also stated that it can be difficult communicating with multiple grade levels of students. During the interviews, the participants stated that they felt a need to find ways to simplify communicating with multi-grade level students so that they could understand the students and build better relationships with students. Teacher B explained that building a relationship with multiple grade levels can be challenging and some students may not receive proper attention. Teacher B further explained that if a teacher can have a lesson plan that will help multi-grade levels, then the teacher might be able to communicate better and understand the student's needs. The observations helped to identify that the teachers did not use any form of lesson plans that were designed to help teachers communicate with

multiple grade levels of students.

After reviewing the research questions of how teachers describe their relationships with diverse students and demonstrate their relationships with students, the following finding was developed. The findings showed that *teachers struggle communicating with diverse learning students*.

**Theme 2: Teachers Limit Their Interactions with Students to Those Interactive Suggestions Provided in the Textbook and do not Include Other Opportunities for Classroom Interaction with Their Students**

During the interviews and observations, the participants provided information that also helped me to determine that there was limited interaction with students based on the following: limited classroom study materials, technical resources, and teacher training.

The participants mentioned the lack of instructional support made it difficult to build relationships with students of multigrade-levels and be able to attend to each student's needs at the same time. Teacher A expressed, "there is a lack of instructional support to help with building a relationship with students." To elaborate, the teachers do not have detailed teaching strategies to develop better lesson plans and professional development to teach them how to connect to the students and to support students' language development. One of the participant's commented, "we need alternative ways to improve our relationships with the students to help improve learning. The teachers focus more on meeting state requirements for student improvement, than focusing on developing a way to building relationships with our students" (Teacher C).

The first observation was completed at the local college. Teacher C began the

class with a classroom sharing activity. During the observation, the participant presented to the class the pages to complete in their books but did not follow the instructions and interact with students while they completed the sharing activity lesson.

The second observation was with Teacher A and was also held at the local college. In the classroom of Teacher A, the students and teacher were supposed to interact with each other by sharing a personal experience as it related to education. The sharing of a personal experience activity was at the beginning of class. Although the participant presented this activity at the beginning of class, Teacher A did not engage with students. There were some students in the class that had questions about the activity pages in the book. The teacher did not interact with the students. Instead the teacher told the students to work with each other to complete the pages. According to the activity instructions, the activity was designed for both the teacher and students to contribute their personal experiences, but Teacher A did not contribute toward completing the activity.

A third participant observed was Teacher E. The participant brought a picture and asked the students to also bring a picture of a person who motivated them to receive more education to help them with their English. According to the participant, the objective of this activity was to help the student improve English skills through speaking and presentation. "I felt like sharing something near and dear to me because I would like to learn more about my students and I feel that sharing experiences of our lives will help us learn about each other" (Teacher E). The students only communicated with each other in this classroom, the teacher did not share an experience.

A fourth participant, observed twice, was Teacher D. The classroom visited was

located at a local church. Teacher D's interaction with students involved providing instructions for study materials from an ESL booklet. There was not a lesson provided in the classroom. There were groups of students arranged by English proficiency levels. The teacher only interacted with students by providing them the instructions at the beginning of the study period. During the interview Teacher D commented that "understanding the students' English proficiency is important but it does not mean that the lesson will be equivalent for all English learning levels."

The fifth participant, observed twice, was Teacher B. This classroom was located inside of an elementary school. The teacher began class with a journal writing assignment. The teacher wrote a class lesson on the board. There was no classroom interaction lesson noted during this observation.

Overall, the five participants either had one or no interaction lessons during classroom observations. The analysis identified that the word commonly used was "interaction." I referenced the word "interaction" back to the coding from the observation notes. The results identified that frequency of the word "interaction" revealed that some of the participants did not use lesson plans or activity resources while interacting with students. The observation as it relates to how ESL teachers interact with diverse students allowed the theme *teachers limit their interaction with students to those interaction suggestions provided in the textbook and do not include other opportunities for classroom interaction with students.*

### **Project Deliverable**

Based on the findings from this case study, I created a PD training that will help teachers improve their professional knowledge about communicating and using more than one resource to interact with students. I developed a 3-day PD for teachers who conduct classes in adult education and adult basic learning. The PD training will be presented in person with PowerPoint presentations and PD guides. The PD training will also provide teacher training while teaching and using the PD guide in their classroom. In the PD guides, the teachers can record notes from the PowerPoint slides and complete lesson activities. These activities are related to building teacher–student relationships by using a constructivist process of learning, improving interaction with students through effective lesson planning, and learning how to identify positive teacher–student interaction.

### **Summary**

There may be problems regarding retention for teachers and students that occur when there is a lack of building a relationship between the teachers and students. To help understand these problems, two research questions were developed: How do ESL teachers describe their relationships with diverse students, and how do ESL teachers interact with their students? Based on the findings, the answers to the research questions were teachers struggle communicating with diverse learning students and teachers limit their interactions with students to those interactive suggestions provided in the textbook and do not include other opportunities for classroom interaction with their students.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

In this case study, I explored how ESL teachers describe their relationship with students, and how teachers interact with students in a local ESL adult education program. The findings showed that (a) teachers struggle to communicate with diverse and multigrade-level students and that (b) teachers limit their interactions with students to those interactive suggestions provided in the textbook and do not include other opportunities for classroom interaction with their students. After reviewing a problem with retention that may occur when there is a lack of understanding between the teachers and students, I designed a 3-day professional development (PD).

The first day of the PD, the teachers will participate in lessons on how teachers use constructivism in relation to the teacher–student relationship. There will be five sessions on Day 1. On Day 2, the teachers will have lessons about understanding lesson plans for better interaction in a diverse classroom. The teachers will also review information related to improving classroom interaction. There will be five sessions on Day 2. On Day 3, the teachers will complete lessons related to continuous learning, empowering each other, creating diverse learning lesson plans, positive attitude, and being a mentor. There will be five sessions on Day 3. The rationale for developing this PD is explained in the next section.



There are short and long-term goals for implementing this PD training. The short-term goal is to help teachers improve building relationships with diverse learners. The long-term goal is to help increase interaction between teachers and students, which may also help with teacher retention.

### **Rationale**

I selected a 3-day PD as the best way to help teachers understand how to improve communication skills, which in turn may improve the teacher–student relationship. A research study was conducted through interviews and observations and the PD was based upon the results of the research. The interview and observation final results were labeled as themes. The resulting two themes influenced the content of the PD. The first theme, *Teachers struggle communicating with diverse and multiple grade level students*, was based on teachers feeling that their relationship with students was difficult to establish because of lack of communication. The teachers described their difficulties connecting with students when they work with students at several grade levels and coming from different native languages in a limited amount of time in the same class. The second theme, *Teachers limit their interactions with students to those interactive suggestions provided in the textbook and do not include other opportunities for classroom interaction with their students*, related to teachers only using partial lessons from the classroom textbooks as a resource for interacting and relating with students. Buczynski and Hansen (2010) found that a PD helped teachers improve their skills and relationships in the classroom by understanding how to teach and interact in a diverse classroom by developing lessons that focused on relationship-building skills.

In helping to resolve the teacher retention problem, this PD training will be used to inform and guide teachers who struggle communicating with their students by expanding ESL teachers' knowledge and understanding about how to efficiently connect with diverse and multigrade-level students. The information from this PD training will help teachers learn to build relationship skills with students using communication and interactive lessons and lesson planning. This type of PD that helps improve building relationships through communication and interaction has been shown to have positive results in learning programs (Doren, Flannery, Lombardi, & McGarth Kato, 2012). The positive results stated by Doren et al. (2012) showed that teachers were able to improve the quality of their teacher–student relationship in order to meet their classroom goals.

### **Review of the Literature**

Understanding the Teachers' Relationship with Students (UTRS) PD was designed based on the following findings: the teachers struggle while trying to build a positive relationship with their students; teachers use limited resources, such as textbooks, to interact with students. To develop this project, a search for existing theoretical approaches and current research related to the design and development of PD activities was conducted using the resources listed in the following literature search.

### **Literature Search**

To develop this project, a search of journals was conducted through Google Scholar, Ebsco, and Walden Library Search of multiple databases. The search was conducted using key words such as: *social change, understanding adult behavior, learning about adult behavior, relationship building with adults, teacher communication*

*in classroom, teacher interaction with adults, adult education, communicating with adult ESL students, adult learning for teachers, professional development in adult education, why professional development for adult educators, and adult learning, improving the classroom, expectations of professional development, developing a professional development, effective professional development, and outcomes of professional development.*

### **Learning Theories and Professional Development**

The UTRS PD was designed to allow teachers an opportunity to engage with one another and gain a better understanding of how they interact with their students. During the PD, the teachers participate in activities, including role playing, to help them understand how to build relationships with diverse learning students. The framework of this PD focuses on social learning theories. It has been stated that PD needs to involve both social and cognitive aspects of learning (Eun, 2008). The social learning theory explained that people often learn more through interacting with one another by describing their experiences and collaborating to develop solutions (Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2015).

Bandura (1977) explained that social learning development could increase when there was an interaction between people during a formal or informal learning process. Vygotsky's (1978) social development theoretical framework was focused on evaluating the situation in which learning takes place and later relating the situation to how a person interacted with another person. The outcomes of the PD are based on using role play that relates to Vygotsky's social learning theory and reviewing what has been learned based

on Vygotsky's learning theories. The form of role playing will be where two teachers are given a difficult classroom situation and are asked to act out their response to the situation in front of the rest of the class. Both theories will be used to understand: (a) what I cannot do, (b) what I can now do with help, and (c) what I can do after I have received support (Wertsch, 1985).

In this PD, the teachers will review and discuss with each other the topics related to communicating with students and building positive relationships. They will also focus on teacher–student interaction and different ways for learning from the role play interaction. Wertsch (1985) suggested that a learning environment that focuses on improving teacher–student interaction can increase communication between a teacher and student and could lead to building better relationships. Along with improving communication, teacher–student interaction can help with developing language skills at a faster pace when the teacher and students are consistently engaged with each other (Verplaetse, 2017).

### **Genre**

To improve teacher interaction and to develop a multi-grade-learning classroom curriculum PD was designed (see Yoon & Armour, 2017). A PD allows the teachers to be able to gain more knowledge on how to use their resources to provide an effective learning environment (Badri, Alnuaimi, Mohaidat, Yang, & Rashedi, 2016). Adult education programs must have the proper resources and teachers' knowledge to communicate and address many different learning styles (Nicholls, 2014). Through the UTRS PD, a teacher should have the opportunity to learn best practices that can address

issues that may relate to communication between teachers and students. According to Johnson (2014), PD is designed to provide more knowledge for professional growth. The experience gained in my PD is to help prepare teachers to succeed in the classroom with students at various levels of learning. Professional development can improve the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs of instructors who contribute to increasing student and teacher involvement within the classroom (Blocher, Armfield, Sujo-Montes, Tucker, & Willis, 2011). The skills, attitudes, and beliefs can be processed through reflection, where the teachers outline their teaching styles and how these affect classroom learning (Moon, 2013). The teachers will examine the advantages and disadvantages of teaching in a challenging multi-learning classroom. Then the teachers may develop a better learning environment and positive environment to encourage a relationship not only to help the students, but also to help them deal effectively with diverse students (Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner, 2015).

The cost of a PD must be reasonable, especially for grant-funded programs (Hill, Beisiegel, & Jacon, 2013). A restricted budget, sometimes, is only feasible for developing a traditional or conventional PD because a face-to-face PD is less expensive than incorporating technology or other alternative methods into the PD (Ebert-May, Derting, & Hodder, 2014). The downside of a less costly conventional PD is it restricts the convenience of using online programs to present the information (Marrero, Woodruff, Schuster, & Riccio, 2010). The upside of using less costly traditional PD is that it is face-to-face, and provides 30% more feedback than online PD (Nicholls, 2014). Marrongelle, Sztajn, and Smith (2013) suggested that a program can integrate a low-cost face-to-face

PD along with a low risk and low-cost technology. Although my PD does not integrate online and traditional training, the better of the two would include a traditional PD that incorporates technology for online usage of the PD.

### **Professional Development Effectiveness**

The teachers in my study explained that sometimes it is difficult to understand what the students need in the classroom in regard to the challenges of building positive relationships. The added pressure and lack of building positive relationships can also relate to testing the students' progress. The teachers described that communicating with students is not possible when they have to continually give students a computerized assessment test. Teachers stated that they are not able to have positive relationships because the structure of the program is formed more around administering state mandated testing than learning about the student. According to De Oliveira (2011), a useful PD may help build positive relationships within a program even when a program is mostly focused on meeting program requirements. De Oliveira (2011) stated meeting only standardized testing measures is not always possible when teaching a multi-grade level class because there may be individual attention needed for each student that can only be achieved through teacher–student relationships. Meeting requirements and developing relationships can be achieved simultaneously. Sampson (2016) also stated that an effective PD should include problem-solving techniques where teaching multi-grade level students may be overwhelming.

The PD information would focus on trying to help teachers build a relationship with students. A teacher can become overwhelmed while trying to build relationships

with students who have different learning levels, which can affect communication and the needs of the students (Cook et al., 2018). The teacher must spend more time only teaching curriculum than building a relationship with the students. In an adult learning classroom, building a relationship with the students is important and if there are several students with multiple grade levels, the teacher should develop a relationship by communicating with the student early in the school term (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

According to Hulsheger, Roberts, Feinholdt, and Lang (2013), teachers are not always aware of how to interact with students in the classroom and may need added guidance on how to communicate with their students (Maslow, 1999). Similarly, Ivars and Calatayud (2013) suggested that teachers need to be aware of their teacher–student relationship by practicing how to communicate and interact with students, while working on a multitask job involving multiple languages. That opportunity is built into the PD using role play. When teachers are able to role play as teachers and students, the teacher is able to have a better understanding of a classroom situation and build good qualities to become effective teachers (Stronge, 2018). Some of these qualities are having a positive learning environment, good communication, being able to engage with students, and having a strong rapport with students (Coombs & Bhattacharya, 2018).

This PD aims to improve classroom interaction between teachers and students by providing information that will help teachers develop highly interactive lesson plans (Van den Bergh, Ros, & Beijaard, 2014). The possible outcome of improving teacher–student interaction is increasing positive relationships between teachers and students. DeCapua, Marshall, and Frydland (2018) stated that the increase of positive relationships between

teachers and students can transform the way they interact with each other by improving the teacher and student learning experience.

### **Professional Development Content**

The content of the UTRS PD is based on the design of relationship building, supported by Vygotsky's social integration theory. Ansyari's (2015) relationship building approach also used a constructivist learning framework where learning participants increased their awareness of how to interact with students to better their teacher–student relationship. Besides relationship building, the content of the UTRS PD design will target the way teachers interact with students by using research on how to increase effective interaction to better the teacher–student relationship (Harris et al., 2013).

**Constructivist learning.** The constructivist learning approach may help with the retention rate of teachers in this adult ESL program through building stronger relationships and improving ways teachers interact with students (Flint, 2016). The constructivist learning environment may aid in building a teacher–student relationship that can help teachers relate to students' past life learning experiences. To help develop teacher–student relationships, constructivist learning is considered beneficial for teachers to be able to build relationships with ESL students (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011).

The objective of using the constructivist learning environment is to allow teachers to use alternative teaching methods to help improve teacher–student relationships (Coombs & Bhattacharya, 2018). The alternative teaching methods, such as more classroom interaction lessons, may help strengthen relationships between teachers and students (Flint, 2016). The teachers can have more choices of lessons that meet their



students' needs. The more choices of lessons the teacher can provide for the students helps to encourage and motivate the students to learn (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017).

A constructivist learning environment not only involves what teachers and students understand, but how they apply what they understand to build a relationship (Scheer, Noweski, & Neinel, 2012). A way that the teacher and student can apply the concept of a constructivist learning environment is through understanding each other and building a relationship by collaborating to build a curriculum. According to Aydin (2016), a collaboration curriculum PD related to the constructivist learning environment is designed to help with building relationships between the teachers and students based on teachers and students learning from prior experience. In the PD the teachers and students will use a collaboration curriculum to understand something new when they relate it to something they already understand. The teachers work together with the students to create a curriculum that is suitable to help form a better teacher–student relationship. When collaborating with other teachers and students, the teachers must communicate with students as well as increase their understanding of the students' values and beliefs. Scheer et al. (2012) used the term transforming constructivist learning, meaning to recognize the way teachers and students think to bring improvements to a situation and influence learning between teachers and students.

Based on past and current experiences, teachers' feelings about teaching a multi-grade level classroom may vary (Scheer et al., 2012). Scheer et al. (2012) stated that both good and bad experiences could help with teachers learning how to build relationships with ESL students. In the PD, teachers will demonstrate with each other how to build

relationships with ESL students through teaching a lesson where teachers and students share their experiences and work together to create lessons that improve their classroom interaction.

Scheer et al. (2012) discussed that adult education in a constructivist context requires a person to have the skills to adapt to changing conditions. To further explain, a positive aspect to a constructivist context is the fact that it allows diversity of learning styles which can help improve a teacher–student relationship (James, Bertucci, & Hayes, 2018). In addition, a constructivist context for learning in adult education is when a teacher adapts to various students’ educational backgrounds and still is able to build a relationship with the students.

A constructivist approach for improving teacher–student relationships and interaction can be valuable despite changes in the learning conditions (York & William deHaan, 2018). The changes in learning conditions can mean changes in the classroom location, changes within the classroom, changes with the time of the class, or even changes in the lifestyle of individual class members, but a positive teacher–student relationship will persist through the changes (Flint, 2016).

When trying to improve teacher–student relationship understanding, different views related to current and prior knowledge are important. Not only will different students interpret knowledge in different ways, but also instructors will have different understanding about the same information. Constructivism-based approaches help learners form new ideas based on past knowledge. A teacher can build better relationships with their students when they can understand past learning experiences and

the teacher can use past learning experiences to help the student learn new information (Cleaver & Ballantyne, 2014).

**Awareness of diverse classroom.** Understanding students in a diverse setting with multiple grade levels in the same classroom can be challenging for a teacher. Woollacott et al. (2014) stated that it is difficult for a teacher to instruct a large, diverse group if the teacher does not understand the student's history, place of residence, and abilities. Students who have different backgrounds and education may require different types of learning material and language assistance. The teacher may find it difficult to teach English and interact with students that have different learning styles and languages if they are not prepared to teach in a diverse classroom (Sorto, Wilson, & White, 2018)

A teacher may not recognize how the student learns. The way a student learns can influence the way a teacher and student communicate with each other. Not recognizing how the student learns can result in a lack of communication. When a teacher and student are not communicating, then the student may feel less involved to learn and may not want to participate in classroom lessons (Suskie, 2018).

A teacher's lack of or limited communication with students can decrease students' motivation to learn and decrease interaction between the teacher and the students, as well as increase confusion about classroom expectations between the teacher and the students (Woollacott et al., 2014). Students may not be encouraged to learn if there is limited communication in a diverse learning classroom (Rhodes & Lohr, 2019). Communication is important in diverse learning classrooms because it helps teachers understand the students' needs to help them reach their goals (Deggs & Miller, 2011).

The lack of communication can lead the teacher to not understand what motivates the student to learn. Clark (2017) provided several complex reasons of why limited communication causes students to stop learning. In the following sentences I provided three reasons why limited communication causes students to stop learning. A result of limited communication causes the students to stop attending the class because the students do not understand what is being taught. The students can become less motivated to learn because the teacher's interactions with students are not consistent. The teacher can become discouraged with the students based on students not attending or being motivated to learn (Courtney, 2018).

Teachers' understanding of different learning levels and different languages will help the teacher understand how to communicate with multiple grade level students (Watson, 2017). In this PD the teachers will develop lesson plans that will have information regarding how to interact with students at different learning levels. The interaction between the teacher and students will help the teachers build better teacher–student relationships (Thompson, 2018).

One of the findings identified in Section 2 of this study was that teachers struggle to communicate with multi-grade level students. A teacher may need to focus on textbooks and other learning activities when it comes to teaching culturally diverse adult students. This may help teachers focus on communicating and learning about the students to improve a relationship as well (see Nieto, 2013). The PD will help teachers to design lesson plans where teachers can communicate and use textbooks to learn about the

students. In this case the PD will guide teachers to design a student-centered and diverse learning lesson plan.

A positive teacher–student relationship can be formed when teachers communicate and interact effectively with students who have different languages and educational levels (Tomlinson, 2015). The UTRS PD was designed to improve building relationships between teachers and their multilevel, multicultural, multilingual students. Understanding how to communicate and interact with students may enable teachers to develop better relationships with their students. According to Brooks (2017), developing better communication and interaction may affect the way a student learns a different language by allowing teachers to learn more about their students.

### **Project Description**

The UTRS PD was designed to be conducted in face-to-face sessions for 3 days. There will be an evaluation at the end of the session on day three. On Day 1, teachers will take part in a brief informational session and spend the rest of their time working in small groups with lessons that are provided in those sessions. All lessons will be supported by computers and projectors in the sessions and the participants will be provided with a physical and electronic copy of the PD guide. The guide will help the teachers during the PD by providing information and problem-solving lessons. The teachers will work in small groups, participate in role play activities, take part in interactive lessons, and share their results with the entire group in that session. While participating in the face-to-face activities, the teachers will use the PD guide as they interact with one another. At the end

of the face-to-face session, the teachers will receive detailed instruction on the journal log lessons they will do for one day inside the classroom.

For Day 2, the teachers will meet face-to-face. In this session the teachers will be divided into groups, there will be a presenter to work with at least five teachers in helping them design a student-centered diverse learning lesson plan. After designing a lesson plan, the teachers will learn how to use and record the practice interactions in their journals. The interaction journal will help provide information on how the teachers interacted with the teachers who will pretend to be students and what activities were completed during the professional development.

Day 3 of the PD the teachers will meet in a face-to-face session to review their journals that related to using the student-centered diverse learning lesson plans and design a collaborative curriculum lesson plan. The teachers will meet in small groups and do role playing while developing a collaborative curriculum. The small group will have one teacher and the rest of the group will be assigned to role play students. Each person in the group will have a chance to role play as the teacher and share notes from their journals. The teachers will also discuss in their groups the best options to improve their communication and interaction. After the session has ended the teachers will be asked to complete a PD evaluation. The responses from the evaluation will provide feedback that relates to their views of the PD. The evaluation will help me to examine what teachers thought and how the PD might have contributed to improving their classroom relationships and interaction.

**Needed Resources and Existing Support**

The physical resources needed for this PD will be two rooms for the face-to-face session with the capacity of 30 people per room. The rooms will be used for the face-to-face PD for Days 1 and 3. Each room should have an overhead projector and computers for the PowerPoint related to the group activity. The presenter will use the computer and the PD guide to present the lessons for that session.

The grant accounting department in the adult education department is willing to supply funds for consumables. The PD training material will be paid based on the program's proposed contract and budget grant that supplies funds under PD funding. The budget for this PD is estimated at around \$3,123. The annual budget is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

*UTRS Professional Development Budget*

Description	Amount needed	Price per unit	Total cost
Stipends for 5 Presenters (Cost for seven days of presenter working with teachers inside the classroom)	5	\$300	\$1500
Teacher's Guide	65	\$12	\$780
2 large coffee makers	4	\$90	\$360
Self-stick easel pads	10	\$20	\$200
Bottled water	10	\$12	\$120
Writing tablets (12 count)	10	\$10	\$100
Pens (60 pack)	6	\$7	\$42
Dry erase markers (12 count)	3	\$7	\$21
Computer in training room <sup>(a)</sup>	2	\$0	\$0
Overhead projector <sup>(a)</sup>	2	\$0	\$0
Tables for 2 rooms <sup>(a)</sup>	13	\$0	\$0
Chairs for 2 rooms	65	\$0	\$0

<sup>(a)</sup>Provided by the college at no cost

**Potential Barriers and Solutions**

Two activities require teachers to keep a journal log. One of the journal logs is to describe how the teachers interacted with students. The second journal log is to record the teachers' reflections. It is possible that some of the teachers who will participate in this PD will feel that it is too time-consuming to keep a journal of classroom interaction and self-reflection, which, in turn, might limit their involvement in the day-3 face-to-face UTRS PD. A possible alternative would be to complete a questionnaire related to teacher–student relationships. A questionnaire could be conducted at the end of the 3-day



period of teaching for the PD. A questionnaire would be used because it would be easy and simple for the teachers to give their feedback.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

The proposed period for the first implementation of this PD is during the fall of 2019. The follow-up sessions, which are future UTRS PD, are projected for the spring and fall semesters of 2020. The PD will contain three days of face-to-face sessions. Each day of the PD will be last at least 8 hours. The session will be scheduled on a weekday during the first two weeks of the semester. The teachers will register and have an introduction to the PD.

There will be five classes for the first day of the PD. Each class will have a presenter, with a total of five presenters. The presenters will be ESL teachers who have taught 5 years or more and have volunteered to teach the other teachers. The presenters will have one day of prior training on how to use the training manual and how to present the information in the manual to the teachers. The topic will contain information on how teachers may use constructivism to understand their students' perspectives based on their life experiences. In classes one through three there will be lessons for activities related to teachers' ability to use constructivism in building relationships with their students. Each of the three classes will be no longer than an hour and 15 minutes with breaks in between the sessions. The fourth and fifth classes will contain information about improving relationships between teachers and students. The activities that will be covered are key notes to understand your teacher–student relationship and self-reflection. Each topic will be 1-hour long. The five classes will be used to help encourage teachers to interact with

one another through understanding diverse learning. The teachers will do role playing lessons that will focus on teachers interacting with students who have different learning styles. For example, the teacher will have the other teachers act as students. Those students will be assigned to different grade levels and learning styles. This approach will also encourage relationship building by focusing on how people learn based on their past experiences. During the role playing, each teacher will have an experience given to them on a card. On the card, the notes of the past experience will also have the learning style that has developed based on the experience. The proposed implementation timetable is in Appendix A.

On Day 2 a sign-in sheet for each teacher will be available along with a paper and electronic copy of a student-centered diverse learning lesson plan, journal interaction, and personal log (found in Appendix A). Along with the lesson plan and journal logs there will be five presenters available to help the teachers complete the student-centered diverse learning plan. Each presenter will be working with at least four teachers. During day two, the presenters will guide the teachers on how to prepare the lesson plans and journal logs during the entire PD. The presenters will help with designing student-centered diverse learning lesson plans. At least one lesson plan will be designed before the teachers' return to their class. For Day 2 the teachers will also complete an interaction journal and it will hold information on how they interacted with the students and what activities were completed during class time. The teachers will also complete a personal journal log on Day 2. In the personal journal log, the teachers will record self-reflection. The self-reflection will help teachers focus on developing desirable teacher–student

relationships. The descriptions of what the teachers are expected to complete in the interaction journal template and personal journal template are provided in the project (Appendix A).

The third face-to-face session will be for the participants to review and discuss their results of the 1-day journal logging procedure. There will be two 1-hour sessions on this day. The participants will then use their results to create a lesson plan. The lesson plan will be developed using the template provided on the first day of the PD. After sessions one and two have been completed the participants will complete an evaluation. The timetable for day three of the PD is located in Appendix A.

### **Responsibilities of Student and Others**

The goals, nature, and proposed timetable of the UTRS PD require a team effort. Therefore, I will detail roles and responsibilities by phase, rather than by group or individual. There will be a design phase and an implementation phase.

**Design phase.** The UTRS PD was developed by me. The Texas Workforce Commission served as my guideline for the financial preparations of the program because the program is funded by a state and a federal grant. The guidelines of the grant simply state that the cost of training from a PD must provide enough training time. The money spent for the PD needs to benefit the teachers (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012). The benefit of the PD will be to provide strategies for teachers who struggle to communicate and interact with their students.

**Implementation phase.** During this phase, I will serve as the lead facilitator and primary support for the delivery of the UTRS PD during implementation. In terms of

room and technology, as stated earlier, I will need two large rooms, a large conference area, and computers for the presenters to use. The college will supply these items once the items are approved by the adult education program director and division operation manager. The expectation for the five presenters during the implementation of this project are to engage with the teachers during the PD and provide (a) strategies for building a connection with students, (b) activities to increase communication, and (c) activities to improve the quality of interaction that will support positive teacher–student relationships.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

To evaluate the PD, I will use a summative approach. The evaluation at the end of the program will be to identify if this PD helped teachers build better skills through developing lesson plans and implementing interactive activities with students to improve teacher–student relationships (Zawacki-Richter, Röbbken, Ehrenspeck-Kolasa, & von Ossietzky, 2014). The summative approach allows a person to understand if processes and designs of learning in a PD are working and compare what was learned against what the teachers knew before the PD (Kirkwood & Rae, 2010). The summative approach is appropriate for this project because it will help to provide information to see if the program has met the goals of improving teacher interaction with students and teachers developing multiple grade level lesson plans (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2014). This form of evaluation is key to the president of the college, the adult ESL program director, and the adult ESL manager. They are the essential stakeholders because they hold an interest in how the program progresses and in reporting the progress to maintain grant funding.

The PD has been designed and will need an evaluation. The process for evaluating the PD is to provide a survey at the end of the PD. The participants in the PD will complete the survey (Appendix A). Then I will review the survey data and send the evaluation results to the stakeholders. The evaluation is intended to provide insights of what the teachers have learned from the UTRS PD.

### **Project Implications**

#### **Social Change Implications**

The positive social change resulting from this PD may be that ESL teachers at the study site will provide a change by developing better relationships with their students. The teachers improving their relationships with the students may help with teacher retention and the continuation of providing students with improved literacy and academic skills. The improvement of literacy and academic skills would allow the students to become more functional in the workforce and better provide for their families.

The stakeholders who are involved in the program are the Adult Education and Literacy program directors and teachers who are providing resources to help improve the program such as this PD. The importance of the UTRS PD to the stakeholders is that it may help to improve teacher–student relationships, which may also affect the retention of the teachers and students. Improving the retention of teachers and students can be beneficial by helping the program to receive more funds from the state that can be used to operate the program. The UTRS PD may also be used to encourage a positive social change by improving the ESL teacher–student relationship and helping ESL teachers have better communication and interaction with the students in an adult ESL program.

This project may help to improve the problem of the lack of understanding between the teachers and students. By improving teacher–student relationships, more teachers and students can become involved in adult education programs to help make a better society. ESL students at the local study site will be retained, allowing them to improve their literacy and academic skills in order to be more functional in the workforce and to support their families. The overall benefit of the project is to help teachers produce an effective and positive relationship between the students and themselves.

### **Importance of the Project**

The far-reaching goal of this project is to support the inclusion of non-English speaking individuals in their communities and society as a whole and improve the teacher–student relationship. The teacher–student relationship may be a key factor related to the problem of teacher retention at a local community college. Therefore, this project is not only intended to create local social change, benefiting the community through improving teacher–student relationship in adult education programs, but could also help benefit ESL teachers in a broader context by improving the way they build relationships with their students. An ESL teacher can demonstrate a positive social change by improving teacher–student relationships and encouraging students’ interest to further their education and career.

### **Summary**

The objective of developing this PD was to provide teachers with learning resources to help them improve their teacher–student relationship. As stated earlier there may be problems regarding retention for teachers and students that occur when there is a

lack relationship between the teachers and students. A 3-day face-to-face PD was designed to help improve this problem. To help develop this PD, I reviewed the problems and the two research questions: how do ESL teachers describe their relationships with diverse students, and how do ESL teachers interact with their students? Based on the findings, the PD was developed to help teachers who struggle communicating with diverse learning students and improve teacher interactions with students.

To understand how a PD would help teachers who struggle communicating a literature review was completed. The literature review consisted of learning theories and professional development. There is also an evaluation plan that will be given through using a survey. The evaluation plan will be used to help me to understand if the professional development was beneficial to teachers with helping them to improve teacher–student relationship. The conclusion of this section was related to how the PD would help to improve social change. The teachers improving their relationships with the students may have a social change by helping with teacher retention and the continuation of providing students with improved literacy and academic skills.

In Section 4 I will discuss the project’s strength, limitations, and alternative approaches with the project. I will discuss what was learned while developing this project. I will also explain how the project affected my personal and academic growth as a scholar. Last, I will discuss how this project can impact social change with teachers and students relationship within the Adult ESL classroom, and the future direction of this project.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

This section will provide an overview of the project study, including its potential influence on faculty and students, my reflections (how I developed as a scholar and project developer), and the project's strengths and limitations. It will also examine how the project developed and future additions to the project that might be beneficial to other educators.

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

#### **Project Strengths**

The strengths of this project are helping to improve skills to build better teacher–student relationships, changing teacher–student behavior for better teacher–student communication, and providing better use of learning materials with communication between the teachers and students. Understanding teacher–student relationships is important in education, especially in adult education programs (Schwarzer, 2009). Bernstein-Yamashiro and Noam (2013) showed that understanding a teacher–student relationship is important for the success of both the teacher and the student, and helps to encourage a positive learning environment. Teacher–student relationships can emotionally and psychologically change teachers' and students' behavior, expectations, and learning process (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013). Another strength of this PD is to help teachers change their behavior to help improve communication between the teacher and students. Hill et al. (2013) stated that usually adult education programs, such as adult ESL programs, provide a repetition of ineffective PD. A third strength for this PD will be to help avoid an ineffective PD through improving efficiency with the



teachers learning from each other. The teachers will be able to share their classroom experiences based on what they have written in their journal.

### **Project Limitations**

One of the limitations of the PD project is that its information on interacting and communication in the classroom may not interest the teachers (Mizell, 2010). The teachers may not be enthused by the information and activities being presented. According to Christesen and Turner (2014), some teachers may show no interest in a PD because of their mindset. Christesen and Turner's (2014) study found that if a teacher is determined to think that the PD will not help them, then they will become less receptive to accepting new ideas.

Funding the PD could be another limitation because the state only allows a certain amount of monies to be directed toward PD in an adult education grant-funded program. From a budget allocation perspective, it may not be feasible to provide the necessary financial support for this PD if attendance is low during the initial PD. If the PD does not receive enough funding, the resources to do an additional PD and the UTRS program may be limited.

Training educators to facilitate the PD may be a third limitation because it takes time for some trainers to become familiar with the material that will be presented to other teachers (Nicholls, 2014). The trainers will need to have training on using technology and understanding the face-to-face PD material. A time frame needs to exist to ensure that trainers have enough knowledge to provide the information to the attending teachers.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

Building relationships between adult students and their teachers can sometimes be difficult (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013). One recommendation for an alternate approach to the problem relating to low retention rates of teachers and students could be to study the students' perspectives of the teacher and student relationship. The purpose of collecting information from the students would be to allow students to share their questions and concerns. The students' responses might help explain why some students do not return to the program.

Another recommendation to help improve teacher–student relationships could be to have a better understanding of the students' demographic characteristics. The meaning of understanding the students' demographic characteristics is for teachers to learn more about their students' education levels and possibly their economic level to understand how to communicate with the students. Dumbrigue, Moxley, and Najor-Durack (2013) discussed that it may be helpful to understand the demographics of the student population in the adult education program to build positive relationships with the students. The process of learning more about the students' demographic characteristics may help to determine how lifestyles and the students' area of living may affect relationship building between the teachers and students.

An alternative approach to help improve the teacher–student relationship would be to provide a policy recommendation. A policy recommendation is written advice prepared for a particular group that can make decisions (Pianta, 2017). A policy recommendation would be an appropriate alternative because it could be used to provide

recommendations to help with the problem of high turnover rates with teachers and students in this adult education program.

### **Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change**

#### **Scholarship**

In the past, I only interpreted the term scholarship to mean something received based on academic achievements or applying for monetary resources. I now understand, based on learning from life adversities, that the term scholarship can mean an academic study or learning at a higher level. An example of how I understand this is because I feel that I have become a scholar as it relates to the trials of developing a project to help improve teacher–student relationships as it may relate to the problem of high turnovers with teachers and students. Before developing this project, the program had an unknown solution to this problem. I believe that scholarship can bring awareness to an unknown. The unknown can begin with a question and through extensive research a person can find many layers of answers to a problem. In summary, my view of scholarship is the mind no longer accepts what is only known, but through mental growth and development explores for answers to the unknown.

#### **Project Development**

Through the course of developing the PD project, I learned about the details needed to develop a PD that provided teachers with information and skills that could help build better teacher–student relationships and possibly improve the retention rate of teachers and students within this adult ESL program. The process of developing the PD was to review the problem and research solutions that would be adequate to be presented

in the PD. I wanted to develop a PD that was beneficial to the teachers but also have clear outcomes that related to the problem. According to Abbott and Rossier (2011), a PD should have clear outcomes that can relate to the needs or problem and should be examined in relation to the PD objectives.

### **Leadership and Change**

Related to leadership and change I recognized that for both to be effective a process must take place. In my professional experience the process includes communication, interacting with others to execute a plan, and a commitment to devote time. In regard to communication, I was able to speak with teachers who had different work experiences and teaching methodologies. I believe that my communication was effective in trying to reach a goal to develop a PD that would improve the teacher–student relationship. The interaction with people to develop a change is important. Information obtained when people interact with each other is what helps to develop and implement a change. The needs of the organization will determine how much time is required during the PD. Overall, I feel that the change that occurred in myself was developing more leadership skills, such as creativity of developing the PD and responsibility of delegating the time and schedule of the PD.

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

A scholar is considered a person who seeks information, develops a solution, and has a change in mindset to gain an understanding to a problem. What I learned as a scholar during the process of developing this project was that it takes time and effort to develop the skills of becoming a person who can seek information, develop a solution,

and have a change in mindset. I believe that I have become a scholar as it relates to developing the skills mentioned and this project. As a scholar I have gained a better understanding of using PD to help improve teacher–student relationships and also it may have an impact on the problem of high turnovers with teachers and students.

As a scholar, this process of developing a project also helped me to identify my strengths and weaknesses concerning data collection and data analysis. My strengths of being able to communicate well with others made it easier to collect data during the interview sessions. I wanted to help the teachers improve their teacher–student relationship and used my interview session to ask in-depth questions that may help the teachers and students improve their relationships. The improvement with the teacher–student relationships not only helps them understand their relationship but can help to improve the program and the students’ life skills within the community. These improvements can impact a social change by helping teachers improve the program and students improve their community.

### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

As a practitioner, my duties have been advanced to becoming a teacher who can assemble a PD to help improve the expected outcomes of improving teacher–student relationships. My duties have now expanded past being an ESL/GED instructor and Adult ESL lesson plan implementation trainer. While conducting this research and developing the PD project, I learned how to assemble a clear and concise outline of findings that would reflect the research questions of how teachers describe their relationships and interactions with adult ESL students. Also, developing this PD has

taught me how to provide information that can teach others. To explain further I am now able to assemble a PD that can provide information based on the needs of teachers and students.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

Throughout developing this project, I learned about the process of creating a PD. I became more educated on how to apply theories and research to address a problem related to relationships between teachers and students. I gained insight on researching the types of projects, such as evaluations, PD's, curriculum plans, and policy recommendations that could help improve teacher–student relationships. I learned that a PD can bring versatility of training and knowledge into an adult education learning environment (Nicholls, 2014). A PD is not just for teachers but should be useful for students in an adult education environment. Nicholls (2014) stated the development of a PD should not only be considered for the people being trained but for every person within that learning environment. The people in this learning environment can include teachers, students, administrators, and staff who work with ESL students.

Throughout the process of developing the project goals, planning to implement the project, and planning to evaluate the outcomes, I learned the challenge of putting a project together that includes time detail and material that needs to be used by the presenter and teacher. I learned that as project developer the best choice of a project was to develop a PD that would focus on providing ESL teachers' information that would help improve relationships with diverse students. Although this project has not been implemented or evaluated, the process of designing a schedule and an evaluation helped

me to understand managing time and the outcomes of a project. While I was developing the class sessions I gained a better understanding about how to provide important information within a given time frame.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

The importance of this project was to provide the teachers with the tools they need to understand and possibly improve the relationship between teachers and students in ESL adult education classrooms. This project would be a 3-day PD that allowed teachers to work together toward designing lessons that would encourage relationship building and interaction. The PD would also encourage teachers on how they can interact with multigrade level students. After attending the PD the teachers should be able to develop learning activities that involve them and the students interacting together. The teachers should have a better understanding on how they build relationships with their students. In essence the improvement of teacher–student relationship may help to increase the retention rate for the teachers and students in this program.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

The goal of this project was to provide a formal training session through a PD that related to improving teacher–student relationships. This improvement can help support non-English speaking individuals in their communities and society as a whole and teach the skills that would increase teacher–student interaction in an ESL learning environment. The case study presented the views of how teachers interacted in the classroom with their students and how those interactions affected the teacher–student relationship.

**Implications**

The implications for social change at a local level would be improving the relationship between teachers and students in this adult ESL program. The teachers will be implementing a change through improving communication and interaction between them and the students. Teacher–student communication and interaction are important because they can help teachers instruct multiple grade levels within the same classroom (Abbott & Rossier, 2011). Also, when teaching multiple grade levels, different classroom activities can be used to interact with students and provide effective communication. The PD training will be provided to help impel a change in the teacher–student relationship. The PD that was designed was based on Bandura’s social learning theory and Vygotsky’s social development theoretical frameworks (Bandura, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). The changes of improving communication and interaction can impact the adult ESL learning environment. The teachers can also gain more knowledge and training, improving adult learning for ESL students. If the adult ESL program can improve the teacher–student relationship, then the retention of the teachers and students may also improve. Thus, the improvement of the teacher–student relationship and retention can have a positive result of more students learning English and integrating into the workforce.

**Applications**

As related to the ESL adult educational field, this PD can be used to provide teachers with information that can support and encourage the development of positive interpersonal relationships in adult education classrooms. The results of this PD do not have to be used only in an adult ESL education programs. The PD could also be applied



to other adult education programs such as general education development (GED). To explain further, this PD helps teachers learn how to improve communication and interaction with adult students. The final results will be that the teacher and students build a better relationship in an adult education program.

### **Directions for Future Research**

The future direction of research could be to do an evaluation that is directed toward the teacher–student relationship. For example, a future study might examine how teachers and students communicate and interact with one another and provide an evaluation for the teachers to complete. The evaluation would still help to answer the questions how ESL teachers describe their relationship, and how ESL teachers demonstrate their relationship. The future interview questions and observations to gather information would change to evaluating the teachers so that the teacher–student relationship could be assessed from a different perspective.

### **Conclusion**

The development of this project was designed based on the results of interviews and observations of five teachers who had taught between 0-6 years as an ESL instructor in an adult education program. According to all five teachers, communicating with adult ESL students can be a difficult task. I felt that it was essential to develop this PD that would help teachers build better relationships with their students because the teachers and students are vital to this program and their local communities. Previous research has demonstrated that it is important to building a relationship between a teacher and student to create a successful learning environment through classroom interaction (Bernstein-

Yamashiro & Noam, 2013). In trying to improve a teacher–student relationship, I developed this PD to help the teacher–student relationship grow. The learning growth will be beneficial inside and outside the classroom. I think that some teachers may not consider that positive communication and interaction with students is important. Teachers may feel that their responsibility is only to teach a lesson or provide feedback to a student. Students are people just like the teachers, and it is important to establish a good relationship to help advance the student. The teacher can learn more about their students, and the students can learn how to improve academically for a prosperous future.

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## Appendix A: The Project

### Understanding the Teachers' Relationship with Students Professional Development for Adult Educators

#### Professional Development/Training Curriculum and Materials

At a local college in southeast Texas, teacher retention in the adult education programs (ABE, English as a Second Language, and Adult Civic Education) has dropped since 2014. The program manager made efforts to maintain contact with the teachers, and to encourage educators to continue teaching in the program. There were about 20 teachers within this adult education program who stated that it is difficult to teach and communicate well with their students. Instructors' employment had a 60% turnover rate (Program Manager, 2013), also shown by the Texas Education Adult Management System (TEAMS) program report (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012). Horton (2010) suggested, "retention success or failure may be tied strongly to the co-created key student and professor relationship" (p. 40). Therefore, the teacher–student relationship may be a key factor related to the problem of teacher retention at a local community college.

Adult educators have often struggled with building positive relationships with their adult ESL students. A teacher–student relationship may be a problem due to the lack of understanding languages, or cultures, or due to limited professional development. Currently, in the state of Texas, there are several grant-funded literacy programs for adults, especially in the community college setting (Texas Workforce Commission, 2012, p. 16). Students enroll to improve their language skills. Often, they drop out of these programs because there was no student-teacher relationship (Kek & Huijser, 2011). The

State of Texas required that a target percentage rate be met at the end of the fiscal year, based on the educational functioning level at the start of the fiscal year (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

There was a lack of understanding on how ESL teachers viewed teacher–student relationships. Teaching in an adult ESL class was sometimes difficult for both teachers and students, especially when there was a lack of interpersonal relationships between the student and teacher. The teacher–student relationship has been related to causing problems with learning English and affecting retention rates in Adult Education programs. According to Schalge and Soga (2008), attrition in adult education was considered to be a problem due to the lack of building positive relationships between students and teachers (p. 152).

A qualitative case study was suitable for this study because it allowed me to explore the teacher–student relationship. I was also able to provide an in-depth analysis toward understanding how ESL teachers describe their relationships with diverse students and how the teachers interact with students in a local ESL adult education program. Researchers use a qualitative design to research a particular group of people in order to gain a deeper understanding of the research questions (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010). A case study also allows the researcher to become involved and connected to the study (Merriam, 2009). I discuss the outcomes of this case study in the Learning Outcomes and Target Audience section of this document.

**Purpose**

I selected a 3-day PD as the best way to help teachers understand how to improve communication skills, which in turn may improve the teacher–student relationship. In helping to resolve the teacher retention problem this PD training will be used to inform and guide teachers who struggle in communicating with their students by expanding ESL teachers’ knowledge and understanding about how to efficiently connect with diverse and multi-grade level students. The information from this PD training will help teachers learn to build relationship skills with students using communication and interactive lessons and lesson planning. This type of PD that helps improve building relationships through communication and interaction has been shown to have positive results in learning programs (Doren, Flannery, Lombardi, & McGarth Kato, 2012). The positive results stated by Doren et al. (2012) showed that teachers were able to improve the quality of their teacher–student relationship in order to meet their classroom goals.

**Goals**

The goal of this three day face-to-face PD is to improve the teacher–student relationship in an adult ESL program. The teachers in the PD will participate in activities that involve creating lessons and journals that can help to improve the teacher–student relationship. The activities will consist of implementing student-centered lesson plans, diverse lesson plans, self-reflection journal recordings, and classroom interaction journal recordings. The lesson plans and journal recordings will be developed by the teachers. A designated presenter will also help the teachers with developing lesson plans and journal

recordings. There will be templates with questions for both the interaction and personal journal logs for the teachers to follow for their recordings.

### **Learning Outcomes / Target Audience**

The findings from the research identified that (a) teachers struggle to communicate with diverse and multiple grade level students and that (b) teachers limit their interactions with students to those interactive suggestions provided in the textbook and do not include other opportunities for classroom interaction with their students.

The learning outcome is for teachers to understand how to develop lessons and journals to help improve the teacher–student relationship. The teachers will learn how to develop multiple ability level lesson plans and develop lessons that increase interaction between the teachers and students. The target audience for this PD is the adult ESL teachers.

### **Days 1-3 of Professional Development, Facilitated by Designated Teachers**

On many occasions teachers may feel disconnected from the students in the classroom and from themselves. Because of life changes and fast-paced learning environments, teachers often do not have the time to learn about their students and how to connect with the students. During this PD, teachers will interact with one another and have a chance to create lessons and journals that involve interaction activities and self-reflection activities and how the lessons and journals influence a positive relationship with adult ESL students. The objective of this PD is to help teachers improve building relationships with students. The need to help teachers build better relationships involves teachers struggling to communicate and interact effectively with diverse learning students

and is related to the problem of retention that may occur when there is a lack of understanding in the teachers' and students' relationship.

### **Overview of Professional Development**

The first day of the PD, the teachers will participate in lessons on how teachers use constructivism in relation to the teacher–student relationship. There will be five sessions for day one. The second day the teachers will have lessons about understanding lesson plans for better interaction in a diverse classroom. The teachers will also review information related to improving classroom interaction. There will be five sessions for day two. The third day the teachers will complete lessons related to continuous learning, empowering each other, creating diverse learning lesson plans, positive attitude, and being a mentor. There will be five sessions for day three.

### **Why Do I Teach Adults?**

Many times, teachers may understand why they are educators, but they may still struggle communicating and interacting with adult students. When asking the question “Why do I teach adults,” many teachers have various answers to this question. This will be the time the teacher will complete 3-days of activities that are designed to help teachers improve their teacher–student relationships.

### **Day 1 of the Professional Development**

The first day of the PD will contain five sessions. The teachers will sign in to each session. In these sessions, there will be a designated teacher who will facilitate the PD using PowerPoint to present lessons and activities. On this day the teachers will interact with each other in many self-reflection and group activities regarding their thoughts about

teacher–student relationships in an adult ESL program. The teachers will complete a personal journal log. In the personal journal log, the teachers will record self-reflection about what they thought were positive or negative lessons and interactions with their students. The self-reflection will help teachers focus on whether the development of teacher–student relationship is positive. If the relationship is not positive, then they will use this session to help them develop ideas to improve the development of the teacher–student relationship. The timeline for the first day of the PD is presented next.

Total Time of PD: 8 hours and 15 minutes

- I. Registration Period 7:30 am-8:00 am
- II. Welcome and Introduction 8:00 am -8:30 am
- III. Session 1 Constructivism (8:30 am -9:45 am)
  - Sign In
  - Introduction: How Teachers Use Constructivism (15 minutes)  
Slides (2-5)
  - Activity #1 Am I a Student-Centered Teacher (60 minutes)  
Slides (6-9)  
Conduct the Activity  
Review Activity  
Complete Lesson Plan Template
- IV. Break (9:45 am-10:00 am)
- V. Session 2 Constructivism (10:00 am-11:15 am)
  - Sign In
  - Introduction: How Teachers Use Constructivism (15 minutes)  
Slides (10-11)
  - Activity #2 Creative Thinker Equals Positive Teacher–student Relationship (60 minutes)  
Slides (12-15)  
Conduct the Activity  
Review Activity  
Complete Lesson Plan Template

- VI. Break (11:15 am-11:30 am)
- VII. Session 3 Constructivism (11:30 am -12:30 pm)
- Sign In
  - Introduction: Teachers' Perceptions (15 minutes)  
Slides (16-17)
  - Activity #3 Teachers' Perceptions About Relationships (Reality and Constructivism) (45 minutes)  
Slides (18-19)  
Conduct the Activity  
Review Activity
- VIII. Lunch (12:30 pm -1:30 pm)
- IX. Session 4 Improving Relationships between Teachers and Students (1:30 pm-2:30 pm)
- Sign In
  - Introduction: Improving relationships between teachers and students (15 minutes)  
Slides (20-21)
  - Activity #4 Key Notes to Understand Your Teacher–student Relationship (45 minutes)  
Slides (22-25)  
Conduct the Activity  
Review Activity  
Complete Personal Journal Template
- X. Break (2.30 pm-2:45 pm)
- XI. Session 5 Review and Reflect on Improving Relationships between Teachers and Students (2:45 pm-3:45 pm)
- Sign In
  - Introduction: Review and Reflect on Self-Reflection and Journal Log (15 minutes)  
Slide (26)
  - Activity #5 Self-Reflection and Journal Log  
Slides (27-28)
  - Teachers will be divided into groups of five. Teachers will practice with each other where one person is the teacher and the others are the students. The teacher will complete a self-reflection journal log as it relates to how teachers would improve their relationship with students (45 minutes).  
Conduct the Activity

Review What was Learned from the Activity



## STUDENT-CENTERED / DIVERSE LEARNING LESSON PLAN

Assignment	Briefly Describe Class Activities in The Boxes Labeled Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introduction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group				

## SELF-REFLECTION JOURNAL LOG

Did I communicate well with my students?

What will I do differently to communication classroom interaction?

What type of activities did I do with my students to improve my relationship with students?

How did my relationship with students improve today?

What did I learn about my students today based on the lessons implemented in the classroom?

## **Day 2 of the Professional Development**

For day 2, a sign-in sheet for each teacher will be available along with a paper and electronic copy of a student-centered diverse learning lesson plan and journal interaction.

In this session the teachers will be divided, there will be a presenter to work with at least five teachers in helping them design a student-centered diverse learning lesson plan.

After designing a lesson plan, the teachers will learn how to use and record the practice interactions in their journals. The interaction journal will provide information on how they interacted with the students and what activities were completed during the professional development.

Below is a brief description of what the teachers are expected to complete along with journal templates.

Total Time of PD: 8 hours

Teacher will complete lesson plans and journal logs (interaction and personal) for five days (1 hour and 30 minutes for 5 days).

The presenters will help their designated teacher in designing a student-centered diverse learning lesson plan. There is an option of completing the logs electronically, but the teachers must also print a hard copy for the follow-up session. The electronic version can be saved on WebEx's shared drive to share with other teachers.

- I. Welcome and Break into Assigned Groups 7:45 am--8:30 am
  
- II. Session 1 Understanding Lesson Plans for better Interaction in a Diverse Classroom (8:30 am-9:45 am)  
 Slides (29-31)
  - Sign In
  - Introduction: What are student learning levels (15 minutes)
  - Activity #1 Develop a lesson for multiple learning levels (60 minutes)  
 Conduct the Activity  
 Slide (32)  
 Review Activity

## Complete Lesson Plan Template

- III. Break (9:45 am -10:00 am)
- IV. Session 2 Understanding Lesson Plans for better Interaction in a Diverse Classroom (10:00 am -11:15 am)
- Sign In
  - Introduction: How to assess multiple learning students (15 minutes)  
Slides (33-34)
  - Activity #2 Review lesson plan and add comments from Activity #1 (60 minutes)
  - Slide (35)  
Review Activity  
Complete Lesson Plan Template
- V. Break (11:15 am -11:30 am)
- VI. Session 3 Improving Classroom Interaction (11:30 am-12:30 pm)
- Sign In
  - Introduction: Best Practices for classroom interaction I (15 minutes)  
Slide (36-37)
  - Activity #3 Improving Classroom Integration  
Slide (38)  
Teachers' in their small groups (five teachers per group) will share their activity with each other and pretend that the other teachers in the group are students and complete the activity with them (45 minutes)
  - Material: scissors, 2 poster boards, glue, colored markers, post-it notes, pens, notebook paper. There are brief examples listed after the student centered/diverse lesson plan to help teachers develop their interaction activity.  
Conduct the Activity  
Review Activity
- VII. Lunch (12:30 pm-1:30 pm)
- VIII. Session 4 Improving Classroom Interaction (1:30pm -2:30 pm)
- Sign In
  - Introduction: Best Practices for classroom interaction II (15 minutes)  
Slides (39-40)
  - Activity #4 Best Practices for classroom interaction II  
Slide (41)  
Teachers' in their small groups will continue to share their activity with each

other and pretend that the other teachers in the group are students and complete the activity with them (45 minutes)

- Material: scissors, 2 poster boards, glue, colored markers, post-it notes, pens, notebook paper. There are brief examples listed after the student centered/diverse lesson plan to help teachers develop their interaction activity.

Conduct the Activity

Review Activity

IX. Break (2:30 pm -2:45 pm)

X. Session 5 Improving Classroom Interaction (2:45 pm -3:45 pm)

- Sign In
- Introduction: Interaction and Journal Log (15 minutes)  
Slides (42-43)
- Activity #5 Interaction and Journal Log

Slide (44)

Teachers will be divided into groups of five. Teachers will practice with each other where one person is the teacher and the others are the students. The teacher will complete an interaction journal as it relates to how they would improve classroom interaction (45 minutes).

Conduct the Activity

Review What was Learned from the Activity

## STUDENT-CENTERED / DIVERSE LEARNING LESSON PLAN

Assignment	Briefly Describe Class Activities in The Boxes Labeled Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introduction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group				

## INTERACTION CLASSROOM ACTIVITY EXAMPLES

## Conversation grid-

Teacher can create a conversation grid for the class. The students can pair with one another and complete the grid together. The teacher should also participate with a student. When the questions have been answered then each partner can tell what they learned about the other person based on the answers from the conversation grid.

## Pass the mic-

Ask students to write down three to five words that describe them. Then ask the students to exchange that list with a partner. The teacher will interview each student asking them to use those words to describe what they think they know about their partner.

## Guess who-

The students write down five facts about them. The teacher creates a mystery game by mixing all the facts together. Everyone takes a turn by pulling a fact card and the person who guesses the correct name to that fact wins the game.

## Family Feud-

Teacher creates questions (Example: Name a job that is accident prone). The teacher divides the classroom so there are two teams. The teacher has provided the answers on post-it notes that are on a poster board and are covered. The team that answers the most correct answers wins the game. Teachers can create questions that relate to classroom lessons or as an icebreaker.

## JOURNAL LOG OF CLASS INTERACTION

Did I communicate with my students this week? Did I connect with the students? Did I use good communication skills? Did communicating with students as I presented the lessons help encourage a positive relationship with the students?

What did I do in class this week that reflects positive teacher–student relationship with students? What type of interaction activity did I use based on learning material from the textbooks (internet, handouts, group lessons, etc.)?

What suggestions can I make to help improve teacher–student relationship?

What did I achieve this week with trying to improve my relationship with students?

What did I learn about my students this week regarding how well we did communicate and interact with each other? What did I learn about my students? What did they learn about me?



### **Day 3 of the Professional Development**

The PD will take place face-to-face and will be directed by designated teachers.

The sessions will be divided to contain a maximum of 10 teachers in a session. The day 3 professional development will take place to focus on the teachers' journal recordings that they completed in day 1 and 2.

Total hours of PD: 8 hours

- I. Welcome and Break into Assigned Groups 8:00 am--8:30 am
- II. Session 1 Continuous Learner (8:30 am -9:30 am)
  - Sign In
  - Introduction: Teaching adults is a learning process (15 minutes)  
Slides (45-47)
  - Activity #1 Teaching adults is a learning process  
Slide (48)
  - Each teacher shares their self-reflection journal log(45 minutes)  
Teachers provide their opinion and examples of methods to improve relationships with students based on their responses in their self-reflection journal  
What helped/did not help to improve?
  - A classroom problem based on teacher–student relationship is given to the teachers. Create a classroom lesson that can be used to help improve teacher–student relationship?
- III. Break (9:30 am--9:45 am)
- IV. Session 2 Empower Each Other (9:45 am -10:45 am)
  - Sign In
  - Introduction: How can we empower each other (15 minutes)  
Slides (49-50)
  - Activity # 2 Empower the teacher–student relationship
  - Teachers will work with each other in a small group and create a method to empower their students based on the examples given in session 2 introduction.  
(45 minutes)  
Slide (51)

- V. Break (10:45 am -11:00 am)
- VI. Session 3 Create a Student-Centered and Diverse Learning Lesson Plan (11:00 am-12:00 pm)
- Sign In
  - Introduction: Lesson Plan that includes ways to empower the teacher–student relationship
  - Activity #3 Create a Student-Centered and Diverse Learning Lesson Plan Teachers collaborate to create another Student-Centered Lesson Plan and Diverse Learning Lesson Plan (60 minutes). Slides (52-53)
- VII. Lunch (12:00 pm -1:00 pm)
- VIII. Session 4 Positive Attitude (1:00 pm -2:00 pm)
- Sign In
  - Introduction: Displaying Positive Attitude (15 minutes)  
Slides (54-55)  
Activity #4 How do I display a positive attitude (45 minutes)  
Slide (56)  
Conduct the Activity  
Review Activity
- IX. Break (2:00 pm -2:15 pm)
- X. Session 5 Take It a Step Further (2:15 pm -3:15 pm)
- Sign In
  - Introduction: I am a Mentor (15 minutes)  
Slides (57-58)  
Activity #5 Build a Mentor(45 minutes)  
Slide (59)
  - In small groups the teachers will use a flipchart to draw an outline of a person. Each teacher will write inside the outline the qualities they think a mentor should have. Each teacher will use a different pen. Once each group has finished their mentor then all the teachers will come together. The teachers will share and compare their group’s mentor with all the teachers in that session.

- Material: Flipchart paper or poster board (one for each group, a large number of thick-tipped colored markers, tape (to tape the artwork on the wall when completed).

Conduct the Activity

Review Activity

XI. Break (3:15 pm -3:30 pm)

XII. Complete the PD survey (3:30 pm -4:00 pm )

Slide (60)

- What did you learn from this PD? Share responses as a class
- Complete the survey

## STUDENT-CENTERED / DIVERSE LEARNING LESSON PLAN

Assignment	Briefly Describe Class Activities in The Boxes Labeled Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introduction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group				

## References

- Doren, B., Flannery, K. B., Lombardi, A. R., & McGarth Kato, M. (2012). The impact of professional development and student and teacher characteristics on the quality of postsecondary goals. *Remedial and Special Education, 34*(4), 215–224. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0741932512468037>

UNDERSTANDING THE TEACHER–STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

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Teacher's Guide for Professional Development

**Objective**

The objective of this professional development is to help the teachers improve their relationships with students. The teachers will work in groups and answer questions. The purpose of forming small groups is to show teachers how to work together to develop resolutions to improve teacher–student relationships.

**Professional Development Overview**

The first day of the professional development there are five sessions. Teachers will complete activities provided in this guide to help develop a better understanding of the meaning of constructivism and how constructivism is instrumental in improving teacher–student relationships. Teachers will participate in a self-reflection activity.

Session 1 last for 1 hour and 15 minutes

Break 15 minutes

Session 2 last for 1 hour

Break 15 minutes

Session 3 last for 45 minutes

Lunch 1 hour

Session 4 last 1 hour 15 minutes

Break 15 minutes

Session 5 last 30 minutes

For day 2, a sign in sheet for each teacher will be available along with a paper and electronic copy of a student-centered diverse learning lesson plan, journal interaction, and personal log. In this session the teachers will be divided, there will be a presenter to work with at least five teachers in helping them design a student-centered diverse learning lesson plan. After designing a lesson plan, the teachers will learn how to use and record the practice interactions in their journals. The interaction journal will provide information on how they interacted with the students and what activities were completed during class time.

Session 1 last for 1 hour and 15 minutes

Break 15 minutes

Session 2 last for 1 hour and 15 minutes

Break 15 minutes

Session 3 last for 1 hour

Lunch 1 hour

Session 4 last 1 hour

Break 15 minutes

Session 5 last 1 hour

The PD will take place face-to-face and will be directed by designated teachers. The sessions will be divided to contain a maximum of ten teachers in a session. The day 3 professional development will take place to focus on the teachers' journal recordings that they completed in day 1 and 2.

Session 1 last for 1 hour

Break 15 minutes

Session 2 last for 1 hour

Break 15 minutes

Session 3 last for 1 hour

Lunch 1 hour

Session 4 last 1 hour

Break 15 minutes

Session 5 last 1 hour







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# Day 1



# Session 1

## Constructivism

**Introduction:** How Teachers Use Constructivism**Time Frame:** 15 minutes


Presenter Note: Presenter will define with the class the meaning of Constructivism. The presenter will read slides 1-4. After presenting slide #4 the presenter will introduce activity #1

## + How Teachers Use Constructivism

A constructivist classroom.

- Read together the following definitions:
  - Students are involved in their own learning process.
  - Learners build their own understanding.
  - Teachers interact with students to gain and explore new knowledge.
  
- For the purpose of this professional development constructivism uses prior knowledge and understanding to relate to another person and to help build a relationship between the teacher and student.

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## + How teachers use Constructivism to build a teacher-student relationship

5

Discuss how teachers can use Constructivism

- Teachers can transform learning by using prior knowledge and learning how to relate to the students to build a positive relationship.
- Teachers and students can learn about each other through interacting.
- Teachers can use reflective moments, analyzing their thoughts, to understand the relationship between teachers and students.
- Teachers should understand their students' diverse backgrounds (education level, language, place of residency).



Review the meaning of a constructivist classroom and how it relates to relationship building.

Next use the section below to record how you would use prior knowledge/experiences to understand or relate to students' knowledge/experience to build a better relationship.

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**Activity #1** Am I A Student-Centered Teacher

Time Frame: 60 minutes

Presenter Note: The teachers will review and complete activity #1 about constructivism as it relates to being a student-centered teacher and questions 1-4. The teachers will need to form 3 small groups and work together to answer each question. The answers will need to be written in the activity lesson and on a poster board. The poster board will be presented to the entire group for group discussions. The teachers should only work within their small group during this time to answer the questions and review for activity #1.



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**Activity #1**  
**Am I a Student-Centered  
Teacher?**

## + Key Things for Student-Centered Teachers

7

- Using the learner's personal experience to build relationships and teach students.
- When trying to understand students, let the teachers find alternate ways to understand and connect to what students have learned.
- Build a relationship by making things simple in the classroom. Teachers and students should enjoy learning together. (Make it Simple)
- Building a positive relationship involves understanding that students have different learning levels. (Don't Stress)
  - Find common interest
  - Use pairs or small groups
  - Be patient
  - Work as a team



Am I a student-centered teacher based on the key things provided from slide 7? Provide your answer below.

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- Form three small groups.
- Write down your responses for questions 1-4
- Compare and discuss your answers within your group.
- After small groups have finished discussing, share responses with the entire class in the session.

1. Based on what you have learned about student-centered teachers what activities would you use to interact with students in the classroom?

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2. How would you assess students' interaction with you during a lesson?

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3. How would you respond to lack of interest from students? How would the interest from the student affect your relationship with them?

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4. Would students return to your class if they had to choose related to how you interact with them.

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### Template to Use for Activity #1:

Presenter Note: Have the teachers return to their small group and work together to create student-centered lesson plan. The teachers can use the template below to help them develop an interactive student-centered lesson plan.

In your small group create a student-centered lesson plan based on the information you have learned in this session. A template is also provided in this guide for you to use in your classroom for future use.

## + Student-Centered Lesson Plan

9

Assignment	Briefly Describe Class Activities In The Boxes Labeled Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introduction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups.				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				

**Student-centered lesson plan.** The template on the next page is useful for a multi-skill level classroom. The teachers can use this lesson plan during the semester to help create lessons that will help with interaction between the teachers and students. The teachers can fill in lessons for daily use. The lesson plan is divided by skill level. The teacher will need to fill in the lessons based on the education level of the students, such as beginners, intermediate, and advanced. Then the teacher can fill in how much time students will be spending on the assignment. Next, the teacher will need to check if the assignment is for the whole class, pairs, individual, or groups.

Key Tools to help develop a student-centered lesson plan

- ❖ Conduct an assessment to find out the learners' needs
- ❖ Remember students have different learning styles
- ❖ Keep things simple
- ❖ Keep dialogue open between you and the students

Assignment	Briefly Describe Class Activities in The Boxes Labeled Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introduction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups.				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group				

**Review Activity #1**

Presenter Note: After completing the activity in session 1, the teachers will discuss and write down what they learned from the activity. They will leave the small groups and come together in one large group for the review activity. The teachers will reflect on what they learned from this activity and answer the questions listed below. The teachers should only work on the review for 10- 15 minutes.

What did you learn about yourself as a teacher trying to improve a teacher–student relationship? Do you think that the way you communicate with students affects the relationship? How do you communicate and interact with them?

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# Session 2

## Constructivism

**Introduction:** How Teachers Use Constructivism

Time Frame: 15 minutes

Presenter Note: The teachers will review and complete activity #2 about Constructivism as it relates to limited classroom learning resources and diverse academic abilities.

## + How Teachers Use Constructivism

11

A constructivist classroom.

- Read together the following definitions:
  - Teachers use resources to learn about their students and build a relationship with them. What resources work best to help the teachers interact with students?
  - Teachers find creative ways to understand their students.
  - Teachers understand the challenges of instructing a wide range of academic abilities.



Review the meaning of a constructivist classroom and how it relates to diverse learning.

Next use the section below to record how you would use prior knowledge/experiences of the students to interact with them. As the teacher, do you recognize a range of academic abilities in the classroom?

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**Activity #2** Creative Thinker Equals Positive Teacher–student Relationship

Time Frame: 60 minutes

Presenter Note: Review the slides with the teachers then have them form three small groups, answer the questions, and complete the lesson plan in activity #2. After completing the questions and lesson plan, the groups will summarize their answers and present them to all the groups in the session.

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**Activity #2**  
**Creative Thinking**  
**Equals**  
**Positive Teacher-Student**  
**Relationships**

## + Limited Resources

13

- How do limited resources affect you interacting with the students in the classroom
- How do you build positive relationships in a class when there is limited resources, and lack of interaction to teach

## Diversity



- How would you define diversity in the classroom
- How does diversity in the classroom affect teacher-student relationships



- Form three small groups.
- Write down your responses for questions 1-4.
- Compare and discuss your answers within your group.
- Poster boards will be provided to share group answers with all the groups in the session.
- Then create a lesson plan for a culturally diverse group.

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Presenter Note: In session #2 please have the teachers complete the following questions 1-4. The teachers will be divided into three small groups. Each group will write the answers on the poster board that will be given to them. The small groups will share their answers with all the groups in this session. A brief discussion will take place after each group presents their responses.

1. How would you define a creative thinker when it comes to developing innovative lessons that encourage effective interaction between the teacher and students?

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2. Is your classroom a community of diversity (age, gender, ethnicity, education level, languages)? If so, how do you build positive relationships in the classroom?

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3. In your classroom can students have a different opinion from the teacher and still maintain a positive relationship? Relate this question to what you learned about a constructivist classroom.

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4. How do you accommodate and interact with students who have various education levels? How do you interact when there is a lack of learning resources? How do these situations affect your relationship with your students?

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## Template to Use for Activity #2:

Presenter Note: Interact with teachers using the lesson plan template. The teachers can use the template on the next page to help them develop a lesson plan for a diverse classroom lesson plan.

15

# + Diverse Learning Lesson Plan

Assignment	Briefly Describe Class Activities In The Boxes Labeled Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introductions</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups.				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				

**Create a diverse learning lesson plan.** The template on the next page can be used for a multi- skill level classroom. The teachers will create a lesson plan in this session and can use this lesson plan during the semester to help create lessons to improve interaction between the teacher and students. The teachers can fill in lessons for daily use. The lesson plan is divided by beginner, intermediate, and advanced skills. The teacher can also fill in how much time students will be spending on an assignment. Next, the teacher will need to place a check mark on the left side of the template if the assignment is for the whole class, pairs, individual, or groups.

Assignment	Diverse Classroom Lesson Plan Template			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introduction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups.				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				

**Review Activity**

Presenter Note: After completing the activity in session 2, the teachers will discuss and write down what they learned from the activity. They will leave the small groups and come together in one large group for the review activity. The teachers will reflect on what they learned from this activity and answer the questions listed below. The teachers should only work on the review between 10-15 minutes.

What did you learn about yourself as a teacher trying to improve a teacher–student relationship? Do you think understanding diversity in the classroom and creating a diverse lesson plan affects the relationship? How do you communicate and interact with the students?

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# Session 3

## Constructivism

**Introduction:** Teachers' Perceptions  
Time Frame: 15 minutes

Presenter Note: During activity #3 the teachers will learn more about how a teacher's perception of what? can affect the way teachers and students interact with one another. The terms reality and constructivism, and how they are applied in adult education will be reviewed in a PowerPoint. After reviewing the meaning of reality and constructivism in an adult education classroom, the teachers will be asked to give their own definitions to these two terms.

## + Teachers' Perceptions



17

Merriam-Webster defines reality as “something that is neither derivative nor dependent”.... reality as a view of your experiences that determine the way you see things. Relationships can be viewed differently.

You may see your teacher-student relationship differently, and that is OK. The final result is to be able to develop a relationship that is best for you and your students. Observing your classroom and yourself is one way to understand your relationship with students.

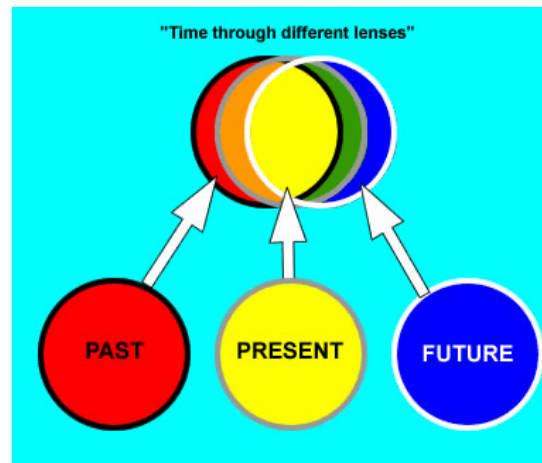
Is it easy or difficult to build a relationship when you have several different point of view in a classroom?

**Activity #3** Teachers' Perceptions About Relationships (Reality and Constructivism)

Time Frame: 45 minutes

+ **Activity #3**  
**Teachers' Perception about**  
**Relationships**  
**(Reality and Constructivism)**

18



Presenter Note: In session #2 please have the teachers complete the following questions 1-4. The teachers will be divided into three small groups. Each group will write the answers on the poster board that will be given to them. The small groups will share their answers with all the groups in this session. A brief discussion will take place after each group presents their responses.

How do we know what we know? How do you gain knowledge? The views of constructivism identify that a person learns from what they view or experience. In this activity, you as the teacher will learn how past experiences bring knowledge to resolve a problem. Below are two pictures; one is a picture of a painting and the other a mathematical problem. Not every person sees or solves problems the same way, but they may need to work together to understand a picture or find a solution. The exercises below will help you to understand how to interact with others to develop an answer to a problem. In relation to building relationships, as it relates to teacher–student relationships it may take interacting between the teacher and students to resolve issues with students who have various academic levels.



- Form three small groups.
- Write down your responses for questions 1-4.
- Compare and discuss your answers within your group.

19



### What Did You Learn?

#### Teachers' Perception (Reality and Constructivism)

The participants will form three small groups. Please complete the following questions 1-4 in a small group. Write the answers on the poster board that will be given to you. The small groups will share their answers with all the groups in this session. A brief discussion will take place after each group presents their responses.

1. Are the expectations in your class based on past or present relationships with students? Do your personal views of students affect the way you interact and build relationships with your students.

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2. In your small group tell each other what you see in this painting. Each person can only use one word to tell what they see in the painting, but the word must also describe yourself. Next briefly tell another person from your group something about yourself that relates to the painting. The other person who received the information about you must write down the meaning of that one word as it related to you. The initial person must tell the person who wrote the meaning of the word if they are correct or incorrect. The objective of this activity is to use words that relate to you and the painting. The other person has to communicate and learn about you in order to give a correct meaning to the word. Building a positive relationship includes listening, understanding, and communicating with each other.



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# Session 4

## Improving Relationships between Teachers and Students

**Introduction;** Improving relationships between teachers and students  
Time Frame: 15 minutes

Presenter Note: Present Session 4 PowerPoint that will explain the meaning of Understanding the Teaching Perception of building a positive relationship, and Self-Reflection.

## + Improving Relationships between Teachers and Students

21

- What do you know about your students?
- Improving teacher-student relationships may require getting to know more about students. This may take more time and effort, especially in a diverse classroom.
- Do you have reflective moments on how to improve your teacher-student relationship?



As a teacher, do you go into class and start teaching or do you do some type of interaction activity with the students? Are you aware if students are listening, engaged in a conversation related to a lesson. As the teacher do you have a lesson prepared at their education level of the students? Is there communication between students and yourself? What types of interaction am I aware of in the classroom? Is the relationship between you and the students developed enough to recognize the learning needs of each student? What types of support do you provide to your students?

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**Activity #4 Key Notes to Understand Your Teacher–student Relationship**  
Time Frame: 45 minutes

Presenter Note: The teachers will form three small groups, answer the questions, and review the personal journal log in activity 1. After completing the questions, the groups will summarize their answers and present them to everyone in their session.

**Key Notes to Understand Your Teacher–student Relationship**

The purpose of this activity is to help teachers create a vision of a classroom that is effective for teachers who want to interact and build a better learning community for their students. The teachers will need to answer the bullet points listed below and then review the journal log on the next page. The teachers may also review how they will keep their journals (daily or weekly).

- What do you know about your students.
- Do you share any personal reflective moments with students? There may be times when students and yourself may want to discuss something that is learned from class or a personal learning experience. This may help to create a dialogue between the students and yourself and increase classroom interaction between you and the students.

- Do you think that you provide each student adequate interaction and communication that will help improve or sustain a positive relationship?

## + Activity # 4 Key Notes to Understand Your Teacher-Student Relationship

22

- Form three small groups.
- Complete the Daily Classroom Journal Log. This is a practice journal log. You will complete another journal for five days titled *Daily Journal Log of Classroom Interaction*.
- Compare and discuss your answers within your group.



**What Did You Learn?**

## + Self-Reflection Journal Log

23

“Self-reflection is a crucial element of enhancing personal resilience” (Wosnitza, M., Delzepich, R., Schwarze, J., O’Donnell, M., Faust, V., & Camilleri, V, 2018 ).

- Reflect on your experience
- Reflect on your learning
- Apply your learning to your practice

+

24

### Self-Reflection Journal Log

Did I communicate well with my students?

What will I do differently to communication classroom interaction?

What type of activities did I do with my students to improve my relationship with students?

How did my relationship with students improve today?

What did I learn about my students today based on the lessons implemented in the classroom?

## Daily Journal Log of Classroom Interaction

Did I communicate well with my students?

What type of classroom lessons and activities did I use to interact with students today?

What type of activities did I do with my students to improve my relationship with students?

What will I do differently to increase classroom interaction?

How did my interaction with students improve for today?

What did I learn about my students today based on the lessons implemented in the classroom?

**Review Activity**

Presenter Note: After completing the activity in session 4 the teachers will discuss and write down what they learned from the activity. They will leave the small groups and come together in one large group for the review activity. The teachers will reflect on what they learned from this activity and answer the questions listed below. The teachers should only work on the review between 10- 15 minutes.

What did you learn about yourself as a teacher trying to improve a teacher–student relationship? Do you think creating a journal log will help identify how you communicate and interact with your students? Why or why not?

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# Session 5

## Improving Relationships between Teachers and Students

**Introduction:** Self-Reflection and Journal Log**Time Frame:** 15 minutes


Presenter Note: Present Session 5 PowerPoint that will explain the self-reflection of a teacher.

## + Self-Reflection and Journal Log

26

Self-Reflection is important because it can help in several ways:

- Determine what is working or not working
- Increase awareness of unexpected outcomes
- Help improve communication
- Understand reactions during complex situations to help build relationship



**Activity #5** Self-Reflection and Journal Log  
Time Frame: 45 minutes

The purpose of this activity is to allow teachers the opportunity to review how they interact with students, and how the interaction affects them as teachers. The teachers will form three small groups and complete the self-reflection. While still in the small groups the teachers will discuss the results of the self-reflection. Provide details of why you agree or disagree with a statement.

## + Activity # 5 Self-Reflection and Journal Log

27

- Form three small groups
- Complete the self-reflection activity
- Compare and discuss your answers within your group.



**What Did You Learn?**

<b>Self-Reflection</b>		
<b>You believe you have a good relationship with your students.</b>		
Agree	Neutral	Disagree
<b>You have a positive attitude and an open mind to ideas from your students and teacher-student relationship.</b>		
Agree	Neutral	Disagree
<b>You personalize the class lessons for the students to interact with them.</b>		
Agree	Neutral	Disagree
<b>As the teacher you are flexible with the students when needed to help develop a positive teacher-student relationship.</b>		
Agree	Neutral	Disagree
<b>What are your Strengths with developing teacher-student relationships?</b>		
<b>What are your Weaknesses with developing teacher-student relationships?</b>		

Self-reflection is a process that helps a person recognize areas of strength and weakness. In this activity, the teacher will examine him or herself and rate the areas as agree, neutral, and disagree.

- You believe you have a good relationship with your students.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

- You have a positive attitude and an open mind to ideas from your students and teacher–student relationship.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

- You personalize the class lessons for the students to interact with them.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

- As the teacher, you are flexible with the students when needed to help develop a positive teacher–student relationship.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

What are your strengths with developing teacher–student relationships?

What are your weaknesses with developing teacher–student relationships?

The image shows a large rectangular frame with a thin purple border. In the top-left corner, there is a purple plus sign (+). In the top-right corner, there is a vertical bar consisting of a thin light purple line on the left and a wider dark purple rectangle on the right. The number '29' is written in white inside the dark purple rectangle. In the center of the frame, the text 'Day 2' is written in a large, dark purple, serif font.



# Session 1

## Understanding Lesson Plans for better Interaction in a Diverse Classroom

**Introduction:** What are student learning levels  
**Time Frame:** 15 minutes

**Presenter Note:** The presenter will ask the teachers to form small groups and discuss what they wrote in their class interaction journals. Each teacher should share in the small groups.

+31

## What are student learning levels

- **Level 1: Knowledge.** What does the student already know?
- **Level 2: Understanding.** Does the student understand what they have learned?
- **Level 3: Application.** Is the student able to apply what they have learned?
- **Level 4: Analysis:** Is the student able to explain in their own words what they have learned?
- **Level 5 Synthesis;** Is the student able to form new ideas from what they have learned?
- **Level 6 Evaluation:** Has the student accomplished what was to be learned?



**Activity #1: Developing A Lesson for Multiple Learning**

Time Frame: 60 minutes

Presenter Note: Have the teachers work to their small group and work together to develop a lesson plan for multiple learning the teachers can use the template below to help them develop an interactive student-centered lesson plan.

In your small group create a multiple learning lesson plan based on the information you have learned in this session. A template is also provided in this guide for you to use in your classroom for future use.

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32

## Activity #1

### Develop a lesson for multiple learning

STUDENT-CENTERED / DIVERSE LEARNING LESSON PLAN

Assignment	Briefly Describe Class Activities in The Boxes Labeled Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
1. Warm up and/or Review <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
2. Introduction <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
3. Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
4. Practice <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
5. Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
6. Application <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
7. Reflection <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group				

Assignment	Diverse Classroom Lesson Plan Template			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introduction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups.				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				

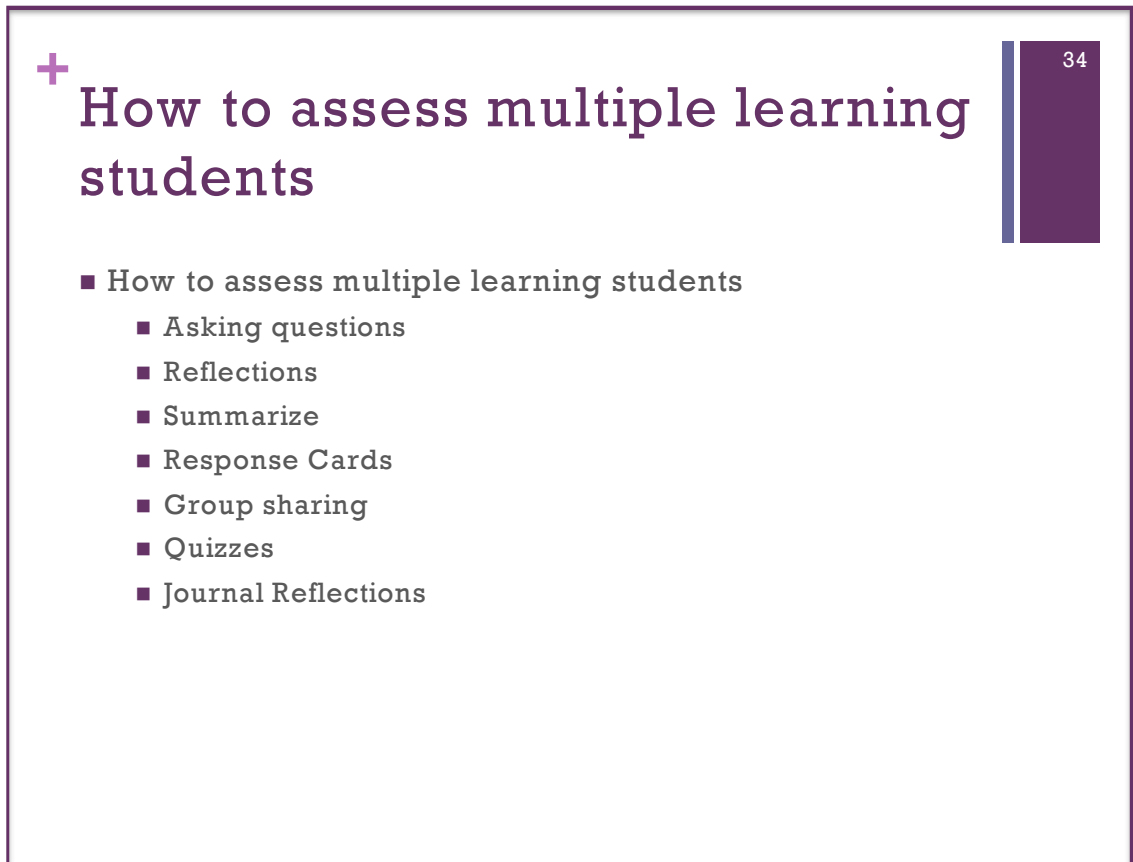


## Session 2

### Understanding Lesson Plans for better Interaction in a Diverse Classroom

**Introduction:** How to assess multiple learning students  
Time Frame: 15 minutes

Presenter Note: The presenter will ask the teachers to form small groups and discuss how they would assess their students if they have multiple learning level in their class.



34

## + How to assess multiple learning students

- How to assess multiple learning students
  - Asking questions
  - Reflections
  - Summarize
  - Response Cards
  - Group sharing
  - Quizzes
  - Journal Reflections

**Activity #2:** Developing A Lesson for Multiple Learning  
Time Frame: 60 minutes

Presenter Note: Have the teachers work to their small group and work together to develop a lesson plan for multiple learning.

In your small group review the multiple learning lesson plan based on the information you have learned in this session. Examine the pros and cons about the lesson plan that was created.

**+ Activity #2**  
**Review lesson plan from Activity #1**

STUDENT-CENTERED / DIVERSE LEARNING LESSON PLAN

Assignment	Briefly Describe Class Activities in The Boxes Labeled Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introduction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group				

**Review Activity**

Presenter Note: After completing the activity in session 2, the teachers will discuss and write down what they learned from the activity. They will leave the small groups and come together in one large group for the review activity. The teachers will reflect on what they learned from this activity and answer the questions listed below. The teachers should only work on the review between 10-15 minutes.

What did you learn about developing a lesson plan for multiple learning level students. as a teacher trying to improve a teacher–student relationship? Do you think understanding diversity in the classroom and creating a diverse lesson plan affects the relationship?

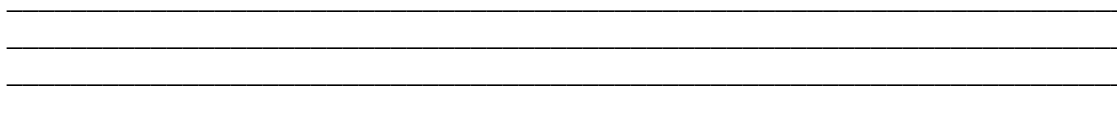
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36

# Session 3 Improving Classroom Interaction

**Introduction:** Best Practices for Classroom Interaction I**Time Frame:** 15 minutes

Presenter Note: The presenter will ask the teachers to form small groups and discuss and create a conversation grid.

## + Best Practices for Classroom Interaction I

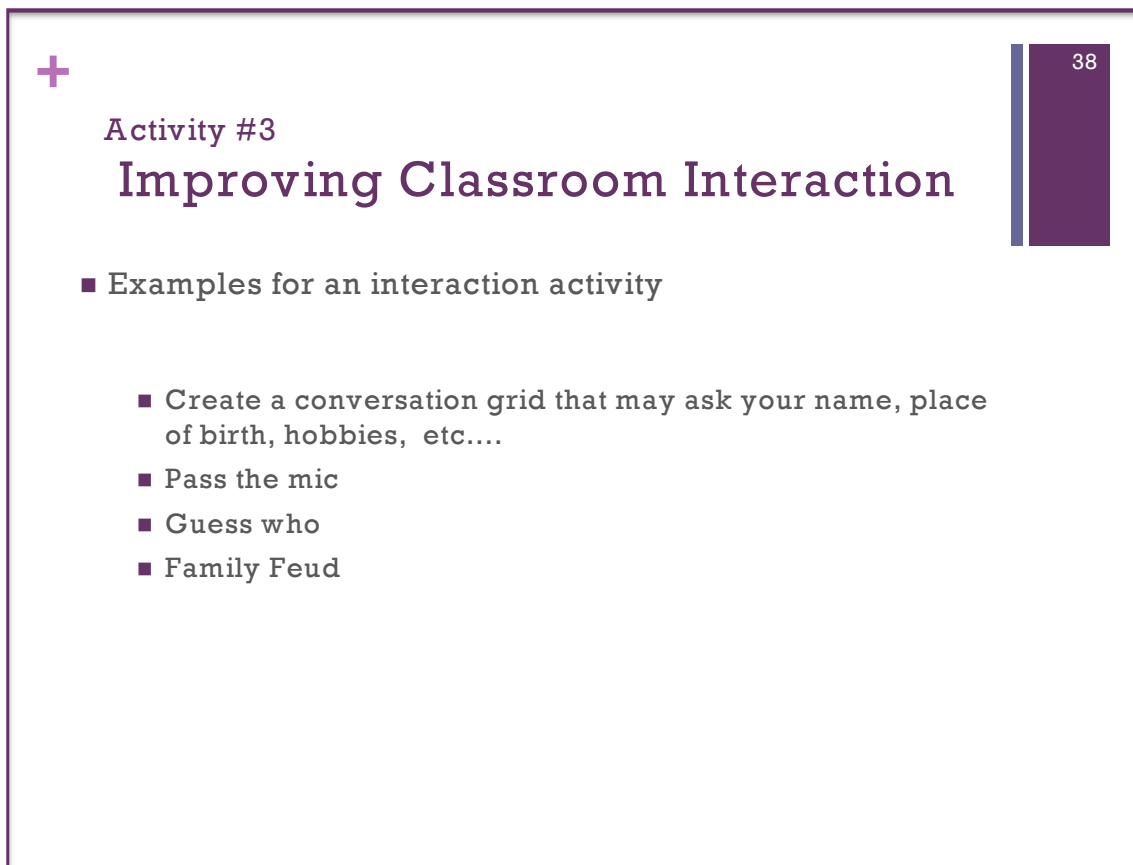
37

**Best Practices for Classroom Interaction I**

- Create a welcoming environment
- Establish well communication
- Learn about each other
- Create activities that encourages a feeling of success
- Teachers and students should be acceptable to new ideas

**Activity #3: Improving Classroom Interaction**

Time Frame: 45 minutes

A presentation slide with a purple border. In the top left corner is a purple plus sign. In the top right corner is a purple vertical bar with the number 38 in white. The main title is 'Improving Classroom Interaction' in a large purple font. Below it is the subtitle 'Activity #3' in a smaller purple font. A bulleted list follows, starting with 'Examples for an interaction activity' and listing four items: 'Create a conversation grid that may ask your name, place of birth, hobbies, etc....', 'Pass the mic', 'Guess who', and 'Family Feud'.

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38

Activity #3

# Improving Classroom Interaction

- Examples for an interaction activity
  - Create a conversation grid that may ask your name, place of birth, hobbies, etc....
  - Pass the mic
  - Guess who
  - Family Feud

Teachers' in their small groups (five teachers per group) will share their activity with each other and pretend that the other teachers in the group are students and complete the activity with them.

Material: scissors, 2 poster boards, glue, colored markers, post-it notes, pens, notebook paper. There are brief examples listed after the student centered/diverse lesson plan to help teachers develop their interaction activity.

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If needed teachers provide insight on how to improve relationships with students

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# Session 4 Improving Classroom Interaction

**Introduction:** Best Practices for Classroom Interaction II**Time Frame:** 15 minutes

Presenter Note: The presenter will ask the teachers to form small groups and discuss and create a conversation grid.

## + Best Practices for classroom interaction II

40

- **Emotional support** refers to the ways teachers help students develop warm, supportive relationships, experience enjoyment and excitement about learning, feel comfortable in the classroom, and experience appropriate levels of autonomy or independence.
- **Teacher sensitivity** — teachers' responsiveness to students' academic and emotional needs
- **Quality of feedback** — how teachers expand participation and learning through feedback to students.
- **Language modeling** — the extent to which teachers stimulate, facilitate, and encourage students' language use.

**Activity #4: Improving Classroom Interaction**  
Time Frame: 45 minutes

41

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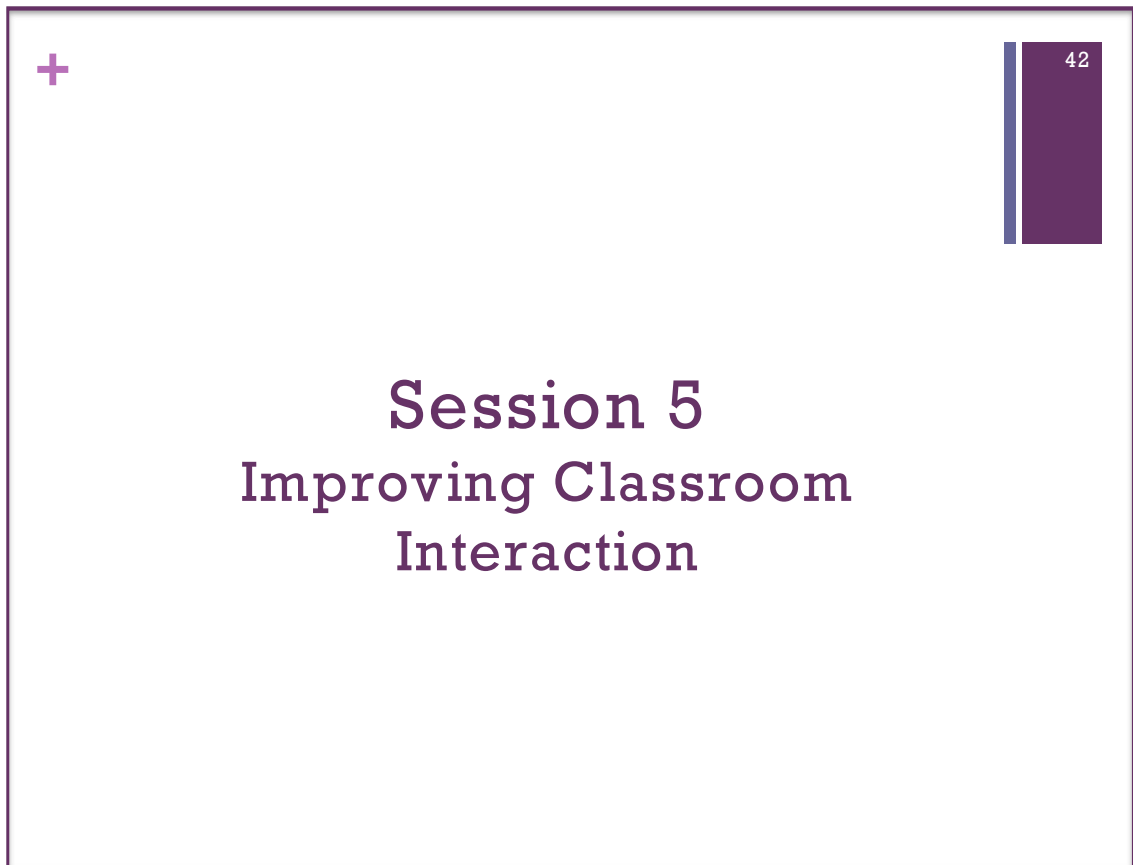
## Activity #4

### Best Practices for classroom interaction II

- Continue to share your interaction activity
- Examples for an interaction activity
  - Create a conversation grid that may ask your name, place of birth, hobbies, etc....
  - Pass the mic
  - Guess who
  - Family Feud

Teachers' in their small groups will continue to share their activity with each other and pretend that the other teachers in the group are students and complete the activity with them.

Material: scissors, 2 poster boards, glue, colored markers, post-it notes, pens, notebook paper. There are brief examples listed after the student centered/diverse lesson plan to help teachers develop their interaction activity.



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# Session 5 Improving Classroom Interaction

**Introduction:** Improving Classroom Interaction

**Time Frame:** 15 minutes

**Presenter Note:** Presenter will ask the questions with the bullet points from the slide below.



## Activity #5 Interaction and Journal Log

Having an interaction journal log helps to:

- Target different aspects of your teaching
- Record your growth
- Motivations for a teacher
- Self-awareness
- Learning about various ways to interact with students
- Formative assessment of how a teacher interacts with students

### **Activity #5** Interaction Activity and Interaction Journal Log

Time Frame: 45 minutes

Presenter Note: Presenter has the teachers form a small group. The group should have no more than five teachers within the group. Explain to them that each teacher in the group will roll a die and the number will tell them what question to answer on the space below. After each teacher has taken a turn they will write their responses on the poster board provided. Each group will share their answer with the entire class in the session.

Teachers will form small groups in this session. In the groups you will each roll a die and answer this question out loud then write your answer on the space given below. The group will also write their responses on the poster board to share with the entire class in the session. After everyone has stated their response, as a class choose 3 best responses that were given.

Your responses should relate to the relationship of your students

Roll a 1: I am thankful for...

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Roll a 2: Other teachers compliment me on my ability to....

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Roll a 3: Something I would like my students to know about me is....

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Roll a 4: I feel really good about myself when...

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Roll a 5: I am proud of my ability to....

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Roll a 6: Something nice I did for my students was....

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What are the best three responses given from class in this session.

1.

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2.

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3.

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## + Activity #5

### Interaction Journal Log

44

**JOURNAL LOG OF CLASS INTERACTION**

Did I communicate with my students this week? Did I connect with the students? Did I use good communication skills? Did communicating with students as I presented the lessons help encourage a positive relationship with the students?

What did I do in class this week that reflects positive teacher-student relationship with students? What type of interaction activity did I use based on learning material from the textbooks (internet, handouts, group lessons, etc.)?

What suggestions can I make to help improve teacher-student relationship?

What did I achieve this week with trying to improve my relationship with students

What did I learn about my students this week regarding how well we did communicate and interact with each other? What did I learn about my students? What did they learn about me?

Presenter Note: After completing the Interaction activity answer the question from the interaction journal log.

### Daily Journal Log of Classroom Interaction

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Did I communicate well with my students?

What type of classroom lessons and activities did I use to interact with students today?

What type of activities did I do with my students to improve my relationship with students?

What will I do differently to increase classroom interaction?

How did my interaction with students improve for today?

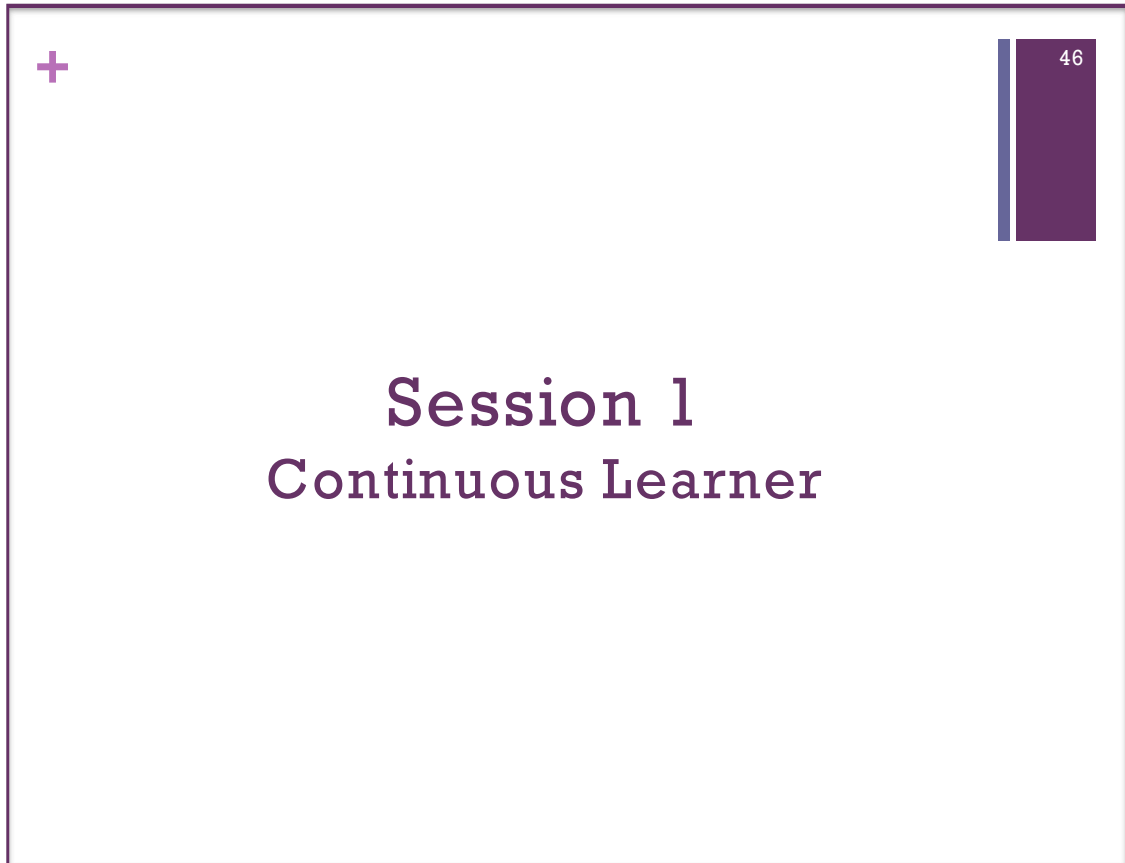
What did I learn about my students today based on the lessons implemented in the classroom?

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45

Day 3



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46

# Session 1 Continuous Learner

**Introduction:** Teaching adults is a learning process

**Time Frame:** 15 minutes

Presenter Note: Discuss with the teachers about being a mentor by reading the bullet points on the slide below. As you read these bullets help the teachers understand that being a teacher is the same as being a mentor.

## + Teaching adults is a learning process

47

- Developing humility to help improve the teacher-student relationship
- Teachers need mentors
- Sometimes it is better to listen more than speaking
- Appreciate the relationship
- Be genuine with each other
- Be able to correlate with positive expectations



## Activity #1

# Teaching adults is a learning process

- A classroom problem: Teacher has 15 students. There are three different languages spoken by the students. There are seven students who are at a middle school grade level and 8 students who are at a high school grade level. None of the students talk to the teacher when they are in class. How as the teacher would you begin communicating with the students? How would make the students feel comfortable to want to build a teacher-student relationship with you?

### **Activity #1** Teaching adults is a learning process

Time Frame: 45 minutes

A classroom problem based on teacher–student relationship is given to the teachers. Create a classroom lesson that can be used to help improve teacher–student relationship?

Each teacher completes and shares their self-reflection journal log  
Teachers provide their opinion and examples of methods to improve relationships with students based on their responses in their self-reflection journal.

Assignment	Diverse Classroom Lesson Plan Template			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introduction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups.				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				

SELF-REFLECTION JOURNAL LOG

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Did I communicate well with my students?

What will I do differently to communication classroom interaction?

What type of activities did I do with my students to improve my relationship with students?

How did my relationship with students improve today?

What did I learn about my students today based on the lessons implemented in the classroom?

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49

# Session 2 Empower Each Other

**Introduction:** Teaching adults is a learning process  
Time Frame: 15 minutes

## +How can we empower each other

50

Examples:

- Give discussion time
- Respect each other when agreeing and disagreeing
- Brainstorm with students
- Have patience
- Provide your personal outlook or views you have about your students

## + Activity # 2 Empower the teacher-student relationship

51

The teacher will create a scrapbook that provides personal views they might have about their students. In the scrapbook they will cut pictures out that tell a story about their students and events that have may take place with their students. After the teachers have finished their scrapbook, they will share the story within their group.

### **Activity #2** Empower the teacher–student relationship


Time Frame: 45 minutes

Presenter Note: Have the teachers form small groups. At each table there are some magazines, scissors, staplers, glue, and sheets of construction paper. The teacher will create a scrapbook that provides personal views they may have about their students. In the scrapbook they will cut pictures out that tell a story about their students and future events that may take place with their students. After the teachers have finished their scrapbook, they will share the story within their group.

The teachers can also use the scrapbook activity in their classroom. They can take pictures throughout the semester and at the end put a class scrapbook together. The teacher and students can look back and see what they have done together throughout the semester.



You will create a scrapbook that tells a story about your students and any special events that have taken place in the classroom that involves your students. You will use the magazine pictures and construction paper to create the scrapbook.



# Session 3

## Create a Student-Centered and Diverse Learning Lesson Plan

**Introduction:** Lesson Plan that includes ways to empower the teacher–student relationship

## +Activity #3 Student Centered

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Teachers collaborate to create another Student-Centered Lesson Plan that was initially provided from Activity #1 of day one's face-to-face session

Assignment	Briefly Describe Class Activities In The Boxes Labeled Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
1. Warm up and/or Review <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
2. Introduction <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
3. Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
4. Practice <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
5. Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
6. Application <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
7. Reflection <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				

### Activity #3 Create a Student-Centered and Diverse Learning Lesson

Time Frame: 60 minutes

Teachers will work with each other in a small group and create student centered lesson plan. The teachers will do role playing. One teacher will implement the lesson in the group while the other teachers are students. Each teacher will present a lesson. After completing this activity each teacher will need to ask themselves how they empowered the students while using their lesson.

Assignment	Briefly Describe Class Activities in The Boxes Labeled Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced			Time
	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	
<b>1. Warm up and/or Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>2. Introduction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups.				
<b>3. Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>4. Practice</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>5. Evaluation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>6. Application</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups				
<b>7. Reflection</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Class <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group				

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# Session 4 Positive Attitude

**Introduction:** Displaying Positive Attitude  
Time Frame: 15 minutes



## + Displaying Positive Attitude

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- Are there times in the classroom where you may become frustrated?
- How does your attitude change when you are frustrated?
- How do you change your negative thinking into positive thinking.? How does it affect your teacher-student relationship?





## Activity #4 How do I display a positive attitude

- Write a brief statement of how you would display a positive attitude with your students.
- Create an exercise for your students to encourage a positive attitude for a better teacher-student relationship?

**Activity #4** How do I display a positive attitude  
Time Frame: 45 minutes

**How do I display a positive attitude with my students?**

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# Session 5

## Take It a Step Further

**Introduction:** I am a Mentor  
Time Frame 15 minutes

## + I am a Mentor

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- Understand what type of mentor you are.
- Set expectations together with your students.
- Take general interest in your students as a person.
- Know when to give advice.
- Improve your emotional intelligence.
- Don't assume anything about your student, you should ask.
- Be transparent about mistakes you have made.
- Celebrate your students' Achaemenes together.
- Give more than you ask for.



## + Activity #5 I am a Mentor

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The objective of this activity is to build a mentor



**Activity #5** How do I display a positive attitude

Time Frame: 45 minutes

In small groups the teachers will use a flipchart to draw an outline of a person. Each teacher will write inside the outline the qualities they think a mentor should have. Each teacher will use a different pin. Once group has finished their mentor then all the teachers will come together. The teachers will share and compare their groups mentor with all the teachers in that session.

**Material:** Flipchart paper or poster board (one for each group, a large number of thick-tipped colored markers, tape (to tape the artwork on the wall when completed).

**Survey**

Time Frame: 15 minutes

Presenter Note: After the teachers have completed their lesson plans then they will complete a PD survey.

## + Complete the PD survey

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**Professional Development Survey**  
Please review each question and circle your response

I gained new knowledge from this professional development.	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
I will use the professional development activities in the classroom to help develop a better teacher-student relationship.	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
The period of the professional development activities and journal log was adequate.	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
I will use the journal log in this professional development again in my classroom.	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Teacher support was provided to help develop the lesson plans and journal logs were useful.	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
I would attend another professional development similar to this one (Related to activities, in-class support, follow-ups).	I agree	I disagree	I don't know

What did you learn from this PD? Share responses as a class

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Complete the survey on the next page and place it the basket labeled survey at the front door of the classroom.



### Professional Development Survey

Please review each question and circle your response

This is the end of the professional development. Please remember to take the time to enjoy yourself, enjoy your students, and enjoy learning from others.

I gained new knowledge from this professional development.	I agree	I disagree
I will use the professional development activities in the classroom to help develop a better teacher–student relationship.	I agree	I disagree
The period of the professional development activities and journal log was adequate.	I agree	I disagree
I will use the journal log in this professional development again in my classroom.	I agree	I disagree
Teacher support was provided to help develop the lesson plans and journal logs were useful.	I agree	I disagree
I would attend another professional development similar to this one (Related to activities, in-class support, follow-ups).	I agree	I disagree



This is the end of the professional development. Please remember to take the time to enjoy yourself, enjoy your students, and enjoy learning from others.

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## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interviewee (Title and Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Course/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Other topics Discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Interview Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

*Purpose:* The purpose of this interview is to provide data that supports how adult ESL teachers describe their relationship with their students

1. As a teacher, what is your perspective on being an ESL teacher for an adult education program? Please explain with details or examples.
2. According to Schwab (1970), adult literacy became an issue for lifelong learners. How do you think building relationships between the teacher and student affects ESL programs?
3. How would you describe diverse cultures?
4. How do you try to connect or communicate with your students if diverse cultures are present, and does culture awareness have an effect with your interaction with the students?
5. How would you describe relationship building techniques and which ones have you used in your classroom?
6. How would you describe successful and non-successful relationship building techniques?
7. How as a teacher, would or do you adapt your learning environment to create a relationship with your students?
8. How would you describe your cultural awareness of the students enrolled in ESL?
9. When you meet your students who have diverse backgrounds, how do you integrate

culture awareness for classes with a large population of students? (Individuals and Similar cultural and educational backgrounds)?

10. Social learning is a theory that explains people learn from one another (socially) in many ways that can be applied to improve certain environments. Do you think that examining teacher and student relationships in ESL programs will provide information to help ESL programs? Please explain your answer with details or examples.

## Appendix C: Classroom Observation Protocol

Understanding Teacher Perception of Teacher–student Relationship in  
Adult ESL Programs

## Classroom Observation Report

Instructor evaluated \_\_\_\_\_

Course/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Purpose:* The purpose of this classroom observation is to provide data that supports how adult ESL teachers interact with their students

A numbered level should be placed by each question to help identify how much interaction took place within the classroom.

The levels will be used to determine how often the action took place in the classroom during the observation.

5 = 11 times or more in the classroom

4 = 8 to 10 times in the classroom

3 = 6 to 8 times in the classroom

2 = 3 to 5 times in the classroom

1 = 1 to 2 times in the classroom

Not Applicable = the action did not occur in the classroom

Highest	Satisfactory			Lowest	Not Applicable
5	4	3	2	1	n/a

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. In the learning environment was there communicating and interacting with positive expectations?

Examples/ Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Talking with students individually and help them understand at the student's grade level

Examples/ Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Give the student the opportunity to interact with class activity.

Examples/ Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Did the teachers' learning environment help to encourage students?

Examples/ Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Correcting students in a positive manner.

Examples/ Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Communicates clearly and effectively to the level of the students.

Examples/ Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Did the teachers' learning environment help encourage students, and provide assistance when needed?

Examples/ Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Preventing classroom frustration and stress.

Examples/ Comments:

Any other observation noted in relation to interacting with students?



## Appendix D: Coding Analysis

*Coding Analysis of Interviews and Observations Related to How ESL teachers describe and demonstrate their relationships with their students*

Open codes		Axial codes	Themes
Interview	Observation		
Struggle to communicate because (difficult from work, diversity, bonding, social skills, simplify, appreciated, feeling motivated Learn, grade levels	Lack of communicating Diverse  Learn	Teachers struggle to communicate	Teachers struggle to communicate with diverse students and multi-grade level students
Accepting students' background Unprepared Lessons	Students' background and interaction	Teachers and diverse learning students	Teachers limit their interactions with students to those interactive suggestions provided in the textbook and do not include other opportunities for classroom interaction with their students.
Lessons	Lessons (classroom interaction activity	Lack of using interaction activity in textbook to help communicated	
Interact/Improve relationship	Text book interaction	Teacher and students' connecting in the classroom	