

Andragogy, Accessibility, and Adult ESL: An Analysis of English Language Teaching Curricula

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Abstract

This thesis aims to provide a textual analysis of three major adult English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula used in voluntary English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching contexts. The three curricula focused upon in this study are *Interchange*, *Side by Side Plus*, and *Step Forward*, published respectively by Cambridge, Pearson, and Oxford University Press. Two textbooks from each curriculum, one at the A1 proficiency level and one from the B1+ level, were analyzed for their incorporation of the six principles of adult learning theory, or *andragogy*. Along with examining the use of andragogy, curricular adaptability and accessibility for faith-based programs, students, and teachers were examined as well through an analysis of curriculum materials. The study found an unexpected amount of andragogy in ELT textbooks, but also found a number of areas in all examined curricula that could be improved to better consider adult ELLs and their educational needs. In locating common areas that are lacking and potentially impeding learner growth, this research illuminates the need for a closer conversation between textbook writers, adult learning theorists, and ESL instructors in the creation of ELT educational materials that prioritize adult language learners' strengths, needs, and goals. This study may benefit both ELT researchers and faith-based ESL program directors by illuminating aspects of adult ELT curricula that may be incongruent with the needs of the faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL classroom.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Overview of Chapters.....	7
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	9
Voluntary Adult ESL: An Understudied Field.....	9
Research in ESL Educational Programming.....	10
ELT Textbooks.....	11
Research in Faith-Based, Voluntary Adult ESL Programming.....	12
Faith-Based ELT Textbooks.....	13
Faith-Based, Voluntary Adult ESL Instructors.....	14
Andragogy.....	15
History of Andragogy.....	16
Critiques of Andragogy.....	18
Andragogy, SLA, & Adult ESL.....	19
Conclusion.....	22
Research Questions.....	23
Chapter Three: Methods.....	24
Part 1: Textbook Analysis.....	24
Data Collection.....	25
Data Analysis.....	28
Coding Procedure.....	28
Reliability of Coding.....	34
Part 2: Curriculum Analysis.....	35
Data Collection.....	35
Data Analysis.....	38
Chapter Four: Findings.....	39
Part 1: Findings from Textual Analysis.....	39
Learner's Need to Know.....	45
Self-Concept of the Learner.....	46
Prior Experience of the Learner.....	46
Orientation to Learning.....	48
Motivation to Learn.....	48
Readiness to Learn.....	49
Conclusion.....	51
Part 2: Findings from Curriculum Analysis.....	51
Adaptability.....	51
Accessibility.....	54

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion.....	68
Principles of Andragogy in Adult ELT Textbooks.....	68
Adaptability and Accessibility of ELT Curricula for Faith-Based, Voluntary, Semi-Weekly ESL Programs.....	71
Conclusion.....	73
Implications.....	76
For Program Directors and Instructors.....	76
For ELT Publishers.....	78
Limitations.....	79
Future Work.....	80
References.....	81
Appendix.....	90
Vita.....	91

List of Tables

Table 3.1. CEFR Levels.....	28
Table 3.2. Code Descriptions and Examples.....	30
Table 4.1. Prevalence of Activities with Andragogical Principles.....	40
Table 4.2. Curriculum Offerings.....	52
Table 4.3. Teacher’s Resources per Curriculum.....	56
Table 4.4. Features of Online Study Platforms.....	58

List of Figures

Figure 3.1. Example of a unit, lesson, and activity.....	29
Figure 4.1. Coded Principles per Total Coded Activities.....	42
Figure 4.2. Percentage of Coded Principles per Book.....	43
Figure 4.3. Prevalence of Coded Principles in A1 and B1+ Textbooks.....	44
Figure 4.4. Activity Example: Self-Concept of the Learner.....	47
Figure 4.5. Activity Example: Motivation to Learn.....	50
Figure 4.6. Interchange Digital Workbook.....	59
Figure 4.7. Interchange Online Progress Tracker.....	60
Figure 4.8. Interchange Online Textbook.....	61
Figure 4.9. Side by Side Online Textbook.....	63
Figure 4.10. Side by Side Online “FunZone”.....	64
Figure 4.11. Step Forward Online Study Platform.....	65
Figure 4.12. Step Forward Online Progress Tracker.....	67

List of Abbreviations

ESL: English as a Second Language

ELL: English Language Learner

ELT: English Language Teaching

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

List of Definitions

Faith-based voluntary adult ESL: An English as a Second Language course or program that is taught in part or in whole by volunteers, is run by a religious organization or nonprofit such as a church, and teaches non-accredited English lessons for adult English Language Learners in the community.

Faith-based voluntary adult student: Students attending faith-based voluntary adult ESL classes

Global ELT textbook: An English Language Teaching textbook created to be used in any setting or location in which English is taught as a second language. These books often have themes or dialects specific to places such as the US or the UK, but content is made for general audiences and is not specifically made to be used by any one region, culture, and home language.

Curriculum: A selection of materials, including textbooks, workbooks, supplementary materials, and teachers resources, which is used as the primary means of educational content and organizational structure for one or more proficiency levels within an academic subject.

Chapter One: Introduction

When I began volunteering at faith-based, adult ESL programs in 2019, I became aware of a number of obstacles hindering the growth of my adult students. For one, many of my students relied on others for transportation, worked odd or overtime hours at work, had children who had after-school needs, or other obstacles that kept them from being in class consistently. Another obstacle was that the classes were usually in the evenings on one or two days a week for two to three hours, making it difficult to fully cover material, keep students to stay engaged late at night, and ensure they retain information between classes. But what stood out to me most was the lack of teacher training resources and quality textbook materials. *Step Forward First Edition* was the curriculum used at the first program for which I volunteered. A few years later, teaching at a different program, I was introduced to *Side by Side Plus*, created more recently and by a different publisher. However, I was constantly disappointed with the juvenile nature of these ESL textbooks with cartoonish images, elementary activities, and no explanation of tasks. I have often created my own materials, trying to make content relevant to my adult students and giving rationale for why they are learning something or how to learn things for themselves outside of class. However, when I began doing this, I had no prior experience teaching ESL, no resources or training sessions from the program itself, and no real understanding of what my students needed. While some of this was likely due to the faith-based programs' own limited funding and knowledge of ESL instruction, I discovered as I worked with books from different programs that it was not uncommon for me to open an adult ESL textbook and feel as if it were written for grade-school students. Was I missing key information as to why there seemed to be a lack of adult-appropriate content in these textbooks, or were the writers of these materials truly so separated from their target audience? This question is what began my studies into ESL teaching,

adult learning, and English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula most frequently used within the context of faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs.

My experience as a volunteer ESL teacher in an underfunded faith-based program is no doubt a unique one, given the vast number of those living in the United States without access to English education. The U.S. welcomes approximately 20% of the world's migrants, with over 40 million individuals living in the U.S. today who were born in another country; however, only around half of these individuals, here for work, family, education, or a better life, are proficient English speakers, reporting that they speak English "very well" (Budiman, 2020). This means that approximately 20 million immigrants and residents living in the US do not speak proficient English. With such high numbers of US residents who have limited English knowledge, the need for English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction is great. While many resources have been allotted to public K-12 schools and universities to accommodate for the needs of childhood and adolescent English learners, there is much less organized support for adult learners (Eyring, 2014).

There are a few different options for adult English Language Learners (ELLs) who desire to learn English formally in a classroom setting. The first is enrollment in a private, university-led program, which often has full-time, part-time, or even night and weekend options. This type of program may come with a degree or certificate, and is especially advantageous to adult ELLs in need of more official qualifications for their career goals; however, students are often wholly responsible for tuition, which is an obstacle for many immigrants with unstable means of income. Another option is federally-funded, state administered programs that are mandated through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Division of Adult Education and Literacy, 2022). However, these programs may follow schedules that are too inflexible for

working adults, and there may be very few in any given area, which creates an issue for adults who have transportation and/or time restrictions (Rhodes & Schmidt, 2020). The third option is to seek out English lessons at local churches or community centers with free, volunteer-based ESL programs; this option is especially attractive for its convenience, focus on community, free instruction, and flexible class times. These programs aim to give adult students a safe, comfortable, and affordable environment in which to learn and practice English, and are utilized by many immigrants, refugees, and other English language learners (Kristjansson, 2003).

These voluntary adult ESL programs are often coordinated by non-profit organizations and held at churches or community centers. Classes are usually taught by volunteers, many of whom are untrained in ESL, in teaching, or in both. Student attendance is not mandatory, and enrollment is often free or low-cost (Durham & Kim, 2018). As there are no federal or state educational standards mandated for voluntary adult ESL, classes vary widely within and between programs, and no degrees or academic credentials are given for completion of these programs. Class sessions may range from once a day to once a week, and may take place at unconventional hours due to the fact that many students and instructors have jobs or other responsibilities during business hours. Some students enrolled have little to no knowledge of the English language. Others may sound like near-native speakers, but have surprisingly low literacy skills; it is not uncommon for students to have widely varying levels of proficiency in their reading, writing, speaking, or listening abilities (Gilbertson, 2000; Eyring, 2014). Demographically, these classes may include any combination of international students, temporary residents, and others involved in various academic or professional pursuits, but immigrants and refugees often make up the highest number of students participating in voluntary adult ESL programs (Wrigley, 2007).

As part of most programs, students receive physical or online textbooks to supplement their learning both in and out of class. But, unlike standardized curricula used in public K-12 schools, there are no federal regulations for content within English language programming (Eyring, 2014). Many textbooks align with international standards and objectives such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, or CEFR (Council of Europe, n.d.), or the English Language Proficiency Standards (American Institutes for Research, 2016); however, since there is no government regulation of voluntary ESL classes or their coursework, there are not explicit requirements for adult ELT textbooks as there are with K-12 educational textbooks. This can lead to a wide range of variation in content and quality between different curricula. Along with that, many community-based or church-based ESL programs do not receive government funding (North American Mission Board, 2014) and may not be able to afford to invest in more expertly-developed material, may not feel they should impose textbook costs upon students, or both. The absence of national standards for US adult learners, a lack of funding, and the seemingly lower priority of adult education compared to childhood education may suggest a lack of quality control in the creation of adult ESL curriculum, leaving ESL program directors and instructors alike in the dark as to which textbooks and resources are most conducive to the successful teaching of ESL to adult students.

For this reason, many voluntary ESL programs use global English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks, which are produced by well-known publishers and designed for a generic, “global” audience. The purpose of a global ELT textbook is to be applicable to as many audiences around the globe as possible; although they often still include themes or dialects specific to a major English-speaking country, the goal is for students from any country or culture to be able to use these books (Mishan, 2022). Global ELT textbooks are usually part of an entire

curriculum created by their publishers; these curricula include a series of textbooks for different class levels, teacher's manuals for instructor use, and supplementary student materials such as workbooks and online study platforms. Many faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs will choose a particular curriculum and use many or all of its accompanying textbooks, teacher's materials, and supplementary content, instead of creating their own programming or putting the task onto volunteer instructors who may not have the training or the time. However, given the discussed discrepancies between the creation of adult ELT materials and the unique needs of the adult ESL learner, this can lead to issues such as those I had experienced when using these global ELT curricula to teach my adult students in faith-based, voluntary ESL programs.

Motivated by these concerns, this study aims to examine whether global ELT curricula are considerate of their adult student users, accessible for students and teachers, and adaptable for faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL contexts. In doing so, this research may help identify ways in which ELT educational materials can best serve adult language learners' strengths, needs, and goals. This study may also benefit ESL program directors looking for successful curricula to administer in their programs by illuminating aspects of adult ELT textbooks that are most conducive to adult language learning and best fit the needs of the program considering budget, volunteer or employee base, and structural bandwidth.

To gain a sense of how such global ELT publishers incorporate adult-appropriate content for adult students throughout their curricula, this study analyzes three global American English ELT curricula representative of those commonly used in faith-based voluntary adult ESL programs. The curricula examined are *Interchange* published by Cambridge (Richards 2017), *Side by Side Plus* by Pearson (Molinsky & Bliss 2016), and *Step Forward* by Oxford University Press (Santamaria 2017; Denman 2017). Two textbooks from each curriculum corresponding

with the CEFR proficiency levels A1 and B1+ (Council of Europe, n.d.) were chosen to examine the incorporation of adult learning theories within textbook content and between proficiency levels in each textbook series. This study specifically looks into the use of *andragogy* in adult ESL curricula; first popularized in the US by Malcom Knowles in the 1960s, andragogy is a framework of principles for the teaching of adult learners (Mews, 2020). Six principles make up the basic framework of andragogy: the learner's need to know, self-concept of the learner, prior experience of the learner, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn (Knowles et al., 2020). Because of the many age-specific factors involved in adult learning success, these adult-focused teaching practices should no doubt be taken into consideration when writing textbooks for adult ELLs.

Along with examining the textbooks themselves, other aspects of global ELT curricula are studied as well. One such consideration is the adaptability of these curricula for faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs, taking into account these programs' unique needs and limitations due to student demographics and limited funding. Another factor to be considered is whether any online or digital components have been incorporated into the program, and if so, how accessible they are to adult students enrolled in faith-based, voluntary programs. Additionally, many instructors who teach adult ESL classes, especially in volunteer-based programs, lack some or any formal training in ESL instruction and may not have any previous teaching experience or licensure (Henrichsen, 2010). Textbooks created with these programs in mind, then, should consider how accessible the textbook lessons are for novice instructors, and would ideally include supplementary teaching materials needed for the curriculum's success.

It is important to acknowledge that there is much debate over the ethicality of teaching ESL within religious contexts. Many have noted the tensions and moral concerns that arise when

students, whether knowingly or unknowingly, enroll in ESL classes at faith-based programs that promote different religious beliefs than their own, and that may be actively or secretly using English classes as an evangelistic tool. While this is an important issue to address, this study does not discuss this matter for a number of reasons. The first is that this conversation has already been initiated by those such as Wong et al. (2012), Wong and Canagarajah (2009), Chao and Kuntz (2013), and many others, and it continues to be discussed frequently within the academic field; the scope of this project, however, is not wide enough to address and enter that conversation in a manner that could contribute significantly to the valid points that have already been made. The second reason is that although there are many concerns with faith-based ESL programs, these programs are the ones meeting a large portion of adult ELLs' educational and material needs; even the US government during the Bush administration asserted that faith-based organizations tend to be more effective in charity and community service than government programs (Guy, 2005). Until adult ESL programs that are free and held at non-traditional hours for working adult students are widespread and funded federally, faith-based programs will continue to be necessary for countless adult English language learners across the nation. Because of these reasons, this study aims to identify just one area in which such programs can better serve the needs of their adult students.

Overview of Chapters

This qualitative study is organized as follows: Chapter One introduces the Master's thesis and elaborates upon the motivations behind the study; Chapter Two provides a literature review of relevant research and scholarship in the fields of faith-based voluntary adult ESL, andragogy, and related fields; Chapter Three describes the methodology of the textual analysis, including

study materials and methods of analysis; Chapter Four discusses the results of the study; and Chapter Five discusses implications, suggest future areas of research, and conclude the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This study is situated within the context of the voluntary, faith-based, adult ESL program and classroom, taking into consideration the unique characteristics and constraints of adult ESL programs that are free for students, composed of volunteer teachers and staff, and organized by faith-based organizations. However, to understand this context more fully, it is important to look at where it is situated in the larger field of literature. This chapter reviews the field of adult ESL in general, along with the research in ESL educational materials and ELT textbooks for both secular and voluntary contexts. It then discusses the unique backgrounds and challenges of voluntary instructors in faith-based ESL programs. After main topics in the field of adult ESL are established, the chapter continues with a history of andragogy, a discussion of its critiques, and its connection to the field of adult ESL. It ends with a conclusion and a statement of this study's research questions.

Voluntary Adult ESL: An Understudied Field

Although there is extensive research into the field of voluntary adult ESL, it is often based upon qualitative or localized data; there is little to no nationwide or state-wide information on voluntary adult ESL programs, with no means to procure that information, making it difficult to study the field on a larger scale. In “Overlooked and Understudied? A Survey of Current Trends in Research on Adult English Language Learners,” author Julie Mathews-Aydinli asserts that “adult [English language learners] studying nonacademic English remain an understudied population in the academic scholarship on second-language acquisition (SLA) and education” (2008, p. 199). Since her article over a decade ago, research in the field of voluntary adult English ESL has seemed to progress rather slowly; while there are a number of books, studies, articles, and other research related to both general and faith-based adult ESL programs, it is a

common sentiment across the literature that larger-scale research into the field is lacking considerably (Rhodes & Schmidt, 2020; Mathews-Aydinli, 2008; Durham & Kim, 2018; Anumudu, 2022; Baurain, 2012). In-depth research into programming, funding, and student demographics is relatively limited, as there are few to no accurate statistics on how many voluntary adult ESL programs exist in the US, what curricula they use, or any information on the students they enroll. Most voluntary adult ESL programs are not monitored by the federal or state governments (Eyring, 2014), making it virtually impossible even to collect national or state-wide demographic data, much less gather information on programs, educators, retention rates, and quality of learning. And, even if this data were attainable, it would be likely to be frequently inaccurate, as there are high student turnover rates in both faith-based and secular voluntary adult programs due to unpredictability in students' home lives, access to transportation, work schedules, and other immediate needs (Rhodes & Schmidt, 2020).

This lack of data does make it somewhat difficult to study long-term or widespread trends over voluntary adult ESL programs, and even more difficult for faith-based programs. However, there is a large amount of case studies, ethnographies, qualitative studies, and other forms of research done in smaller-scale capacities within the field; these studies and others are discussed throughout the remainder of the literature review, along with their relevance to the goal of this study.

Research in ESL Educational Programming

There are a number of case studies and reviews of adult ESL educational content; some of the first critiques began during or before the 1970's, arguing that all curricula carried a social and/or political "hidden curriculum" (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985). "Survival ESL" (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985) soon after emerged as one of the most common hidden curricula in adult ELT

textbooks, and it is still a commonly discussed concern today in the field. While survival ESL is still a focus of research on adult ESL texts, a number of other problematic systems within ESL curriculum creation have been brought to the foreground and critiqued by experts in the field. In “Humanizing TESOL Curriculum for Diverse Adult ESL Learners in the Age of Globalization,” Majid Al-Amri (2010) asserts that while ESL curricula have become more sensitive to the diverse needs and learning styles of adult English language learners in recent years, empiricist and positivist themes have historically hindered successful ESL instruction and learning. There have also been numerous calls to revise curricula that have been overly-focused on grammar, remediation, and basic language competence, while overlooking rhetorical skill, academic language control, and fluency development (Ewert, 2011; Shapiro, 2011).

ELT Textbooks

Another related pool of literature to take into consideration is one that is focused on the textual analysis of ELT textbooks. Many of these textual analyses are focused on K-12 ELT textbooks, textbooks used in specific countries, and/or a specific aspect of learning, such as pragmatic content (Meihami & Khanlarzadeh, 2015), use of pictures (Ghoushchi et al., 2020), or even critical issues such equity and power dynamics (Shufflebarger, 2022). In “The Global ELT coursebook: A case of Cinderella’s slipper?” author Frida Mishan (2022) discusses the limited scope of culture, pragmatics, and teaching theories utilized within global ELT textbooks, along with the echo chamber effect that can occur when writers of ELT textbooks begin to emulate other “successful” ELT curricula, rather than focusing on effective practices. Other notable literature in this field includes the work of Skela and Burazer (2021) and Vitta (2023), which provide information on how ELT textbooks are written and organized, highlight the means in which textbook publishers create and choose what content to include in ELT materials, and aim

to guide program directors and instructors through the process of reviewing ELT textbooks and curricula for use in their own classrooms.

While many of these studies and reviews no doubt have adult ELT textbooks in mind, they focus more broadly on ELT textbooks in general, opening analysis up to books for K-12 or post-secondary educational programs, which may have different standards. In Tomlinson's and Masuhara's "Adult Coursebooks" (2013), adult ELT textbooks are specifically examined; the authors discuss the many positive changes many materials have made in recent years, such as an increase in personalization, relatability, and other improvements made as new research and developments were made in the field. However, they noted that many textbooks had strayed from techniques that kept different types of learners engaged, had not incorporated SLA findings on successful adult language learning, had focused too heavily on grammar, and had created a number of expensive and technology-reliant course components.

Research in Faith-Based, Voluntary Adult ESL Programming

Although not as broadly researched as the curricula for general ESL programs, considerable literature is dedicated to studying faith-based, adult ESL settings. Collections such as those by Wong et al. (2012) and Wong and Canagarajah (2009) discuss a variety of perspectives, practices, and implications of Christian faith in the ESL classroom. Durham and Kim (2018), Anumudu (2022), and a number of other case studies and interviews highlight best practices and suggestions for teaching and training. Other studies interviewed instructors, program directors, or students in faith-based ESL programs to explore social issues such as power dynamics, student understandings of identity and culture (Chao & Kuntz, 2013), and the promotion of family literacy through faith-based programs (Chao & Mantero, 2014). While these are valuable insights to be gained, it seems that *how* content is being taught to adult ELLs in

voluntary, faith-based contexts has overshadowed the glaring question of *what* is being learned in the first place.

Faith-Based ELT Textbooks

The use of the Bible as the primary means by which to teach ESL has a history that shares its beginnings with the nation itself; many colonial settlers in the 17th century spoke languages such as French, Scottish, and German as their mother tongue, and their children were required to learn English at school (Cavanaugh, 1996). Considering the fact that the Bible was used to teach English in America beginning in the late 1600s (Youmans, 2017), there is no doubt that the Bible would have been used at that time to teach students whose first language was not English. Although the formal field of ESL as it is known now would not develop formally until much later, the practice of using the Bible as an ESL instructional text in the US has continued into the modern day. Even today, it is not an uncommon sentiment within church-based ESL programs that instructors should use the Bible as the primary or exclusive means of instruction in ESL classes.

However, in recent years, there has been a shift away from Bible-only instruction, with most organizations embracing a combination of Biblical themes and secular ELT texts specifically created for ELLs, while a smaller group of faith-based adult ESL programs still follows a Bible-heavy curriculum. This tension between relying on the Bible wholly or supplementarily is not uncommon to witness in conversations concerning teaching practices between instructors from different generations. Nonetheless, it does appear that most in the field recognize the benefits of using modern ELT materials in the classroom. Faith-based organizations and researchers (North American Mission Board, 2014; Victor, 2021) have found that the Bible, while it is no doubt spiritually relevant to many teachers and students in

faith-based ESL programs, may not be relevant for students' more immediate needs, and that it largely lacks modern vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar.

Despite the acknowledgment of the need for ELT texts to supplement the Bible in faith-based ESL contexts, there is a surprising lack of religious ELT materials (Lindholm, 2008). While there are countless adult ELT textbooks on the market today, faith-based ELT textbooks are few and far-between. This lack of quality faith-based ELT materials for adult ELLs has led many faith-based ESL programs to use secular ESL curricula. In a survey sent to ESL programs in the Florida Baptist Convention of churches, Victor (2021) found that only 5% of the programs surveyed used a strictly Bible-based curriculum, with 60% using a secular curriculum, and 35% using a combination of the two. While this is a relatively small sample size, it generally reflects what seems to be a trend in modern faith-based ESL programs: the use of secular curricula, either partially or exclusively, as the main materials for ESL classes.

It is important to note a gap in the literature at this point. Further study into the shift from Bible-based ESL to the incorporation of modern ELT materials and its causes has not yet been explored, nor has the reason for the lack of faith-based ELT materials for voluntary adult ESL programs in religious contexts. This gap unfortunately echoes the gaps noted earlier in the general field of adult ESL education, and likely are related in their cause. Until these empty areas in the literature on adult voluntary ESL are filled, this lack of ELT material for such a large subset of the adult ESL educational context will not likely be able to develop as quickly as needed for the benefit of its students and instructors.

Faith-Based, Voluntary Adult ESL Instructors

The discussion of what texts should and should not be used in the faith-based, voluntary adult classroom is no doubt impacted by the fact that many volunteer instructors in these

contexts are untrained in ESL, adult learning, spiritual leadership, or a combination of the three. While government-funded organizations may be able to pay some or all of their ESL instructors, faith-based programs do not receive federal funds (Durham & Kim, 2018), and therefore out of need may accept whomever volunteers, whether or not they have experience or training. Durham and Kim (2018) summarize it well, stating that “faith-based programs and some smaller community-based programs may struggle to attract as many professionals, rely heavily on available volunteers as instructors, and lack the funding to adequately train those volunteers” (p. 2). Since these programs depend upon the work of volunteer instructors, these volunteers may have a variety of educational backgrounds (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008); some may have degrees and certifications to teach English as a Second Language, while some might be retired teachers who once taught English or another subject in the K-12 setting, and others may not have any teaching experience or training whatsoever. Given the unpredictability in volunteer education levels, one subject that is commonly discussed in the conversation on faith-based ESL programs is the issue of teacher training.

Many have noted both the lack of and the need for teacher training resources in these settings (Durham & Kim, 2018; Lessard-Clouston, 2013). Others have created resources that faith-based organizations can use in teacher training, such as Christian TEFL’s online training courses, the North American Mission Board’s *Teaching English Language Learners the Good News* (2014), J. Wesley Edy’s *Handbook for Teaching Bible-Based ESL* (2021), Ron Lindholm’s *Developing an English as a Second Language (ESL) Ministry in a Local Church: A List of Suggestions for Getting Started and a Manual of Lessons for Teaching the Bible from Fellowship Baptist Church in Springfield, Virginia* (2008), and many others by various denominational groups, churches, and faith-based nonprofit organizations. Given Gilbertson’s (2000) findings

that untrained teachers can have detrimental effects on both the health of their program and the growth of their students, it is clear why many are calling for a higher emphasis on training in programs where many instructors have no prior experience or credentials.

Andragogy

Despite many critiques of different aspects within ESL curriculum, little seems to be discussed on the topic of adult learning theory in adult ELT textbooks, or in the realm of adult SLA in general. The lack of interdisciplinarity between adult SLA studies and adult learning studies is surprising, considering the comparative scarcity of adult-specific research in the fields of ESL and SLA, and the very high prevalence of adult ELLs across the globe. Before discussing their points of relation, though, it is important to understand the history of andragogy and its main tenets.

History of Andragogy

The term “andragogy” was first introduced by Alexander Kapp in 1833 to broadly describe the teaching of adults. The idea was not well accepted; however, the idea did gain popularity in Europe around fifteen years later, and continued to be used in the Workers Education Movement into the twentieth century (Bowling & Henschke, 2020). Despite its use in Europe, the concept of andragogy was not introduced into the field of adult education in the US until Malcolm Knowles used it in the 1960s to describe his theory of adult learning principles. Although Knowles had already published work and done extensive research into the field of adult learning, he was first informed of the term by Yugoslavian educator Dusan Savicevic, who recognized andragogical themes in Knowles’ work after participating in one of his courses on adult learning (Loeng, 2018). Knowles subsequent work, beginning with his 1968 “Androgogy [sic], not Pedagogy” and 1970 *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus*

Pedagogy, soon popularized the concept and theory of andragogy within the US (Knowles et al., 2020; Loeng, 2018).

Knowles' theory of andragogy initially consisted of an andragogical model composed of four main principles or assumptions about the way in which adults learn most successfully. These four assumptions included the learner's self-concept, the learner's experiences, readiness to learn, and orientation to learning (Knowles et al., 2020). Knowles later added the need to know and motivation onto this list, establishing six main tenets for fruitful adult learning. These six principles are given below, directly quoted from Knowles et al.'s *The Adult Learner* (2020, pp. 43-46):

1. *The need to know.* Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it... [W]hen adults undertake to learn something on their own, they will invest considerable energy in probing into the benefits they will gain from learning it and the negative consequences of not learning it...
2. *The learners' self-concept.* Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives. Once they have arrived at that self-concept, they develop a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction...
3. *The role of the learners' experiences.* Adults come into an educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from that of youths... [F]or many kinds of learning, the richest resources for learning reside in the adult learners themselves...
4. *Readiness to learn.* Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations. An

especially rich source of readiness to learn is the developmental tasks associated with moving from one developmental stage to the next.

5. *Orientation to learning.* In contrast to children's and youths' subject-centered orientation to learning (at least in school), adults are life-centered (or task-centered or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning...
6. *Motivation.* Adults are responsive to some external motivators (e.g., better jobs, promotions, higher salaries, etc.), but the most potent motivators are internal pressures (e.g., the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, etc.)...

These six principles of andragogy and Knowles' many works on adult learning have become the basis for many theories, practices, and studies in adult education throughout the United States.

Critiques of Andragogy

While it is generally accepted as a dominant theory in adult learning, many have raised concerns about different aspects of Knowles' andragogical model. One such concern is that because of its divergence in use throughout the twentieth century between the United States and Europe, along with other less established usages before its popularity, "andragogy" has a number of meanings, depending on the place and time in which it was discussed (Loeng, 2018). Another concern is with the word itself; *andra* is derived from the Greek root, *aner*, which was most often used to refer specifically to adult males (Mohring, 1989). While some have attempted to suggest alternative Greek roots, these morphemes often have complications of their own, such as the Greek *teleios*. It is equivalent to the English "adult," but it has also often been used to suggest perfection or completion, which would contradict the concept of andragogy definitionally

(Mohring, 1989). Along with this, by the time reasonable alternatives could be suggested as the term for adult learning theory, the name “andragogy” had by that point already become quite established within the field (Loeng, 2018).

There have been recent critiques of andragogy based on a supposed lack of critical, feminist, and afrocentric perspectives within andragogy, taking issue with the prioritization of individualism that Knowles instilled into the theory (Sandlin 2005). However, the individualism that some have identified as a fault of andragogy is the very aspect of the theory that has made it attractive in other critical scholars’ eyes. Many studies have embraced and acknowledged a form of critical andragogy that focuses on the student’s experiences and needs, encourages social justice, and promotes equity in adult educational settings (Brown, 2006; Clemons, 2019; DeTurk, 2011; and Conway, 2023). Given that this more critical approach to andragogy intends to include and prioritize marginalized groups such as minorities, immigrants, and women, who often make up the majority of students in voluntary adult ESL classrooms, newer research in andragogy shows promise for the success of an andragogical framework within the adult ESL educational setting. While the merits of marrying critical perspectives with andragogical principles are still being debated, andragogy has continued as a foundational theory in the field of adult learning in the United States today (Bowling & Henschke, 2020; Brookfield, 2020).

Andragogy, SLA, & Adult ESL

Overall, the established field of adult learning does not seem to have made its way into adult SLA studies, despite the known fact that second language acquisition is different for adults than children (Hird et al., 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2021). Adult second language learners acquire language much differently from preadolescent L2 learners; adults tend to learn much more quickly than young learners in a classroom setting (Lightbown & Spada, 2021), benefit

from explicit instruction (Roehr-Brackin, 2018), and have higher metalinguistic knowledge and problem-solving skills (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). Recent research in adult SLA also shows the need for instruction catered specifically to adults, while acknowledging the lack of research and understanding on teaching adult learners. Gilbertson (2000) asserts that “[t]eaching adults in the same manner as [instructors] either taught children or were taught as children establishes a perception of disempowerment” (p. 52); however, she found that many ESL instructors, unless trained otherwise, will do just that. This gap between adult learner and teacher highlights the need for principles such as andragogy to be incorporated into the field.

Interestingly, it is not uncommon for studies in SLA to use language that mirrors andragogical principles. This excerpt from page 64 of Norris et al.’s (2017) *Second Language Educational Experiences for Adult Learners* is a particularly clear example:

Associated pedagogic practice is informed by principles such as (a) the diagnosis of learner backgrounds, needs, and interests, followed by the embedding of instruction in relevant and interesting content; (b) the persistent exposure of learners to tasks just beyond their level of knowledge or ability (the Vygotskian “zone of proximal development,” or ZPD) to both build on prior experience and motivate new learning; (c) the replication of target communication-task complexity in the instructional setting, such that learners develop ownership over language use in reality and not just in the abstract; (d) mentoring or apprenticing of learners through sustained interaction with expert “others” (e.g., the teacher, other learners) who are able to provide language input and feedback appropriate to the communicative act, as well as the learners’ immediate needs; (e) the use of scaffolding, or temporary learning supports, to bridge gaps between learners’ current knowledge or abilities and proximal language

competence targets (and to stave off de-motivation), such that learners become increasingly self-regulating in their language behavior; and (f) dynamic or formative assessment through perpetual observation of current levels of performance, achievements, and gaps, provision of relevant feed-back by the teacher or peer, and learner actions upon feedback for subsequent improvement.

This excerpt, in its entirety, lists and explains six principles that are said to be essential in “[a]ssociated pedagogic practice” in the teaching of adults (p. 64). When comparing these six principles, each one seems to align partially or completely with one of the six principles of andragogy: (a) with motivation to learn, (b) with prior experience, (c) with orientation to learning, (d) with self-concept of the learner, (e) with readiness to learn, and (f) with the learner’s need to know. Whether these principles were directly inspired by Knowles’ principles of andragogy, or the correlation was unintentional, the frequent overlap between suggestions in adult SLA research and the principles of andragogy show that these two fields share a number of common goals and theories, and that adult SLA studies could benefit from framing adult language acquisition through an andragogical lens.

While there is minimal interdisciplinarity between theories in SLA and andragogy, there are a number of studies and articles that connect andragogical principles to ESL teaching on a smaller scale. Some, such as Bangura (1996), Ngo & Cherrington (2013), and Deveci (2013), discuss the benefits of using andragogical principles in adult foreign language teaching contexts. Bangura (1996) examined thirty one language textbooks and twenty five course syllabi from foreign language classrooms, and found a concerning lack of andragogical principles used within the sampling. Bangura concluded that based on the dynamic environment in which non-native speaking adults are using language, “it is obvious that andragogic approaches must be built into

the procedures for fulfilling our educational responsibilities... Foreign language programs do not want to teach learners to act as mindless cogs in academic machinery of common characterization” (p. 17). Ngo and Cherrington (2023) and Deveci (2013) both determined after serving adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Vietnam and Turkey, respectively, that students were andragogically oriented, indicating that instructors should consider adult students’ needs and learning styles.

Overall, though, collaboration between theories in andragogy and ESL has not made its way into any established theory within SLA; given that the field of SLA has not incorporated andragogical theory as a main tenet of adult second language learning, it is not reaching theorists writing manuals and handbooks on adult SLA and ESL, not reaching the professionals writing adult ELT materials, and, consequently, not being explicitly incorporated into textbooks written for adult voluntary ESL settings.

Conclusion

There has long been recognition of the gap between theory and practice that separates textbook researchers and writers from instructors, both in and out of the field of ESL (Gibbons, 2006). While theorists understand the teaching and learning principles that work in a classroom setting, they often lack practical experience and are unable to foresee classroom constraints. Instructors, on the other hand, have a clear view of their own classroom, but they may not be trained formally in ESL or have any knowledge of established learning theories. Furthermore, even when teachers are formally trained, the lack of recognition of andragogical theories in the field of SLA no doubt adds to the lack of congruence between classroom needs and curriculum offerings. Techniques that work in native language classes for younger learners may work ineffectively in adult second language educational settings, and textbook activities founded on

pedagogy, however well-designed, may feel frivolous or juvenile in person in the adult classroom. These issues raise the question of whether the creators of global adult ESL curricula are holistically considering the needs of their users when creating ELT textbooks for adult students in voluntary ESL programs.

Research Questions

To examine this gap between the needs and the available curricula for faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) How frequently can principles of andragogy be found within adult ELT textbooks?
- 2) To what extent are adult ELT textbooks and supplementary materials created in a way that is adaptable and accessible for faith-based, voluntary, semi-weekly ESL programs?
- 3) How well do global adult ELT curricula meet the unique needs of the faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL classroom setting?

The first two questions will be answered through the textual analysis of the selected ELT materials, and the third question will be answered in the discussion and conclusion of the overall study.

Chapter Three: Methods

This study aims to provide a textual analysis of three global adult English Learning Teaching (ELT) curricula. The three curricula focused upon in this study are *Interchange*, *Side by Side Plus*, and *Step Forward*, respectively published by Cambridge (Richards 2017), Pearson (Molinsky & Bliss 2016), and Oxford University Press (Santamaria 2017; Denman 2017). Two textbooks from each curriculum were analyzed for their incorporation of the six principles of andragogy.

While the focus of this study is to analyze textbooks which may be used in faith-based ESL programs, none of these materials are produced by religious publishers and do not contain any particular faith-based content. While this may seem to make the selection of these textbooks a strange choice, it is a much more representative selection of materials for many faith-based ESL instructional contexts; as discussed in Chapter Two, many faith-based ESL programs use secular ESL curricula due to the lack of high-quality ESL teaching materials published by religious groups.

This study was conducted in two parts: a textual analysis and a curriculum analysis. The first part examines the use of andragogy in the ESL textbooks themselves, while the second part examines the accessibility and adaptability of the curricula overall.

Part 1: Textbook Analysis

This first section discusses the methods of data collection and analysis of andragogical principles used in the selected adult ELT textbooks. It addresses this study's first research question: *how frequently can principles of andragogy be found within adult ELT textbooks?*

Data Collection

The textbooks selected for this study are from the *Interchange* curriculum by Cambridge (Richards, 2017), *Side by Side Plus* by Pearson (Molinsky & Bliss, 2016), and *Step Forward* by Oxford University Press (Santamaria, 2017; Denman, 2017). These curricula were selected because they are widely used in voluntary, adult ESL contexts and are published by well-known educational textbook publishers. Another consideration was my own experience with two of the curricula; I have used *Side By Side Plus* and a previous edition of *Step Forward* in past volunteer ESL classes. Each textbook within these curricula was labeled by the publishers as a certain CEFR proficiency level. The two textbooks from each curriculum that aligned with the A1 and B1+ levels were selected in order to gain a more complete picture of the textbook series and to observe whether the use of andragogy differed between the highest and lowest books in all three curricula.

Interchange is written by Jack C. Richards, with Jonathan Hill and Susan Proctor. It was first published by Cambridge University Press in 1992, and its fifth edition, the edition used in this study, was updated in 2017. *Interchange* describes itself as “the world’s favorite English course,” focused on student engagement, lesson flexibility, and “solid pedagogy” (Richards, 2017). *Interchange* has four levels: *Intro*, *1*, *2*, and *3*. *Interchange Intro* and *Interchange 3* were analyzed for this study.

Side by Side Plus is written by Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss, and it is owned and published by Pearson. This most recent edition was updated and published in 2016. *Side by Side* has two versions: *Extra* and *Plus*. The *Side by Side Plus Teacher Edition* describes the curriculum as “a special standards-based edition for adult and young adult learners that now provides enhanced career and academic readiness content, expanded reading and writing

practice, and a digital eText that promotes students' independent practice and mastery learning.” (Molinsky & Bliss, 2016). These features, which are not all included in *Side by Side Extra*, make *Side by Side Plus* a relevant curriculum for the present study thanks to their focus on life skills, career readiness, and other issues especially important for adult ELLs. *Side by Side* contains four levels, numbered 1-4; *Side by Side 1* and *Side by Side 4* were analyzed in this study.

Step Forward is published by Oxford University Press, and each level is written by a different author. Its second edition, used in this study, was published in 2017. The *Step Forward Introductory Level* book is written by Jenni Currie Santamaria, *Step Forward 4* is written by Barbara R. Denman, and the series director is Jayme Adelson-Goldstein. The *Step Forward* program has traditionally had 5 levels, from *Introductory* to *4*, but a sixth book, *Step Forward 5*, has recently been added to the program. However, *Step Forward 5* contains fewer resources and supplementary materials than the five lower levels, and is also made for students beginning at the B2 CEFR level. Since *Step Forward 4* aligns more closely with the CEFR levels for *Side by Side 4* and *Interchange 3*, and it is the last book in the series with complete programming, *Step Forward 4* was studied instead of the final *Step Forward 5*, along with *Step Forward Introductory Level*.

All 3 curricula have programming for CEFR proficiency levels A1 to B1+. The CEFR describes A1 as a “Basic User,” and states that students at this level “[c]an understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type... introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has... [and] interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.” (Council of Europe, n.d., para. 7). A B1 level student, or “Independent User,” should be

able to “understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.... deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken... produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest... [and] describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.” (Council of Europe, n.d., para. 5). Table 3.1 provides a comparison of each curriculum’s CEFR levels for each textbook level.

Data Analysis

Generally, the organization of each textbook is as follows: within each textbook were units, within each unit were lessons, and within each lesson were activities. Units were usually multiple pages and included lessons and activities that were all focused on the main theme(s) or learning objective(s) of the unit. There were a few lessons per unit, which were usually one to two pages focused on one specific sub-theme or objective with a few activities under each lesson. *Interchange* lessons were slightly different, with only two per unit; they were called “cycles” in the preface of the book, but were unmarked in the units themselves. Activities were even more specific tasks or series of questions for students to practice the sub-theme of the lesson. Figure 3.1 gives an example of a unit, lesson, and activity from *Step Forward*

Introductory Level.

Coding Procedure

Each ELT textbook was coded in its entirety for signs of Knowles’ six principles of andragogy: the learner’s need to know, the self-concept of the learner, prior experience of the learner, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn. Codes, descriptions, and examples are explained in Table 3.2. Codes were directly from Knowles et al.’s six

Table 3.1. CEFR levels

Curriculum	A1	(A1+)	A2	(A2+)	B1	(B1+)	B2
<i>Interchange</i>	————	<i>Intro</i> —————	———	<i>I</i> ———	—————	<i>2</i> —————	—————
<i>Side by Side</i>		————	<i>1</i> —————				
			————	<i>2</i> —————			
				————	<i>3</i> —————		
					————	<i>4</i> —————	
<i>Step Forward</i>	———	<i>Introductory</i> ———					
		————	<i>1</i> —————				
			————	<i>2</i> —————			
				————	<i>3</i> —————		
					————	<i>4</i> —————	

UNIT
1 Please Spell That
LESSON 1 VOCABULARY

A LOOK AT
• Introductions
• Subject pronouns
• Taking messages

1 Learn the alphabet
A Listen and read. Point to the letters in your name.
1-05

The Alphabet
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

B Listen again and repeat.
1-05

C Match the capital letters to the lowercase letters.
1. A e
2. B g
3. D h
4. E q
5. G b
6. H d
7. I a
8. Q i
NEED HELP?
a = α

D Listen. Circle the letter.
1-06

1. i 5. p b
2. i e 6. m n
3. g j 7. y w
4. h j 8. f s

E Work with a partner. Read the letters in 1D.

2 Spell words
A Look at the pictures. Listen and write the letters you hear.
1-07

1. s t u d e n t
2. t e
3. b k
4. p
5. p
6. p
7. p
8. w

B Listen to the words in 2A. Repeat.
1-08

C Copy the words from 2A in your notebook.

TEST YOURSELF
Work with a partner. Take turns.
Student A: Say a word from 2A.
Student B: Listen and spell the word.

student
s-t-u-d-e-n-t

ACADEMIC
Unit 1 Lesson 1 5

Figure 3.1. Example of a unit, lesson, and activity

Example page from *Step Forward Introductory Level*. “Unit 1: Please Spell That” is a unit, “Lesson 1 Vocabulary” is a lesson, and “1,” “2,” and “Test Yourself” are activities.

Table 3.2. Code descriptions and examples

Code/Andragogy Principle	Description	Examples from Textbooks (not exhaustive)
Learner's Need to Know	Knowles et al. (2020) found that before adult learners are willing to learn something, they need to be able to identify the reasons and applications for what they are learning. While young learners may feel a need to complete tasks just to pass a class or get a grade, adult learners benefit from knowing the usefulness behind assigned tasks.	Unit Objectives Explanation of how tasks are beneficial Activities challenging students to complete a task in real life
Self-Concept of the Learner	In contrast to the dependency often found in younger learners, adult learners must feel that they have autonomy over their decisions (Knowles et al. 2020). Adults should be able to feel responsible for their own learning.	Independent or self-guided activities Personal progress checks
Prior Experience of the Learner	Adult learners have lived longer lives than young learners, and have therefore experienced more. Connecting learning with past experiences not only helps learners build on prior knowledge, but also affirms their life experience. Additionally, the combined experience of every learner in a classroom can create a richer learning environment for students (Knowles et al. 2020).	Activities related to students' home country Activities related to past experiences
Readiness to Learn	Adult learners may not feel ready or motivated to learn something new until they can see they need the information for their current life stage. Knowles et al. (2020) stress "the importance of timing learning experiences to coincide with those developmental [stages]" for adult learners (67).	Not coded in books; prevalence of principle determined by changes in coding frequencies between A1 and B2+ books

Table 3.2. Code descriptions and examples, continued

Code/Andragogy Principle	Description	Examples from Textbooks (not exhaustive)
Orientation to Learning	Adult learners are “life-centered” in relation to learning, rather than young learners who are focused on subjects. Adults will be more motivated if a task relates directly to their lives (Knowles et al. 2020). “Survival English” is a common example; while it has its flaws, it provides clear applications of learning material to the immediate needs of the learner.	Conflict/confusion resolution Understanding news Emergencies/doctor’s visits Transportation Money Shopping Legal/academic forms Technology
Motivation to Learn	Knowles et al. (2020) found that adult learners’ highest sources of motivation are intrinsic, and may relate to desires to improve a career position, life situation, or personal self-image. Motivations to learn are deeper than orientations to learning in that the latter are immediate applications, while motivations are longer-term needs that may be improved by learning.	Citizenship/Naturalization Career development/soft skills Family needs Future goals

principles of andragogy in *The Adult Learner* (2020), descriptions were adapted from its definitions, and examples were based on my own prior knowledge of ELT textbook content and themes encountered while coding. See Appendix A for the full codebook.

An activity was the smallest unit of text in which a single code could be identified, as each set of sentences or phrases in an activity focused on one specific theme or learning objective. Some supplementary lessons were standalone and were not in a unit and/or did not have clearly distinct activities within the lessons. In these cases, headings and subheadings within the lesson were used to distinguish between the beginning and end of activities when coding. Not all activities were marked with a code.

Every time a code was found in an activity, it was bookmarked in a specific color. Two standards were created to decrease redundancy in coding; firstly, if two sentences in an activity were both related to a certain code, the code was only marked once. Secondly, an activity would not be marked with more than one code; examples and themes of the main six codes were identified, and themes that had the potential to overlap between two codes were kept to one code category to eliminate inflation of the data. The main purpose of coding was to find how many activities incorporated andragogical principles; therefore, if an activity was marked with a code, it indicated that there was evidence of andragogy in that activity, and so it would not be marked again.

Since a major goal of ELT textbooks is to help expand users' vocabulary, lessons would often incorporate words or themes into an activity so that students can become familiar with them; the learning goal for the activity itself, however, may not be related to those words or phrases. For example, the "Motivation to learn" code identifies activities that help students' goals and motivations for coming to the United States and learning English, such as finding a

career, giving their children a better education, or becoming a citizen. Some activities may discuss work safety or give practice for filling out government forms. While they may mention concepts related to work or citizenship, the activities themselves aren't focused on career growth, soft skills, or U.S. civics; the focus is to help the learner with immediate needs, like how to read a safety sign or complete a complicated form. For that reason, it was labeled as "orientation to learning," which identifies activities that help students acquire the tools they need to succeed in daily life.

One andragogical principle that is analyzed, but not coded like the rest, was readiness to learn. Readiness in the adult learner is intrinsically and environmentally motivated, and it is different for each student. Readiness to learn must be evaluated by the instructor, who can then give life-relevant content when students are in the right stage of their lives or of their English proficiency to learn a new skill; Knowles et al. (2020) explain that "[a]n especially rich source of readiness to learn is the developmental tasks associated with moving from one developmental stage to the next. The critical implication of this assumption is the importance of timing learning experiences to coincide with those developmental tasks" (p. 45). While the main idea of this principle is that student learning should be descriptive based on their needs instead of prescriptive, it may be difficult to anticipate students' unique readiness to learn in a format as formalized as a textbook. However, it was identified in some unit-to-unit scaffolding in the textbooks themselves, and in the changes in coding frequencies between the beginner level and advanced level textbooks. For example, beginner books may include a higher number of guided tasks related to "survival English," due to students' lower proficiency levels and need for basic language skills. Conversely, advanced books may have more independent activities and a higher focus on career or citizenship goals, as students' priorities may shift away from basic language

learning and more towards thriving in the US. Therefore, the readiness to learn principle was not coded like the others; however, elements such as scaffolding in the textbooks' structuring and differences in codes between the two books in each curriculum were noted and will be discussed in the study's findings.

Reliability of Coding

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that coders should aim to achieve 80% in code-recode reliability. To ensure codes were reliable and replicable, a peer was asked to code a section of one of the *Side by Side* textbooks according to the parameters laid out in this study. This peer is a recent graduate of UTK's Masters of Arts program in English, and therefore is familiar with qualitative research methods and the coding process from her own Master's thesis. She also is a volunteer ESL instructor at the same faith-based voluntary adult ESL program at which I volunteer, and is therefore familiar with the *Side by Side* curriculum.

After reviewing the methodology of this study together, she coded the first unit of *Side by Side I* using Table 3.2, and we then met to compare our codes. All activities but one that I had marked with a code had also been marked by her, and she had not coded any activities that I had not. Some codes I had identified as orientation to learning were not labeled as that in her codes; however, she stated that she was somewhat unsure about some of the codes, such as orientation to learning and the self-concept of the learner. After we discussed the differences as listed in Table 3.2, she determined that orientation to learning was a more appropriate code for the activities based on its definition. However, to ensure that the listed codes were indeed replicable, the coding chart was clarified, another unit within the same textbook was chosen for her to code, and we met once more to compare our results. After discussing our results, we once again found instances in which we had identified the same activities, but with different codes. She had

identified some as the learner's need to know, while I had labeled them as orientation to learning. Updates were made to the learner's need to know section of the coding chart and applied to my coding. Despite minor differences in our codes over both units, our overall intercoder reliability was 82.6%, well within Miles' and Huberman's (1994) percentile of ideal code-recode reliability.

Part 2: Curriculum Analysis

The second part of the analysis elaborates upon the materials available in each curriculum for teachers and students, along with the methods used in analyzing those materials. It addresses the study's second research question: to what extent are adult ELT textbooks and supplementary materials created in a way that is adaptable and accessible for faith-based, voluntary, semi-weekly ESL programs?

Data Collection

While the first part of the study focuses on finding andragogy in global ELT textbooks, the second part of the study examines the accessibility and adaptability of the curricula as a whole, including schedule, student resources, and teacher materials. Since global ELT curricula are used in a wide variation of ESL settings, their scheduling and programming should be adaptable to the programs in which they are used. Even when textbooks incorporate andragogy, if a curriculum's structure and materials cannot be adapted effectively within a faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL context, then the use of andragogical principles in textbooks is of little consequence.

Another factor to consider is the curricular materials that are accessible to students and teachers. Some adult ELLs might need to occasionally miss class, or may want to practice more than a few hours a week than is possible in class. Independent learning options give students the ability to continue their studies despite these restraints. Many students may also have specific

learning styles or needs, higher or lower proficiency than the rest of the class, or troubles with staying engaged in more traditional classroom settings. These needs can then be either exacerbated or alleviated by instructors themselves, depending on how well-equipped they are to direct student goals and needs. Therefore, teachers' materials should provide teachers with resources to address the unique needs of an adult second language learning environment. Independent learning is essential, especially in inconsistent or limited learning environments, and andragogical principles in the book will not help students reach their full potential if they are unable to feel in control of their own learning in the program.

For these reasons, adaptability and accessibility of these curricula overall in a faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL setting was examined along with the presence of andragogy in the textbooks. The next few paragraphs give an overview of the main materials included in each of the curricula examined in this study.

Interchange has a number of supplementary materials that are bundled in various versions of the Student's Book. The *Interchange Student's Book with Online Self-Study* includes progress checks, a Grammar Plus section for extra grammar practice, a code to an online practice platform, and Interchange activities, which supplement each unit. *Interchange* also offers a *Full Contact* version of the textbook, which also includes the workbook and a video activity worksheets section. Access to an online workbook can be bundled into the purchase of either textbook. *Interchange* also has a Digital Pack option, which provides online access to a digital workbook and accompanying activities. The last option *Interchange* offers is textbooks that are split into two to three sections of each level, presumably for flexibility with ESL programs that may not be able to cover an entire book in the time span of the class. The *Student's Book with Online Self-Study and Online Workbook* is available for purchase online for \$69.50. Each

Interchange level has a corresponding *Teacher's Edition*, which can be purchased in print or can be accessed online after registering for free on the Cambridge One educational site. Cambridge One offers teacher support and training, a digital platform for instructors and students to join as a class, and class resources such as textbook audio clips, videos, games, and other activities.

Side by Side Plus textbooks include an online access code to the e-text and an activity webpage, along with a CD-ROM containing audio activities. Supplementary materials include an *Activity Workbook* for students, a *Teacher's Guide* for instructors, and a *Multilevel Activity & Achievement Test Book*. The textbook, workbook, e-text, and access to digital resources are available for purchase together for \$38.28 online. The *Teacher's Guide* can be purchased through contacting Pearson directly.

All levels in the *Step Forward* curriculum, except for *Introductory Level*, offer a version of the textbook for sale with an online practice code, which gives students access to interactive activities that correspond with the textbooks. Textbooks also come with access to the Oxford English Vocabulary Trainer app, providing extra practice and focus on vocabulary from the textbooks. While there is no teacher's manual for *Step Forward*, Oxford has created a free Teacher's Site for the *Step Forward* curriculum, along with an online Teacher's Resource Center, which can be accessed for \$69.30. Lesson plans for all books from the *Introductory Level* to level 4 are available online after registering for free access to the Teacher's Site. Other free resources include over 100 pages of professional development content, placement tests, audio activities for each book, and extensive background information about the courses, their goals, and alignments. Available with the purchase of the Teacher's Resource Center are multilevel activities, instructor access to online books, assessment materials, and a presentation tool. The

Step Forward Level 4 Student Book and Workbook Pack with Online Practice is available for \$44.00, with educational discounts available.

Data Analysis

To determine the accessibility and appropriateness of the studied global ELT curricula for faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL learning contexts, factors such as curricular organization, textbook format, online self-study options, teacher resources, and other supplementary materials were compared between each curriculum. As previously discussed, many faith-based programs lack a sense of stability that for-profit or government funded adult educational programs do. Such programs often must take into consideration the availability of their adult students when setting class meeting times, as many adult students in these contexts are unable to meet daily at normal school hours due to work or family obligations. Lack of instructors, classrooms, or attendance may also affect the way that students are split into levels, which can increase the amount of mixed-level students within a single classroom. These factors can be made either better or worse by the ELT curriculum used; therefore, offerings in each of the three curricula will be compared to the others to determine their overall adaptability and accessibility for programs with unique needs such as those found in faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL settings.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter presents the results of the textual analyses of the examined ELT curricula by addressing the first two research questions directing this study. The first section of this chapter aligns with the textual analysis explained in Chapter Three and explores the study's first research question. The next section in the chapter corresponds to the curriculum analysis in Chapter Three and discusses the study's second research question. These findings from the textual and curriculum analyses later helps to inform the discussion of the final research question discussed in the final chapter.

Part 1: Findings from Textual Analysis

This section discusses the findings of the textual analysis, which address the study's first research question: how frequently can principles of andragogy be found within adult ELT textbooks? These findings were gathered through the coding of the six selected global ELT textbooks for Knowles et al.'s (2020) six principles of andragogy: the learner's need to know, self-concept of the learner, prior experience of the learner, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn. All six principles of andragogy were found throughout all textbooks, although at rates that varied between not only the three curricula themselves but also between the A1 level books (*Interchange Intro*, *Side by Side 1*, and *Step Forward Introductory Level*, according to the CEFR levels in Table 3.1) and the B1+ level books (*Interchange 3*, *Side by Side 4*, and *Step Forward 4*). Table 4.1 illustrates the number of activities that were identified with a code, how many activities were present in the book as a whole, and the percentage of how many total activities were labeled with a code during the coding process. As discussed in Chapter Three, activities were the smallest sections within the textbooks in which all content was focused on one specific objective or learning goal; see Figure 3.1 for an example of an activity.

Table 4.1. Prevalence of Activities with Andragogical Principles

	<i>Interchan ge Intro</i>	<i>Interchan ge 3</i>	<i>Side by Side 1</i>	<i>Side by Side 4</i>	<i>Step Forward Introduct ory</i>	<i>Step Forward 4</i>	Total coded activities
Total codes	38	69	141	106	143	201	698
Total activities per book	239	255	387	285	257	314	1737
Rate of codes per total activities	15.90%	27.06%	36.43%	37.19%	55.64%	64.01%	40.18%

The *Step Forward* curriculum had the highest number of activities coded with andragogical principles, accounting for 55.64% of the activities in *Step Forward Introductory Level* and 64.01% of the activities in the *Step Forward 4* book. *Side by Side* was next, with 36.43% of *Side by Side 1* activities and 37.19% of *Side by Side 4* activities containing andragogy. *Interchange* had the lowest rates, with 15.90% of the activities in the *Interchange Intro* and 27.06% of *Interchange 3* containing andragogical principles. The *Step Forward* and *Side by Side* curricula had frequent life skill-related activities and sections devoted to career growth, which relate closely to the principles of andragogy. On the other hand, much of the content within the *Interchange* curriculum was devoted to grammar, reading comprehension, modeled conversations, and games; this difference in content compared to the other two curricula could account for the lower levels of andragogical prevalence.

One goal of this study was to find the prevalence of andragogy in general throughout the textbooks examined; however, since the principles of andragogy were used as codes, the data identified certain principles of andragogy that were more or less prevalent throughout the textbooks, as shown in Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. The prevalence of these principles is discussed below, organized by andragogical principle. These principles have been kept in Knowles et al.'s (2020) original listed order up until this point. The below subsections will follow that order with one exception; readiness to learn, the fourth principle of the six, will be discussed last. As discussed in Chapter Three, this principle would not be determined by coding, but rather by examining changes in the frequency of certain codes between A1 and B1+ books. Therefore, after the coding data has been given for the other principles of andragogy, the readiness to learn section will discuss findings related to the coding frequencies between books in the same curriculum.

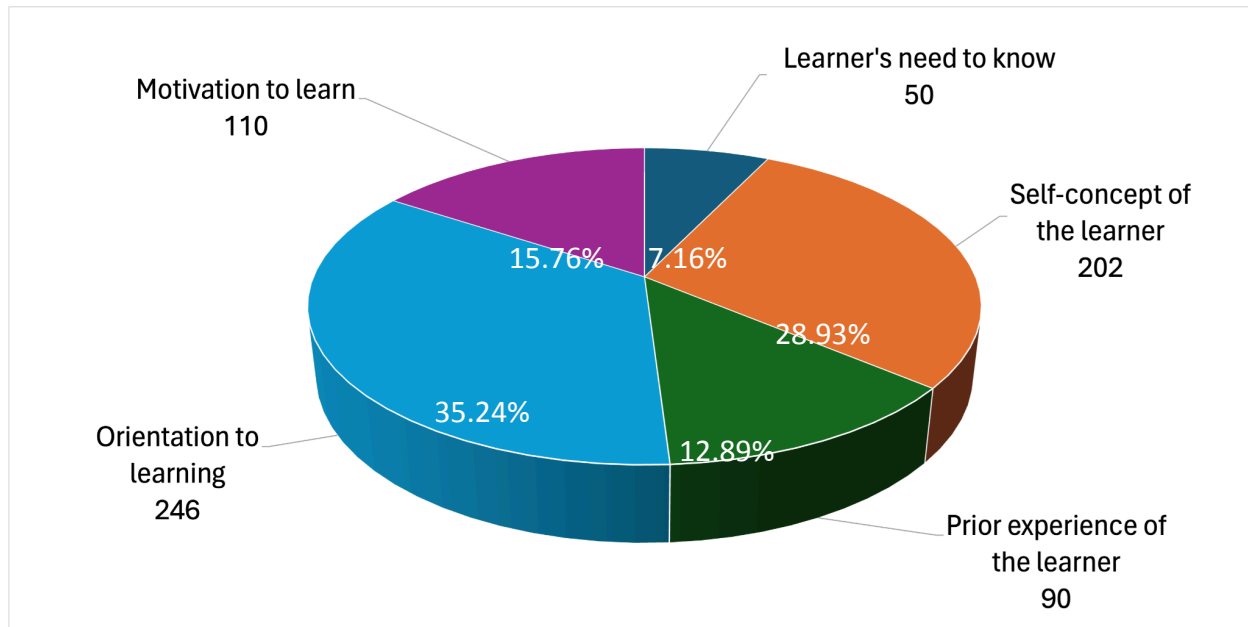


Figure 4.1. Coded Principles per Total Coded Activities

Numbers and percentages of each coded principle found throughout the coding process, out of the total 698 coded activities.

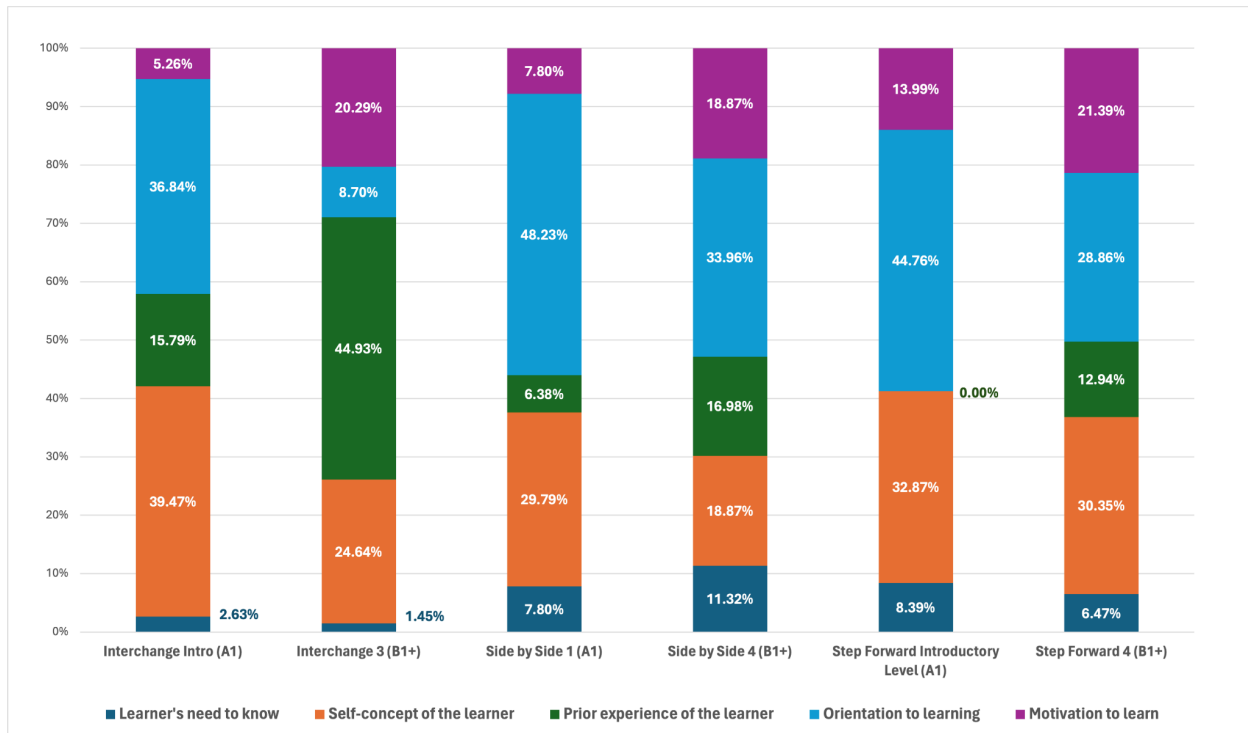


Figure 4.2. Percentage of Coded Principles per Book

A comparison of the percentage of each coded principle per book.

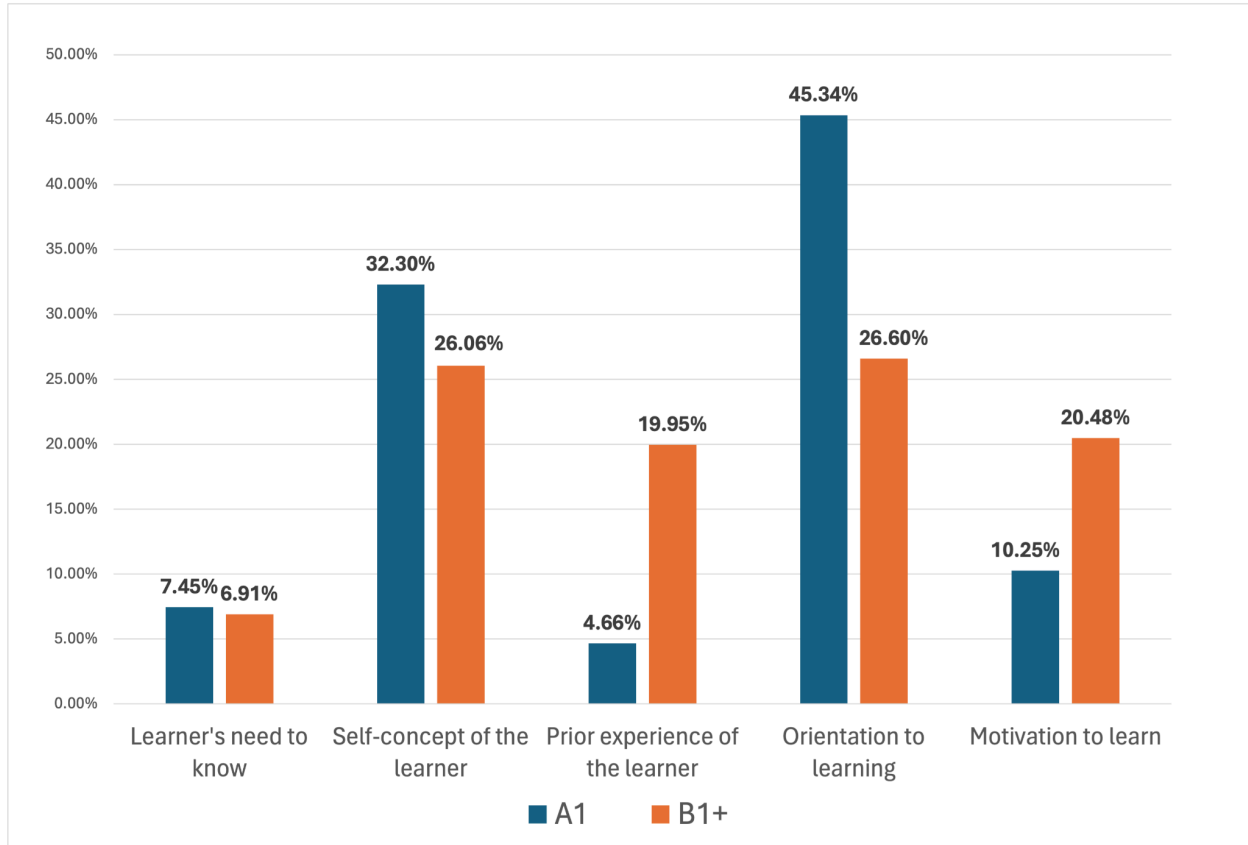


Figure 4.3. Prevalence of Coded Principles in A1 and B1+ Textbooks

The total percentage of each coded principle found within all A1 books, in comparison to those within all B1+ books.

Learner's Need to Know

The principle of the learner's need to know was least prevalent out of all the andragogical principles in the textbooks; only 7.16% of all codes were identified as the learner's need to know (see Figure 4.1). All three curricula list their stated objectives for a given unit in locations such as page margins or unit title pages, which can support a learner's need to know in helping to remind them the goals behind the textbook activities. However, these objectives are not part of the activities themselves and are located in areas that are easy to overlook. Therefore, objectives passively listed outside of activities in the textbook were not coded as evidence of the learner's need to know. Aside from listed objectives in page margins or unit overview pages, there was very little evidence of this principle within student activities.

One notable aspect of the ELT textbooks was that they contained very little instructional or explanatory material and were almost entirely composed of activities. This is in stark contrast to traditional textbooks used in secondary and post-secondary education, which consist much more heavily of instructional materials rather than activities, and have explanations accompanying the introduction of new topics. Aside from occasional reading and writing activities or more complex tasks, each activity begins abruptly without any written context. While the teacher's materials in some cases gave information to the teacher to relay to students as they worked in the textbook, independent learners or those trying to make up missed classwork get little explanatory information from the book itself. *Interchange* was especially devoid of this principle, with the only code in both the *Intro* and *3* books each being the scope and sequence chart at the beginning of each book.

Self-Concept of the Learner

Codes identified as self-concept of the learner comprised 28.93% of the coded activities across all textbooks. All three curricula contained regular self-evaluations, which were coded as self concept of the learner due to the fact that they encourage adult learners to take responsibility for both their progress and their needs. Other activities identified with this principle were journal prompts. However, it should be noted that many of the self-evaluations and writing prompts were heavily structured, and few activities overall gave students control of their own learning, especially in the A1 level books. This could be due to the idea that students with lower English proficiency may need more clarity and guidance to successfully complete open-ended tasks; although this should be considered when crafting activity prompts, some of the activities meant to encourage autonomous learning were structured to the point of restricting the student, as shown in Figure 4.4. One exception was the essay prompts in *Side by Side*, which gave students the main idea of the essay and the tools in which to write and revise, but left style, length, and other choices up to the learner.

Prior Experience of the Learner

A very low amount of prior experience of the learner was found in the books at the A1 level. This principle represented 15.79% of coded activities in *Interchange Intro*, and 6.38% of all *Side by Side 1* coded activities (see Figure 4.2). The lowest was *Step Forward Introductory Level*, with no use of prior experience of the novel in any activity throughout the book. That being said, prior experience of the learner was the principle that increased the most from the A1 to B1+ level books; rates of this principle in the B1+ books were 44.93% in *Interchange 3*, 16.98% in *Side by Side 4*, and 12.94% in *Step Forward 4*. This difference in frequency is most likely due to the fact that past tenses, which are often needed to talk about previous experience,

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

FOR WRITING AND DISCUSSION



MY CLOSE FRIENDS

Tell about your close friends.

What are their names?
Where do they live?
What do they do?
When do you get together with them?
What do you talk about?

105 ●

Figure 4.4. Activity Example: Self-Concept of the Learner

An activity from *Side by Side 1*. Activities meant to promote independent learning were often heavily structured.

are not all fully introduced in the three A1 textbooks, but have been introduced in the B1+ books. Prior experience could still be incorporated into A1 books by asking about holidays, laws, or customs in their home country in the present tense, but given that past tenses are the simplest way to discuss prior experience, the lower rate of this principle in A1 books is not surprising.

Orientation to Learning

The principle that was coded for most frequently was orientation to learning, representing 35.2% of the total codes found in all textbooks. This principle's high frequency is consistent with the fact that "survival English" themes, which align closely with the immediate life skills coded as orientation to learning, are often found throughout ESL curricula. However, activities incorporating students' orientation to learn did decrease in all three curricula between the A1 and B1+ books as students' proficiency grows and priorities shift from immediate life skills to longer-term goals.

Motivation to Learn

The amount of activities incorporating motivation to learn was somewhat low in the A1 level books, representing just 10.25% of all coded activities at the A1 level, but rates of this principle were almost exactly doubled in the B1+ books, making up 20.48% of all coded B1+ activities. However, while there was a twofold increase in motivation to learn, most of the activities coded with this principle in the B1+ books were focused on career development, with much fewer being focused on citizenship or naturalization, soft skills, or other personal development goals. Given that many adult students are immigrants who may be working towards citizenship, it was surprising that civics, history, or other US-specific activities were not incorporated more often into activities. *Side by Side* did have some activities that were focused

on U.S. history and culture and formatted in a newspaper style, as displayed in Figure 4.5, but this was the largest set of activities done on the theme in all six textbooks.

Readiness to Learn

As discussed in Chapter Three, readiness to learn was not coded in the textbooks as the other andragogical principles were, since it is typically dependent upon learners' individual life stages. However, as English proficiency increases, learners' ability to pursue more advanced life tasks will grow as well. Therefore, it is possible to see some of this andragogical principle through analyzing the thematic trends between textbooks in the same curriculum. In doing so, the writers' scaffolding and consideration of learners' readiness in that language level can be observed. The following trends are represented visually in Figure 4.3.

One trend that could be seen in all curricula was an increase in motivation to learn from A1 to B1+ textbooks. Since motivation to learn relates to students' underlying reasons for learning English, such as career development, providing for one's family, or citizenship, it is not surprising that as learners become closer to achieving these goals alongside their increasing proficiency in English, these activities become more prevalent in higher-level textbooks. Prior experience of the learner had similar trends; since none of the lower-level textbooks introduced the past tense, activities requiring any discussion of past events or experiences were quite low. However, higher-level books used this principle much more frequently, as learners at advanced levels have had much more experience with both the simple past tense and either have learned or are learning more complex tenses to discuss events in the past. Conversely, orientation to learn, which related to life-related and problem-related tasks, decreased from all A1 to B1 levels, from 45.34% in the A1 books to 26.60% in B1+ books. This may be due to the fact that basic skills related to "survival English" are necessary in lower levels where students are faced with



Figure 4.5. Activity Example: Motivation to Learn

The first page of a lesson in *Side by Side 4* giving an overview of U.S. history. This is one of only a few activities throughout all three curricula that would help students with skills relating to naturalization or citizenship.

immediate day-to-day challenges. However, these immediate needs become less pressing as learners become more advanced in the language and begin to focus on longer-term goals.

Conclusion

Overall, the *Step Forward* curriculum contained the highest number of activities incorporating andragogy, followed by *Side by Side* and *Interchange*. All B1+ level books had higher rates of activities containing andragogy than the A1 level books in their respective curricula. Orientation to learn was the principle that was identified in the coding most frequently, while the learner's need to know was found least frequently. While the findings in this section do not necessarily demonstrate intentional use of andragogy, it does show that there are activities in each of these books that align with the Knowles et al.'s (2020) six principles of andragogy, indicating that the activities with these themes are theoretically conducive to adult learning.

Part 2: Findings from Curriculum Analysis

Adaptability

This section discusses the features of the selected ELT curricula, including number of levels, textbook organization, supplementary materials, and other curricular offerings, to examine their curricular adaptability for voluntary, semi-weekly, adult ESL programs. Overall, it was found that all three curricula have a number of materials that allow for some modification by ESL programs to fit their own needs; however, they may not be flexible enough to accommodate for the unique constraints of faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs. Tables 4.2 charts the offerings for each curriculum.

All three curricula offer textbooks in both online and print versions, although online copies of *Step Forward* must be purchased separately and are not offered in a bundle as they are with *Interchange* and *Side by Side*. *Interchange* and *Step Forward* both have a set number of

Table 4.2. Curriculum Offerings

	<i>Interchange</i>	<i>Side by Side</i>	<i>Step Forward</i>
Levels in curriculum	4	4	6 (recent addition of level 5 at B2-B2+)
Textbook format	Online, print	Online, print	Online (additional cost), print
Versions of textbooks	2: textbooks also offered in parts A and B	1	1
Units per book	16	Varies	12
Structure of units	2 lessons (or “cycles”) per unit separated by topic, with 5-7 activities per lesson. Labeled activities follow different orders but include Snapshot, Conversation, Grammar focus, Pronunciation, Discussion (or Speaking/Role Play), Word power, Perspectives, Listening, Writing, Reading, and Interchange activity	Varies. Each unit has an overview page, along with a varying number of lessons and activities. Lessons include example conversations with related activities, Life Skills, various reading and writing lessons, and Assessment	7 labeled lessons per unit in the following order: Vocabulary, Writing, Grammar, Everyday Conversation, Reading, At Work (not in Introductory), Teamwork & Language Review. Each lesson contains a varying number of activities
Additional/ supplementary sections	Grammar Plus practice, Video activities	Gazette newspaper, Reading and Writing Workshop	None
Workbooks	Yes	Yes	Yes (except level 5)
Estimated time per unit	11 hrs, 55 min - 16 hrs, 15 min (Level 4, Unit 1)	Unknown	Unknown

units per book, along with having set lessons and/or activities per unit. The number of units in *Side by Side* varies per book, and while some lessons are consistent in their location in each unit, there is a less set order of activities. *Interchange* and *Side by Side* also have additional sections of the book that are not within the units themselves. *Interchange* has a “Grammar Plus” section that comes in the back of the textbook and a “Video Activities” section included in certain textbook versions. *Side by Side* has the “Gazette,” a newspaper-like reading-based activity page, and a “Reading and Writing Workshop” section, which has activities focused on reading, writing, civics, language arts, and other related skills; there are a number of these two sections which occur once every two to three units. Since these sections are somewhat standalone, they could be added by instructors or omitted and left for independent student use, depending on the amount of class time available. All curricula also have workbooks to accompany the textbooks, which can also be used to expand in-class lessons or utilized by students to keep learning outside of the limited hours in the classroom.

While the curricula share many of the same offerings, there are some discrepancies between them. *Interchange* is the only curriculum to offer the book in parts; while their site does not specify the reason, the textbooks are available in parts A and B, split in half. This would be helpful for ESL programs who do enrollment based on semester instead of academic year, or for larger programs with enough instructors to have two classes of each level per semester, split by ability within that book level. *Side by Side*, although it has the same number of levels as *Interchange*, has the most distinct and evenly distributed levels, as shown in Table 3.1. This may make student distribution and matriculation much simpler, as there is less overlap between the levels as in the other two curricula. *Step Forward*, with the recently added level 5 in the

curricula, has two more levels than the others, which would be incredibly helpful for programs with more than 4 levels of proficiency who want to keep the same curriculum between all levels.

One concern with the adaptability of all three curricula, however, is the issue of perhaps too much content for a semi-weekly program. In the *Step Forward* lesson plans, an estimated time range is given per activity. If the instructor were to follow the lesson plan accurately, the first unit in the book would take anywhere between eleven hours and fifty-five minutes to sixteen hours and fifteen minutes. For a class that meets for around an hour every weekday, this could take about three weeks, and if each unit required a similar time, the book could be completed in an academic year with fifteen-to-eighteen-week semesters. However, for faith-based, voluntary adult ESL programs, which meet semi-weekly, this could take much longer; a class that meets for only two hours per week would need at least six weeks to complete the unit, and if each unit took the same amount of time, only half of one *Step Forward* textbook could be completed. The other two curricula do not have estimated lesson plan times, but considering the fact that the amount of lessons and activities were generally close in number for all three curricula, it would likely not be unsafe to assume that their timing would work similarly. While it was mentioned previously that there were a number of activities in some of the books that could be omitted depending on time constraints, it appears that much more from each unit would need to be accelerated or cut completely to fit the tighter schedule of voluntary, semi-weekly programs.

Accessibility

This section first examines each curriculum's available materials for teachers to supplement their instruction of the ELT textbooks. It then discusses the online access options for students meant to aid in independent learning and provide supplemental practice outside of the classroom.

Teacher's resources are available to different degrees for all three curricula. All three curricula offer an online version of the textbook for instructor use. They also all offer lesson plans, multilevel activities, audio/video files, and assessment materials for instructors to use that accompany their respective textbooks. *Interchange* offers both an online teacher's platform and a print teacher's manual, while *Side by Side* only offers a print version of teacher's manuals. *Step Forward* instructor material is only available through their online teacher's website, aside from lesson plans, which are available in print. *Step Forward* has a free Teacher's Site, with limited access to some of the materials included in the for-purchase *Step Forward Teacher's Resource Center*. *Step Forward* and *Interchange* provide professional development resources for instructors, along with class presentation materials for an additional cost, while the *Side by Side* teacher's manual does not include such materials. Table 4.3 highlights the offerings to which teachers have access within each curriculum. The free *Step Forward* Teacher's Site has been differentiated from the *Step Forward* Teacher Resource Center, as different resources are available on each platform. Available teacher's resources within each curriculum are compared in Table 4.3.

As many instructors in faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs are untrained, many may not know how to develop effective lesson plans or create class activities to accommodate for the widely varying proficiency levels within their classrooms. Therefore, the premade lesson plans, multilevel activities, and assessment materials can prove to be invaluable tools for programs with untrained volunteer instructors. Along with this, the professional development and training resources offered by *Interchange* and *Step Forward* may ameliorate the lack of resources given to instructors in programs that do not provide quality teacher training. The free *Step Forward* Teacher's Site may also be beneficial to programs that do not have the funding to

Table 4.3. Teacher's Resources Per Curriculum

Resource	<i>Interchange</i>	<i>Side by Side</i>	<i>Step Forward</i> Teacher's Site (Free)	<i>Step Forward</i> Teacher Resource Center
Teacher's manual	Print, online	Print	Online (limited resources)	Online (some print options)
Lesson plans	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multilevel activities	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Online text access	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Professional development	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Assessment materials	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Presentation materials	Yes (additional cost)	No	No	Yes (additional cost)
Audio/video files	Audio, video	Audio	Audio	Audio (video additional cost)

provide teacher training and/or purchase teacher's resources, as the site offers many of the curriculum's more basic teaching materials for free, such as lesson plans, online text access, professional development resources, and audio for the textbook.

Alongside the teacher's materials provided by the examined ELT curricula, independent study resources for students were also studied. Almost all textbooks included an access code to an online study site that included practice activities for each unit and other study tools. Some of the curricula also provided class audio and video resources for students to review or study on their own, along with online access to a digital copy of the textbook. The resources to which students have access for independent study are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs according to the curriculum. Table 4.4 provides a comparison of the online study features for each curriculum.

Versions of the *Interchange* textbooks have access to the Cambridge One online learning platform, which includes an online version of the textbook, a "digital workbook," audio and video activities, and a progress tracker. The digital workbook, as shown in Figure 4.6 contains activities that follow the theme of each unit in the textbook, ordered by skill in the following way for each unit: vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, and video. The digital workbook activities are different from the textbook and physical workbook, giving students new ways to practice the skills in each unit. The progress page, as seen in Figure 4.7, gives students the ability to follow how many activities in the digital workbook they have completed, and to keep track of their scores for each unit organized by skill. The online e-text includes study features embedded into the book, including drawing tools, a hide/show bar to help students focus on certain sections, a notes option, and a timer. The online textbook is shown in Figure 4.8. The audio files, video files, and video activities align with corresponding activities in the textbook.

Table 4.4. Features of Online Study Platforms

Feature	<i>Interchange</i>	<i>Side by Side</i>	<i>Step Forward</i>
Included online study access	Yes (with certain book versions)	Yes	Yes (except Introductory level)
Activities for independent study	“Digital Workbook” on homepage dashboard	“FunZone” at end of each unit in e-text	“Practice” on homepage of site
Online text included	Yes	Yes	No (additional cost)
Study tools	Drawing tools, show/hide bar, notes, timer	Flashcards, notes, highlighter, search tool	<i>Oxford Learner’s Dictionary</i>
Audio/video files	Audio, video	Audio	No (but access is available elsewhere)
Progress tracker	Yes	No	Yes

Unit 1: That's my kind of friend!

In progress



interchange

Vocabulary

interchange

Grammar

interchange

Listening

✓ Listening Exercise 1

★

○ Listening Exercise 2

★

interchange

Reading

interchange

Video

Unit 2: Working 9 to 5



Unit 3: Lend a hand.



Figure 4.6. *Interchange* Digital Workbook

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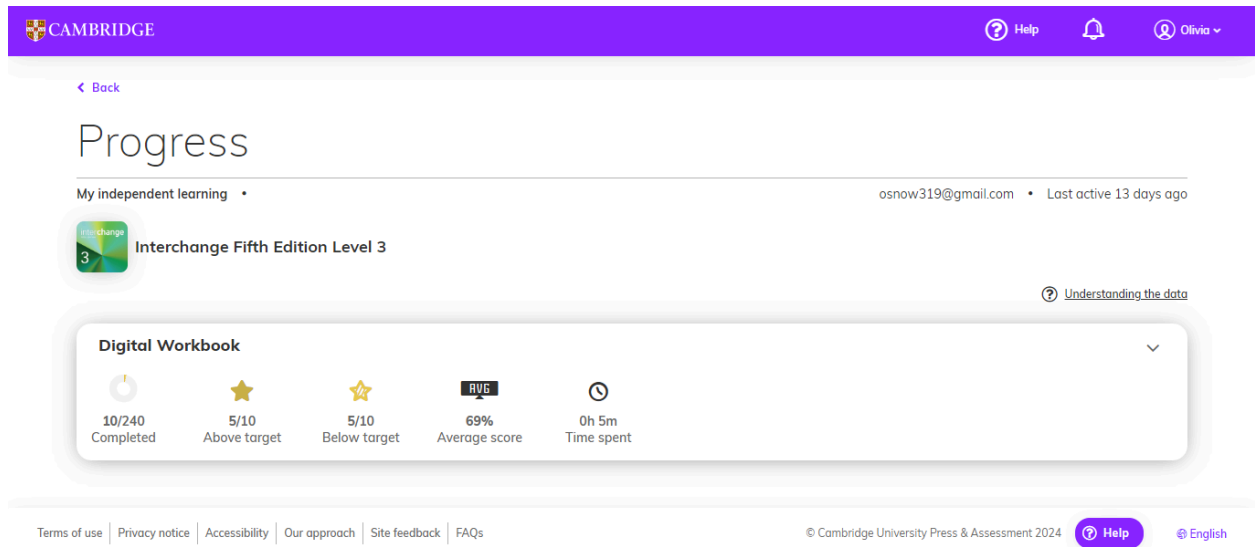


Figure 4.7. *Interchange* Online Progress Tracker

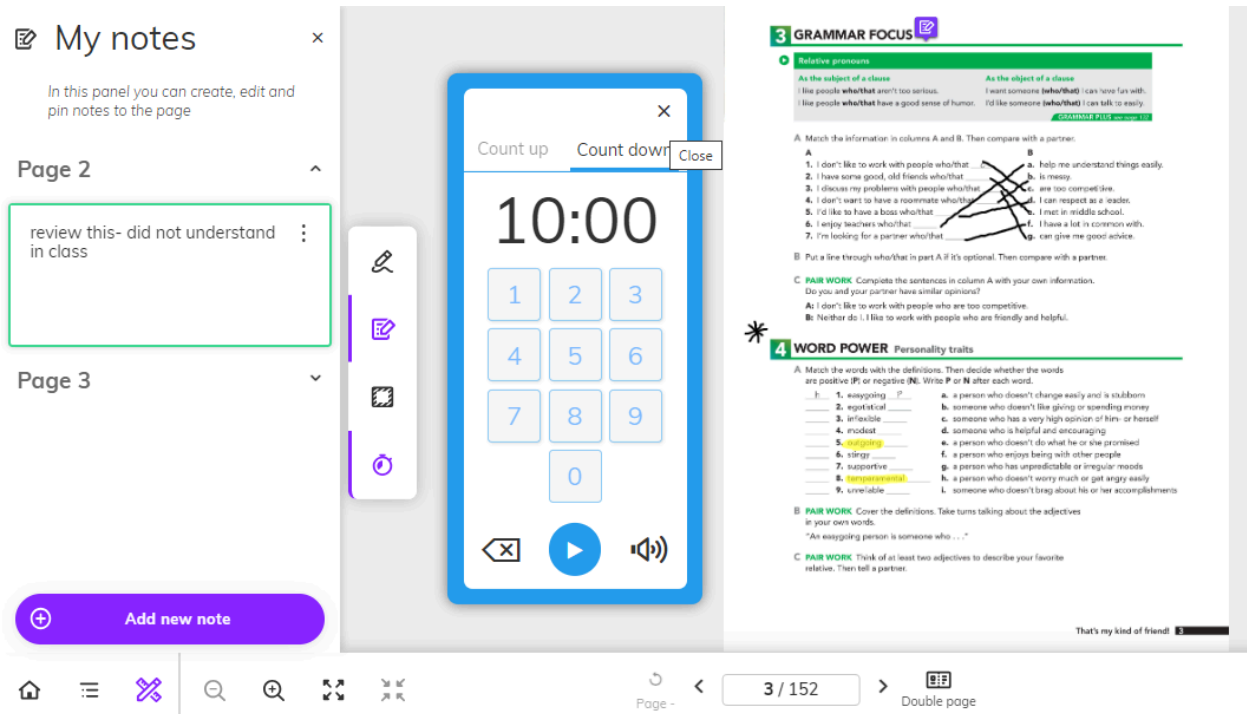


Figure 4.8. *Interchange* Online Textbook

Side by Side textbooks also come with access codes to an online version of the textbook and additional independent learning activities on the Pearson English Portal site. The e-textbook, shown in Figure 4.9 includes a notes option, a bookmarks tab, a highlighter, a search tool, and a customizable flashcard deck to assist students in self-study. Students also have access to a self-study page called “FunZone” at the end of each unit, as seen in Figure 4.10. This page in the e-book is designed like a carnival, with each area of the carnival having a different set of activities. One section focuses on vocabulary, grammar, reading, and life skills; another includes flashcards and a “Pictures & Words” activity; one section labeled the “Game Gallery” offers conversation, “word toss,” and “lucky letters” games; another section includes quizzes and crosswords; and the final section is named “Toon Town.” These activities, when selected, open a new internet window that opens up an online game, puzzle, or task. The FunZone can be completed in any order and does not seem to contain any sort of scaffolding within the unit activities themselves, as *Interchange* and *Step Forward* activities do. The online platform also offers audio activities that correspond with the textbook for students to review or learn from independently. Unlike the other two curricula, *Side by Side*’s online study site does not include a progress tracker for students.

Step Forward includes online practice codes in the majority of their textbooks, except for the Introductory level. However, while access to an electronic textbook can be purchased separately, the online code provided in the textbook does not include access to an electronic textbook as the other two curricula provide. The site offers supplementary activities for students organized by unit, shown in Figure 4.11, which are broken down further by the lessons within each unit. Each activity in the lesson is labeled according to the main skill that the task requires, including reading, writing, listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar. The first lesson in

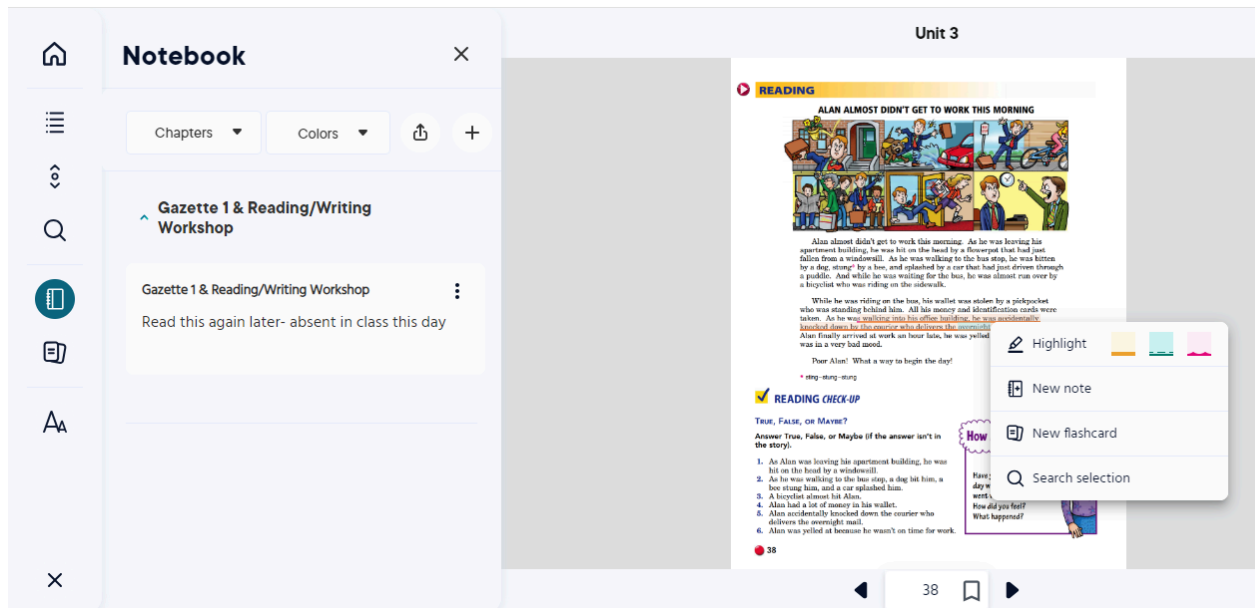


Figure 4.9. *Side by Side* Online Textbook



Figure 4.10. Side by Side Online “FunZone”

Home

Practice

Dictionary

Help

Account

Sign out

My practice

Print

4

STEP FORWARD 2E 4

Show

Last attempt

Scores %

1	Unit 1 It Takes All Kinds!	5/21 Done	9%
2	Unit 2 Breaking News	3/25 Done	5%
3	Unit 3 Going Places	0/22 Done	0%
4	Unit 4 Get the Job	0/23 Done	0%
5	Unit 5 Safe and Sound	0/23 Done	0%

Figure 4.11. *Step Forward* Online Study Platform

each unit is usually all vocabulary activities, the third lesson is usually all grammar activities, and the last lesson is typically a reading and writing activity, while the second and fourth lessons vary between all skill types. The online practice code does not include audio or video activities as the other curricula do, but audio files are available online on the *Step Forward* website. The access code also gives students access to the online *Oxford Learner's Dictionary*, in which students can look up unknown words, read possible definitions, and hear pronunciations. The *Step Forward* practice site has a progress tracker for students that keeps track of overall progress on activities organized by skill, which is shown in Figure 4.12.

Overall, all three curricula have each developed an extensive collection of activities to supplement adult students' learning outside the classroom and encourage independent practice. *Interchange* seemed to have the most comprehensive study site for students; its online access code for students included an e-textbook much like *Side by Side*, but also a site with scaffolded activities and a progress tracker, much like *Step Forward's* site. However, all three curricula's student study resources require technology and internet access, which is an important consideration, especially for programs whose students may not have access to technology or stable internet.

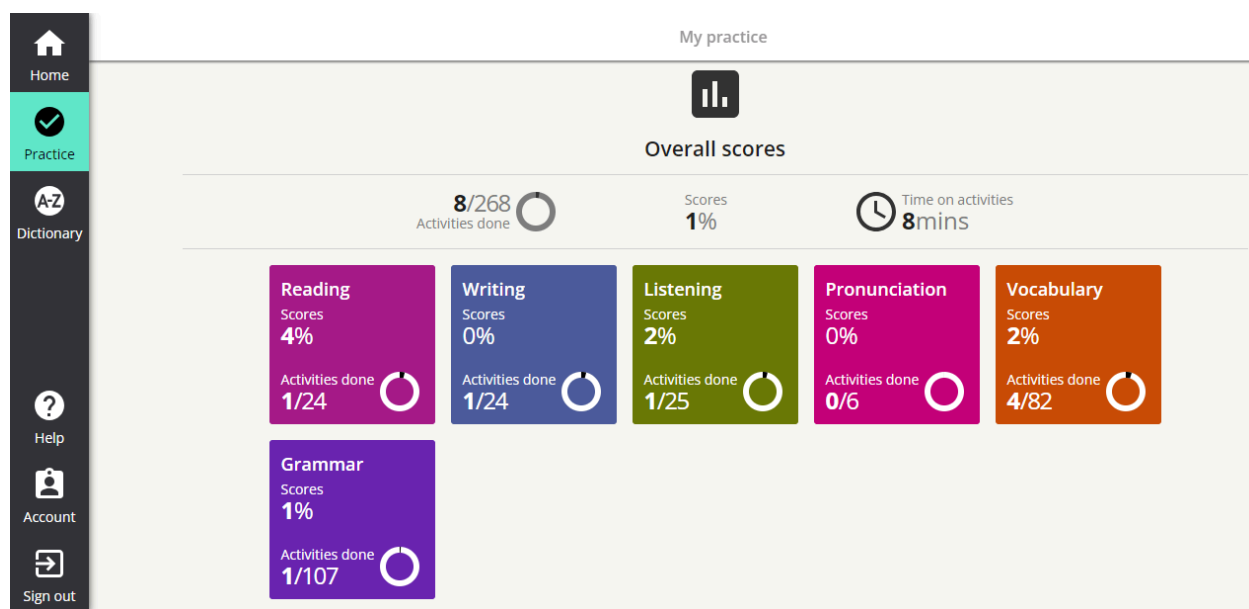


Figure 4.12. *Step Forward* Online Progress Tracker

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

The main goal of this thesis was to examine global ELT curricula for their use of andragogy in student textbooks, along with their adaptability and accessibility to those working and studying in faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs. The study aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1) How frequently can principles of andragogy be found within adult ELT textbooks?
- 2) To what extent are adult ELT textbooks and supplementary materials created in a way that is adaptable and accessible for faith-based, voluntary, semi-weekly ESL programs?
- 3) How well do global adult ELT curricula meet the unique needs of the faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL classroom setting?

This chapter first discusses the results of the first two research questions in relation to the existing literature. Drawing on this discussion, the third research question is then examined, which serves as the conclusion for the study. This chapter also presents implications from the study and ends with limitations of the study and suggested future work.

Principles of Andragogy in Adult ELT Textbooks

Overall, each of the examined curricula did contain activities that were consistent with andragogical principles. All six principles of andragogy were found in different activities throughout the textbooks, and 40.2% of all total activities included content consistent with andragogy. Orientation to learning was especially prominent throughout all examined textbooks; this is not surprising, given the history of hidden “survival ESL” themes within ESL textbooks (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985). However, the more immediate life skills coded in orientation to learning slightly lessened between the beginner and advanced books in all curricula, while the number of codes related to prior experience of the learner, self-concept of the learner, and

motivation to learn were all higher in the advanced books. These patterns show that ELT curriculum creators do consider learners' readiness to learn when structuring the curriculum over a series of multiple books. Knowles et al. (2020) emphasize the "importance of timing learning experiences to coincide with those developmental tasks" for adult learners (p. 45), and the increase in more tasks emphasizing autonomy, long-term goals, and reflection as learners become more advanced indicates that ELT publishers are aware of that importance in creating appropriate content for adult students.

Step Forward contained the highest percentage of activities including andragogical principles, with a curricular average of 59.8% of activities containing andragogical principles. *Side by Side* was next, with an average of 36.8%. *Interchange* contained the least, with only an averaged 21.5% of activities including andragogy. One contributing factor in the low levels of adult-specific content *Interchange* curriculum may have been the heavy focus on grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary: an issue that many such as Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013), Ewert (2011), and Shapiro (2011) have critiqued in ELT materials. As Shapiro (2011) notes, curricula with an overemphasis on such concepts can shift the focus onto technical accuracy and away from fluency. *Interchange's* high number of activities related to example conversations, grammar practice, and other more technical language learning skills may not have left enough room for activities promoting autonomous, self-directed learning.

However, it cannot be said that the theory of andragogy itself was intentionally incorporated into any of the three examined curricula, as none of the curricula's websites, textbooks, or teacher's materials included any mention of adult learning theories. This seems to match previous research on adult ELT materials, such as that of Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) who found that adult-centered learning theories were not being used in the creation of adult ELT

textbooks. Their findings, along with those in this study, suggest that there is a widespread deficiency of adult-specific learning theories within adult ELT materials, and seem to confirm that the writers of such materials are not considering adult learners' needs when creating curricular content.

Another concern in all three books was the lack of explanation and instruction found when coding the principle of the learner's need to know. *Side by Side* especially relied heavily on implicit instruction; the first few pages of each unit would have a modeled sentence or conversation with an accompanying graphic, followed by more graphics with cloze sentences underneath for students to complete. Although this type of format was not found as frequently in the other two curricula, they too contained little to no explicit explanation of grammar rules, sentence structures, or other new concepts. While some sections in teacher's manuals had suggested explanations for newly introduced concepts, this would be little help to students who have missed class and are trying to stay on track, or even for students who are simply reviewing the material on their own time. This forces students back into dependency upon the instructor to facilitate their learning, a position which Knowles et al. (2020) assert "probably accounts in part for the high dropout rate in much voluntary adult education" (p. 44). The lack of directions or explanations behind tasks is in direct opposition to both Knowles et al.'s (2020) andragogical model and the assertion in SLA theory that adult learners benefit from explicit instruction (Roehr-Brackin, 2018).

Another aspect of the textbooks that was surprisingly scarce when coding for motivation to learn was the incorporation of civics, citizenship, or naturalization. Given that most eligible US immigrants eventually apply to become citizens (Budiman, 2020), it is likely a goal shared by many students in voluntary adult ESL programs. Along with this, all three curricula state that

they utilize American English (Molinsky & Bliss, 2016; Santamaria, 2017; Richards, 2017).

While there are separate citizenship and nationalization classes available for immigrants (US Citizenship and Immigration Services, n.d.), it seems like it should be a reasonable, relatable, and simple theme for the writers of ELT materials to include in their curricula if it is already written for those aiming to learn US-specific language and culture. *Side by Side* does include some more in-depth writing and reading activities related to civics and US history, but overall, the three curricula do not incorporate this theme in a quantity proportional to students' potential needs and interests.

Adaptability and Accessibility of ELT Curricula for Faith-Based, Voluntary, Semi-Weekly ESL Programs

In terms of each examined curriculum's adaptability to semi-weekly ESL programs, it seemed that the global curricula were created for programs that meet multiple times per week in a structure that is more similar to a traditional classroom setting. As many faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs do not have the ability to meet daily due to volunteer and student availability, these curricula do not naturally fit the needs and time constraints of such programs. However, the supplementary materials that each curriculum offers, such as teacher's manuals, multilevel activities, online practice sites, and other additional features give ESL programs the ability to adapt the curricula to fit their needs and give students access to independent learning options.

When comparing the curriculum offerings, *Step Forward* covered the widest scope of proficiency level, especially with the new level 5 book that gives programs the option to offer another level of learning for their students, while not having to train teachers or acclimate students to a new curriculum. That being said, programs that do not have the volunteer base to

have the six levels offered by *Step Forward* may find that *Interchange* or *Side by Side* have a more appropriate distribution of proficiency within each of their four levels. *Side by Side* has the most evenly distributed levels and the most even overlap in proficiency between books, which may feel more seamless for long-term students as they matriculate to higher levels.

Considering each curriculum's teacher resources, all three curricula offered lesson plans, multilevel activities, supplementary audio and/or video, and assessment materials. These would be especially helpful for untrained teachers who may not know how to develop and organize instructional material. Additionally, these classes may have higher variation in student proficiency within a single classroom due to a lack of volunteer instructors, funding for more levels, or accurate placement capabilities (Lindholm, 2008; Eyring, 2014), making the multilevel activities an especially helpful resource for instructors who do not have experience teaching students at such varying levels. While all three curricula offered these resources, *Step Forward* and *Interchange* seemed to have a larger amount of additional materials available to accompany the textbooks, both offering professional development resources and presentation materials for instructor use. The free *Step Forward* Teacher's Site may also be particularly helpful for smaller or more independent faith-based programs that may not have the funding for extensive teacher's materials; while it did not offer in-depth multilevel activities, assessment materials, presentation tools, and other certain features, it offered a wide range of teacher's resources for free for all levels between *Step Forward Introductory Level* and *Step Forward 4*. This site may provide an economical solution for programs in need of teacher's resources but lacking the funds to purchase them.

All three curricula also offer access to online study sites for students, which provides the opportunity to study outside of class through online tools and activities. As Rhodes and Schmidt

(2020) note, many students have obstacles that may keep them from class such as family obligations, economic limitations, or lack of transportation; the online independent learning gives a level of flexibility that is necessary for many adult students. The online self-study option also promotes autonomous learning, which aligns with Knowles et al.'s (2020) emphasis on the self-concept of the learner. The *Interchange* online self-study option was the most comprehensive of the three; access to online study included in the student textbook included an e-textbook with study tools, an activity web page, and an automatic progress tracker organized by skill, while *Side by Side* and *Step Forward* only offered some of these features with the purchase of a print textbook.

While the self-study options in all three curricula have the potential to aid in adult students' individual learning, the online-only format for these options must not be overlooked. All three online study platforms require both technology access and a stable connection to the internet, which may be inaccessible for students who are uncomfortable with technology or do not have access to home internet or compatible technology. While this may not be a concern in public or postsecondary ESL programs, faith-based programs may have a higher population of immigrant or refugee students who do not yet have technology or internet access at home (Cherewka, 2020). Community services such as public libraries may offer both for free, but one must have transportation and the free time to utilize these services: things which many immigrant or refugee students may not have. Another consideration is that modern technology can be more difficult for older students, especially when their first language is not that which the technology uses.

Conclusion

Drawing on the previous discussion, this section concludes the study by examining the third research question of how well global adult ELT curricula meet the unique needs of the faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL classroom setting. This setting is unique from public or postsecondary ESL classrooms; programs may not be funded by the federal government (North American Mission Board, 2014), classes may meet at unconventional times and/or fewer times per week to accommodate adult students with work or family obligations, and instructors are usually volunteers, many of whom are untrained (Durham & Kim, 2018; Henrichsen, 2010). Considering the needs of this context, the literature in the field of adult ESL teaching, and the findings from the textual analysis of this study's three chosen ELT curricula, it seems clear that global ELT curricula do not adequately meet the needs of faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL classrooms. Given that there are currently limited options for ELT curricula created for semi-weekly, faith-based programs and written with the adult learner's needs in mind, these programs instead must compromise their needs and the needs of their students to be able to utilize the global ELT curricula available.

This study found that while the books did have themes and activities consistent with the principles of andragogy, adult learning theory was not intentionally incorporated into the books; andragogy was not mentioned throughout any of the programming, teacher's resources, or on the curricula's websites. This may be due to the fact that despite being one of the leading theories in adult learning and education (Brookfield, 2020; Bowling & Henschke, 2020), andragogy has not yet been incorporated into adult SLA theories, as discussed in Chapter Two; this has likely caused the theory of andragogy to be largely overlooked during the creation of ELT materials. Because of this, the textbooks lacked components that could be especially pertinent for adult

ESL students in faith-based, voluntary programs; the first is explanatory material before lessons and activities, which would give students autonomy over their own learning. Another is a focus on long-term goals such as naturalization, as many students in these programs hope to someday become US citizens (Budiman, 2020; Rhodes & Schmidt, 2020). Had the publishers considered the theory of andragogy in creating these materials, it is possible that these areas for concern could have been addressed and resolved prior to publication, as these issues relate directly to principles of andragogy such as the learner's need to know and motivation to learn (Knowles et al, 2020).

Additionally, while all three curricula offered a plethora of learning materials in textbooks, teacher's manuals, and online for students and teachers to utilize as they may seem fit, it seems that there may in fact be too much content for the average faith-based program to complete in an academic year. The textbooks seemed to be structured for classes that met every weekday, while some faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs may not even have the resources to meet more than once a week. Because of this, instructors may need to condense or cut curricular content to fit into the limited time of such programs. This could prove to be especially difficult for the teachers in these contexts, as many are already untrained in ESL teaching, adult education, or both.

The lack of congruence between ELT curricula and the needs of their users seems to indicate that the publishers of these curricula are not considering the contexts of voluntary, semi-weekly, adult ESL programs, although they are likely a large portion of their customer base. However, all of the examined curricula have gone through multiple new editions since their initial publications; *Interchange* is in its fifth edition, *Side by Side* is in its fourth, and *Step Forward* is in its second. The fact that these more recent editions have not changed in a way that

is more conducive to the learning of adult learners in voluntary ESL programs indicates that the writers of these curricula are not extremely interested in accommodating for a large group of their users. Since many faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs still use these curricula, the publishers may not be affected by the curricula's shortcomings; instead, these issues are left to be felt by the programs themselves, the instructors volunteering therein, and the adult students whom they serve.

Implications

This section offers implications based upon the findings and discussion of the study. It first relays implications for program directors and instructors, followed by those for ELT publishers.

It should be noted that although this study focuses on faith-based (and more specifically, Christian) programs, many of these implications will be applicable to other programs run by community centers or other religious organizations. While many community-based ESL programs may be more eligible for government funds, some programs may run into similar issues such as inconsistent attendance, the need for semi-weekly classes at times outside of traditional work hours, a lack of trained teachers, or ill-fitting ELT curricula. Therefore, while some parts of this study such as the literature review are more specific to Christian, faith-based ESL programs, the following recommendations could be applicable to a wide range of smaller or independent ESL programs.

For Program Directors and Instructors

Given that global ELT curricula cannot fully meet the current needs of faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs, this raises some implications for the directors of these programs as they choose and incorporate ELT materials into their classrooms. Programs should consider

whether a curriculum's predetermined schedule is compatible with how frequently their program will be able to meet based on their access to meeting spaces, volunteer availability, and student population. If a schedule will need to be condensed or accelerated for the timing of a semi-weekly program, another thing to consider is the amount of supplementary material needed. If teachers will not have the time to review all of the practice materials and activities within the student textbooks, workbooks with additional practice or online access codes with corresponding activities may not be needed for all students. Especially given that faith-based programs do not receive federal funding (North American Mission Board, 2014; Durham & Kim, 2018), it may be more advantageous for programs to spend money on a more specific curriculum that better fits their needs and schedule rather than on materials supplementing a curriculum that already contains more content than what can be covered. As some programs ask students to contribute to textbook materials, it is especially important to ensure that students' limited resources are not being wasted on unused or unusable materials.

However, regardless of how well the curriculum fits the needs of the program, a vital aspect of adult students' successful learning is their teachers. Given the lack of teacher training in faith-based programs (Lessard-Clouston, 2013) and the detriment that untrained teachers can cause in the adult ESL classroom (Gilbertson, 2000), it is pertinent that volunteer instructors at faith-based, adult ESL programs are trained in both ESL teaching and in the theory of andragogy. For programs that must considerably adapt or condense global ELT materials to fit their needs, well-educated instructors in the classroom become even more of a necessity. While inexperienced volunteer instructors are no doubt well-intentioned, teacher training is essential for the success of adult ESL students.

However, even when faith-based, voluntary programs are unable to provide appropriate curricula and volunteer training, the teachers in these programs can still ensure that their adult students are being given the best chances of success. For those in programs without training resources, instructors should seek out local or online training, as it is shown that untrained ESL instructors can actually be more harmful than helpful for adult students (Gilbertson 2000). Instructors should also help to incorporate andragogical, adult-appropriate principles of learning within the classroom, and encourage their students to learn independently. Victor (2021) states that encouraging students' ability to be self-reliant is an important classroom practice for instructors, which affirms Knowles et al.'s (2020) assertion that adult learners have an inherent need to be self-directed. Lastly, instructors should be communicative with their program directors about their needs and concerns. Many programs may not know that their curricula are not the right fit for their program, or that the textbooks do not intentionally consider the needs for adult learners; as instructors are the intercessor between students and their programs, they should be the first to let their programs know when their students' needs are not being met.

For ELT Publishers

The results of this study bring to light a number of implications for publishers who produce adult ELT materials. The first is that ELT producers should consider both adult SLA theories and the theory of andragogy when creating content for adult learners. Given that SLA theory has acknowledged that adults learn language differently from young learners (Hird et al., 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2021), and as the concept of andragogy is one of the most widely influential theories in adult education (Brookfield, 2020; Bowling & Henschke, 2020), it seems natural to create adult-focused material in light of that. Shortcomings in the textbooks illuminated by this study, such as lack of explicit directions for students and little incorporation

of tasks focused on naturalization, could have potentially been resolved prior to publication had writers taken a more andragogically-informed approach in content development.

As previously discussed, it appears that publishers' assumed consumer base for global ELT curricula is likely public programs that follow a more traditional academic schedule; while this may be partly accurate, such programs are by no means the only ones using these curricula. Publishers should consider that many of the programs purchasing their materials are once-a-week or semi-weekly programs, such as faith-based, voluntary ESL programs that do not have the funding, staff, or attendance rates to hold class every weekday. Curricula designed to be used on a more weekly basis rather than a daily one would be particularly helpful to both faith-based and community ESL programs who have more unconventional schedules to accommodate their adult students. Or, instead of creating entirely new curricula, publishers could offer alternative schedules and condensed lesson plans for semi-weekly programs to use alongside publishers' already existing curricula. However, given that there is little data tracking the actual need for such alternatives, and that these curricula are still widely used despite not considering the diverse needs of their consumers, it is improbable that these needs would be taken into account.

A solution for all of these issues would be for faith-based publishers to create more ELT programming for faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs. As acknowledged in this study's literature review, there is an unexplained lack of ELT material created by faith-based publishers. However, these publishers would be in the ideal position to create content that both accommodates for the logistical challenges and aligns with the spiritual worldview of such programs. Faith-based publishers could be the ones to fill the gap between ELT curriculum offerings and faith-based program needs. At the time of this study's completion, one faith-based organization, Mission to North America (MNA), has begun fundraising for and piloting its new

curriculum, *Neighbor to Neighbor*. The student textbooks do not contain explicit religious content but align with Christian values, and the curriculum incorporates prayer and bible verses into its teacher's materials for instructors to integrate into each class setting (Mission to North America, n.d.). It is also designed to work alongside the organization's teacher training program, which addresses the need for teacher training in faith-based contexts as acknowledged by those such as Durham and Kim (2018) and Lessard-Clouston (2013). As it has not yet been published, it is not possible to determine if it fully meets the needs of faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs in the ways that global ELT curricula could not. However, it seems to be a promising step in the right direction, and it can be hoped that other faith-based publishers follow MNA's lead.

Limitations

One of the most significant obstacles of this study was the lack of national data available on faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs, the number of students enrolled in these programs, and the materials used therein. For this reason, much of the research and discussion incorporated information from adjacent areas of study, as the scope of this study did not support gathering nationwide trends regarding these programs. This study also was only able to look into three global ELT curricula; while the three selected should be somewhat representative of the genre, there are many other books commonly used in faith-based, voluntary, adult ESL programs. Along with this, only certain aspects of these curricula could be examined, including andragogy, adaptability, and accessibility; however, there are many learning theories and attributes of ELT curricula that are equally as important to adult ESL programs, but they could not be studied in this thesis.

Future Work

This study has illuminated a number of gaps within the field of faith-based, adult ESL which should be further researched. As mentioned, very little data on faith-based ESL programs exist; studies on their prevalence, impact in a community, or student populations and retention rates would be invaluable information for scholars, program directors, and instructors in the field. A national survey of faith-based ESL programs, their student and instructor demographics, their available funding, curricular materials, and other information would be especially invaluable for further research into the needs and trends within these teaching contexts. Ethnographies of faith based programs exploring the different facets of these programs, their incorporation of religious themes, and the unique needs of these programs may also help to gain a better understanding of these programs and to bring their needs to the attention of ELT publishers. Further study into the specific learning and teaching theories used in global ELT curricula would also give helpful insight into the motivations behind ELT publishers' inclusion of certain content, themes, and activities. Additionally, the use of clip art and cartoons in adult curriculum could be explored further; although it was outside the scope of this study, some of the studied curricula, *Side by Side* in particular, relied heavily on the use of cartoons as visual aids. It would be enlightening to know the extent to which juvenile motifs or graphics positively or negatively affect adult students' self perception and motivation. Lastly, further study is needed on the lack of publishing of faith-based ELT materials and on the specific curricular needs of faith-based programs. Further research into faith-based ESL programs' needs, values, and preferences for an ELT curriculum, along with an examination of existing faith-based materials, could aid faith-based publishers in creating their own curricula for adult ESL students.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Codebook

	<i>Interchange Intro</i>	<i>Interchange 3</i>	<i>Side by Side 1</i>	<i>Side by Side 4</i>	<i>Step Forward Introductory</i>	<i>Step Forward 4</i>	Total coded activities
Learner's need to know	1	1	11	12	12	13	50
Self-concept of the learner	15	17	42	20	47	61	202
Prior experience of the learner	6	31	9	18	0	26	90
Orientation to learning	14	6	68	36	64	58	246
Motivation to learn	2	14	11	20	20	43	110
Total coded activities	38	69	141	106	143	201	698
Total activities per book	239	255	387	285	257	314	1737

Vita

Olivia Robyn Snow Davis grew up in a small town outside of Nashville, Tennessee. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Lipscomb University in English Writing and Spanish before going on to pursue a master's degree at the University of Tennessee in Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics. She and her husband, Daniel, currently live in Knoxville, Tennessee with their two cats, Simon and Luna. After her graduation, she plans to move back to Nashville and continue volunteering as an adult ESL instructor at her local church ESL program.