EXPANDING THE DESCRIPTION OF FACILITATORS OF ADULT LEARNING: WORKPLACE FACILITATOR TEACHING STYLES, THEORIES OF ACTION, AND PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

This study identified espoused teaching modes and teaching perspectives for a sample of workplace learning facilitators. The difference between facilitator espoused teaching mode and learner perception of facilitator teaching mode was also explored.

The Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS) was used to measure facilitator teaching mode; the Adapted Principles of Adult Learning Scale (APALS) was used to measure learner perception of facilitator teaching mode; and the Teaching Perspectives Inventory (TPI) was used to measure facilitator teaching perspective. The sample was 34 facilitators in colleges/universities and public/corporate training organizations and their 286 learners. Facilitator variables examined were age, gender, race, occupational field, professional preparation, years teaching experience, and program taught.

Facilitators were designated as non-collaborative, but were found to be slightly more collaborative than other groups of instructors and teachers from past studies. There was moderate agreement between facilitator espoused and learner perceived teaching mode, yet learners rated facilitators lower on collaborative teaching mode than facilitators rated themselves. Gender and years teaching experience were found to be significantly associated with facilitator teaching mode. The most common facilitator teaching perspectives were the Nurturing and Apprenticeship perspectives. Teaching perspective did not predict espoused or perceived teaching mode; however, there were differences in teaching mode scores for the different teaching perspectives—with the Transmission perspective returning the lowest collaborative teaching mode scores (espoused and perceived) of all teaching perspectives.

Recommendations for practice and future research were provided, which included a current examination of the PALS instrument for use in workplace learning settings.