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Tutor Training in a Connecticut Mill Town

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Tutor Training in a Connecticut Mill Town

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Abstract

This is a preliminary evaluation of a small volunteer tutoring program in northeastern Connecticut between 2011 and the present, focusing particularly on tutor support, the need for a new tutor training program and how experiential learning can benefit these. The program had a loss of administration in 2012. It is also coming to terms with demographic changes. Research methods were interviews with tutors, reflection through documents and other sources. There is an exploration of experiential learning and tutor training, and a description of context in the first part of the paper. The second part of the paper and accompanying tables uses information gathered to lay out ideas for future tutor professional development and a new tutor training program.

ERIC descriptors: Teaching, Teacher Training, Teacher Education Curriculum, Teaching

Experience

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Tutor Training in a Connecticut Mill Town

This paper is a preliminary examination of a small volunteer tutoring program in northeastern Connecticut. I have been connected with it since the late summer of 2011, functioning as de facto lead tutor. The paper evaluates the program especially in terms of the loss of its administrative infrastructure in August 2012 and the experiments that were tried in consequence. Part of that evaluation comes from interviews with tutors. This paper will focus primarily on continuing education and support of tutors in the program and laying the groundwork for a formal tutor training program. It will explore the use of experiential learning methods in both professional development and in new tutor training. Tables detailing information on tutors and learners, can be found at the end of the paper on pages 47 to 51. Tables laying out preliminary idea on training content and structure can be found on pages 52 to 57. More detailed table pagination will be included throughout the paper.

Overview of Training Needs

Tutor Support and Professional Development

The last formal classroom tutor training for the program in northeastern Connecticut was held in early 2012 by Literacy Volunteer of Eastern Connecticut and was less than eight hours. Most of the current tutors in the tutoring program did not have this training, nor do they have a background in education. Therefore, one need in terms of support is greater knowledge of and contact with the field of TESOL, including content and pedagogy. Another support need is in diagnosing and problem solving the issues that come up with learners, including an assessment system that is appropriate to our demographic of learners. Moreover, the method and scheduling of how these supports are delivered, including face to face versus remote, needs to be examined in order to create a system that is appropriate. The current tutors are rich in experience but as retired (or semi-retired) volunteers, work under constraints that a support system has to take into account, but which experiential learning methods may work well with.

New Tutor Training

Another need of the tutoring program has been training for new tutors. People interested in becoming tutors have come to us since late 2012. Some have been taken aback that we have no training program, and, I suspect, that has put them off. There has been a drop-off in learners since 2015. I have hesitated to look for new learners or for new tutors without an articulated training program in place. Therefore, one goal of interviews with current tutors was to gather information to test my premise that formal classroom based tutor training, plus a scaffolded system of moving from new tutor to independence, is needed for the program and that

experiential learning would be a good framework for future tutor training. I will present an

outline of the personal experiences and reasoning that led to that premise.

English Language Learner Demographics

According to the Population and Housing Narrative Profile 2011 to 2015 Five-Year Estimates for two towns central to the tutoring program, Putnam, and its neighbor, Danielson, approximately 500 people, or 12% of the combined population, said that they didn't speak English very well. The number of people in that group who lived in Putnam was about 70. Our tutoring program worked with at least half of that number in that time. (Literacy Volunteers of Eastern Connecticut, 2017)

However, since 2015, there has been a demographic shift, with many ELLs in Putnam leaving the area. It is possible that soon the program will have no ELLs actively being tutored. Outreach and community educational needs assessment will be required to assess whether or not the tutoring program still has a role as an independent organization. Designing a tutor training program will have to take into account not only what has worked in the past, but also how to adapt to these new demographics.

Exploring the Issue – Experiential Learning and Tutor Training

It may seem an oversimplification that a tutoring program where the tutors have lots of life experience and a teaching philosophy/methodology based on experience would be a good match. However, one of the attractions of experiential learning is that it provides a process for utilizing those experiences.

In interview with tutors, I wanted to explore how tutors drew on their past work and life experiences when they were tutoring. B talked extensively about his experience in hospital administration, and the communication skills necessary to do that job well. C spoke about what she had learned from teaching and tutoring students through the years. Sr. L has talked about her time working in Appalachia and other places, and the techniques that she has found that work well. H talked about her work as a trauma counselor and how she had to communicate with all different kinds of people, including as translator. Indirectly, when we discussed what they were doing with their learners or problems they were having, one could see them pulling from their experiences, as well as their observations. *For more detail on tutors' experience, see tables and notes, pages 53 – 55.*

Learning through and from experience has probably existed for as long as humans have done. Kolb wrote "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created by the transformation of experience" (1984, pg. 38). He believed that learning was a process, that knowledge was constantly remade by experience. He drew on ideas common to Lewin, Dewey and Piaget to delineate an Experiential Cycle. It consists of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, active experimentation. Thereupon, it recycles. It is

usually applied to a discrete experience, soon after that experience happens. However, this is not

absolutely necessary. (Kolb, 1984)

One can make the argument that those connected to the tutoring program have gone

through the experiential cycle of learning multiple times in multiple situations, but not so much

as a conscious process. The MATESOL courses at SIT provided a model for using past

experiences and bringing that knowledge to present challenges.

Most, if not all, of our courses at SIT began with we, as students, being asked to

remember and record our own experiences on the subject we were about to study. I found it both

useful and freeing. For a potential tutor with little formal teaching experience and low

confidence, the activity that Marti Anderson used with us in the beginning of Approaches (July,

2014) would be helpful. Each of us had to remember, in as much detail as possible, how we

were taught something. We shared that. Then we had to think of something we knew how to do

that could be taught in about five minutes. We figured out how to teach it and tried it out. Then

we reflected on how it went. In general, our courses had a pattern of: (a) relate experience of the

subject, (b) discuss, (c) research the subject, (d) connect research to your experience, (e) discuss,

(f) try new ideas/techniques in own context, (g) discuss how it went. This combined the

experiential cycle with collaborative learning, both face-to-face and online (personal

communication, MATESOL program SIT, 2014-2016).

There are characteristics of tutoring (or working with very small groups) that match up

well with characteristic of experiential learning and with the experiential cycle in particular.

Tutoring is informal, individually oriented and thus, subject to changes in the needs and wishes

of the individual. Tutors, like all teachers, are often asked to be self-reliant and to diagnose and

solve problems. The experiential cycle is very much a diagnosing and problem solving cycle and can help tutors to lay out the issues, if things are unclear. Tutors also have more of an opportunity to get detailed information from their learners than classroom teachers, which helps in the diagnosing process, as the first step in the experiential cycle is to record as much detail as possible. The cycle doesn't give the content needed to solve the problem, but it can help clarify the situation. The relationship dynamic of tutoring can be very intense, so it's good to have a mechanism to step back, record, and analyze the situation (personal communication, World Learning SIT Certificate Course, March 15-May 28, 2011, personal communication, MATESOL program SIT, 2014-2016).

Volunteer tutors are also time constrained. A training course for new tutors that runs for fifteen hours needs to take advantage of the brief time that it has. Loop-input, designed by Tessa Woodward, "is a specific type of experiential teacher training process that involves an alignment of the process and content of learning."(2003, pg. 301) Teaching two things at once saves time, and "The advantages of loop input are that it is multisensory, in just the same way as experiential learning, but with the added advantage of involving self-descriptivity and recursion, both of which can have the effect of fascinating certain people. Some participants thus learn more deeply as a result of this reverberation between process and content." (Woodward, 2003, pg. 303). I was formally introduced to Loop-input in the Electronic Village Online course "Experiential Learning and Teacher Training". I am grateful for the permission to use articles from that course in this IPP (personal communication, January-February, 2017).

Context and History of the Tutoring Program

Literacy Volunteers

The tutoring program is a library based tutoring program in Putnam, Connecticut, a small town in northeastern Connecticut. It primarily tutors adults. There has been a tradition of literacy and tutoring programs at the Putnam Public Library, run by various people and organizations. Literacy Volunteers of Eastern Connecticut (hereafter referred to as LVECT) was a branch of Literacy Volunteers (LV) that in the 1970s, united two of the southeastern Connecticut LV organizations, in Norwich and New London, and extended its jurisdiction over all of eastern Connecticut, though they remained mainly focused in southeastern Connecticut. During this time, they established Satellite branches at libraries throughout eastern Connecticut. Each Satellite had a lead tutor, who, like all tutors, is unpaid. Putnam was established as a Satellite branch in 2010. The position of lead tutor was vacant in 2011 and I agreed to serve that function in late July 2011. Due to budget cuts, LVECT was no longer able to offer support to the Putnam Satellite after 2012, or to staff the head office in New London, CT. As of March 2017, all contact information for LVECT directs one to the LV at Otis Library in Norwich, CT and there are no active Satellite branches (Literacy Volunteers of Eastern Connecticut, 2017).

Literacy Volunteers offers free tutoring in ESOL and Basic Literacy and will accept anyone as a tutor who is willing to make the commitment and go through LV training. The umbrella organization of LV is Proliteracy (Proliteracy, 2017), but the structure of the organization is local and varies in criteria for tutors, and in amount of training and professional development offered. Massachusetts LV organizations, for example, are coordinated on the state level, through the Department of Education, with two hours of orientation and eighteen hours of

classroom training. Connecticut and Rhode Island tutor training and professional development varies according to program. (Literacy Volunteers of Central Connecticut, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of Eastern Connecticut, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of Kent County, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of South Central Massachusetts, 2017; Literacy Volunteers Valley South Shore, 2017, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester, 2017)

The nearest Literacy Volunteers organization, Literacy Volunteers of South Central Massachusetts, is headquartered in Southbridge, Massachusetts, about 14 miles from Putnam. It has programs in Dudley and Webster, Massachusetts, which are 10 to 12 miles from Putnam. The next nearest LV organizations are 25 to 30 miles away, one in Coventry, Rhode Island and one in Worcester, MA. All are library based programs and all have classroom tutor trainings that run 14 to 18 hours. The LV program at the Otis library in Norwich (LVECT) is 40 miles away. Their basic classroom training for tutors is 6 to 8 hours and they have monthly support meetings for tutors. Other LV organizations in Connecticut and Rhode Island offer at least 10 hours of training, with the average being around 14 to 18 hours of training. (Literacy Volunteers of Central Connecticut, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of East Bay, Warren, RI, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of Eastern Connecticut, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of Kent County, 2017; Literacy Volunteers of South Central Massachusetts, 2017; Literacy Volunteers Valley South Shore, 2017, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester, 2017).

History of Putnam Program

Initially, in 2011, there were two tutors (including myself) and two learners, both Basic

Literacy/Adult Basic Education learners with intellectual disabilities. By the beginning of 2012,

this grew to at least 6 tutors and at least 5 learners, both ELL and BL. At one point, between late

2011 and mid-2012, there was some discussion of the Killingly library, in the town bordering

Putnam, also becoming a LVECT Satellite location, as many learners came from Killingly and

we tutored there, as well. Both the Killingly library and LVECT ran into major budget problems

and the plan was abandoned.

The high point of the tutoring program was between late 2012 and early 2015. Close to

40 people received tutoring and/or participated in conversation groups during this time period,

some short term and some long term, with an average of twelve or thirteen learners tutored

concurrently. This was the period the Putnam program established practices to supplement the

loss of LVECT administrative structure. In the spring and summer of 2015 there was a sharp

decline in ELLs, followed by a more gradual decline. Most left because their jobs had left the

area, or to follow family members who had left to find better jobs. Other students moved on

because of changes in their personal lives. A couple moved on to more formal education

programs. *For more on current and past learners, see Table and notes pgs. 51-52.*

Putnam Tutoring Program in Context with Other Educational Programs

Some learners between 2011 and the present studied with the Putnam program

exclusively. Other learners participated in the Putnam program in combination with other

education programs. These have included adult education, community colleges and state college

programs. Those with access to a car have commuted, sometimes long distances.

There is one other major community education program in the area, EASTCONN. It has

adult education for both ELLs and native English speakers, plus a tutoring program. It is quite

widespread, but the nearest ESOL classes are in Danielson, Killingly, Connecticut. There is also

an adult education program, run through the public school system in Webster, Massachusetts.

Both towns are about ten miles from Putnam. There is limited public transportation to

Danielson, but none to Webster (EASTCONN, 2017; Webster Public Schools, 2017).

There are also community colleges in the area and colleges within 50 miles. The nearest

community college ESOL classes are in Willimantic, Connecticut, about 25 miles from Putnam.

Public transportation there is problematic. All other community college level ESOL programs

are 30 to 45 miles away (Northeast Connecticut Public Transportation, 2017; Quinebaug Valley

Community College, 2017; Worcester Regional Transit Authority, 2017).

Putnam Library as Support Center

Putnam is a small, community oriented library. The library staff is very supportive of the

tutoring program. They are the main source of referrals for the tutoring program, though in the

past, many of our new learners came by word of mouth. The library has provided us with space

for tutoring sessions and program materials, though this is shared with other groups and

activities. The librarians keep an eye out for materials for the program and have helped with

researching materials in the past. The library, especially in the children's area, is more noise

tolerant than other libraries.

The tutoring program has no official designation with the library, other than as one of the many community programs the library supports. Tutoring sessions have also been held, and continue to be held in other areas as well - homes, cafes, the local nunnery, once at a halfway house, other libraries - but the Putnam library has become our main meeting place and source of support. (Putnam Library, Town of Putnam, CT, 2015)

Socio-Economic and Geographical Context

Putnam (population approximately 7000) and Killingly (population approximately 1700) are two mill towns in northeast Connecticut. Danielson (population 4000) is the main borough of Killingly and where poverty and ELLs are concentrated. They are part of a larger cultural geography of former mill towns, following the rivers, and adjacent towns that are agricultural and bedroom communities for commuters. The area is 25 – 40 miles from cities with higher immigrant populations (Willimantic, Worcester, Norwich, Providence) 50 miles from Hartford and 70 miles from Boston. (U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, 2015)

The towns are spread out, with little public transportation and economically challenged. 49% of the residents of Putnam, and 43% of Killingly, fall into the United Way's designation of Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed or as below the poverty line. (United Way, 2016)

A century or so ago, the mill towns were thriving immigrant communities and there are still a few residents who remember this time. More recently, there were strong Eastern European and Turkish populations in Putnam, and a smaller Hispanic population, but almost all of those from Turkey have left the area. Many from Eastern Europe have left the area as well. Killingly has a Laotian and Hispanic population.

Literacy Volunteers Training and Support 2011 to 2012

In the tutoring program, the last training class in Putnam was held by LVECT in early 2012. They had already lost funding at the time they were training my group (July of 2011) and had had to cut down their training time. The training was 7.5 hours over 3 evening sessions. It gave examples, through stories, of what tutors might expect to happen during tutoring sessions, covered some principles of teaching and went over a series of handouts. Materials for tutors included a book, though they were running low on supplies, an assessment book, and links to resources. There was also suggestions as to how to build a Tutor Tool Kit. There was a folder full of handouts given to new tutors. Tutors were given instruction on the monthly reporting paperwork that each tutor needed to do and instruction on how to conduct periodic assessments using the ESLOA assessment book (Shaffer & McLean, 1996). (*For list of objectives for LV training, see table, pg. 58 - 60*) In 2012, LVECT offered a five hour additional training in Norwich on how to assess basic literacy students using the READ assessment book (Colvin, Root, Hinchman, & Shoultz, 1999).

LVECT did have monthly meetings for tutors in Norwich, so that they could share issues that came up and brainstorm solutions. It was advised by an experienced tutor and had a good reputation. However, Norwich is forty miles from Putnam and there is no public transportation. At least one tutor did not have a car and several other tutors were not comfortable driving the distance, for medical or other reasons.

The LVECT program director did provide considerable support online from August 2011 to August 2012. There was also positive communication between New London, Norwich, Danielson and Putnam. Due to budget and staffing issues, this communication broke down.

Differences Between LVECT Training and Putnam Context

ESLOA Assessment and Intermediate Level ELL Learners

In several ways, there were mismatches between the trainings of 2011 and 2012 and the needs of the tutoring program as it developed over time.   A lot of training time was spent teaching an assessment program that didn't work well for the majority of our learners. Most of our ELL learners were, broadly speaking, intermediate level, and the assessment was geared towards assessing speaking and simple vocabulary for early beginners. It was quite specific on that level, but quite general after that. It was difficult to pin down specific needs of learners beyond the very basics of vocabulary and basic grammar (singular plural/progressives/simple prepositions of place).

LVECT's ongoing assessment system required that each tutor give his/her learner an assessment test every few months, using the ESLOA (Shaffer & McLean, 1996) for English Language Learners and the READ assessment (Colvin et al., 1999) for Basic Literacy learners. The difficulty of using the ESLOA with higher level ELLs was brought up by another tutor at a regional tutor meeting. It was suggested that tutors use the READ assessment which tested sight words, letter recognition and reading passages graded up to an elementary school level grade five (Colvin et al., 1999; Shaffer & McLean, 1996).

Implementing Curriculum

LV's curriculum planning orientation was to design a curriculum with your learner based on their goals and needs. A learner centered curriculum is highly desirable. However, training

was brief, fairly general and geared towards beginner learners. On the ground, the paradox

mentioned in Graves came into play: "it helps to have a clear idea of the territory to be covered –

clear objectives – at the same time that it is important to follow the learner's lead as they move

through the territory." (2000, pg. 73) In a highly individualized tutoring environment, this was

especially true. Though new tutors were introduced to the concept of individualized, goal-

oriented curriculum planning, the tutor training was not able to scaffold tutors through a process

that would teach them to work with the shifting desires and needs of learners, yet keep structure

overall, especially on an intermediate language learning level.

Technological Infrastructure Issues

LVECT also used Rosetta Stone (Rosetta Stone Inc, 2017) and language labs as part of

their ELL tutoring. We did not have a language lab. The Rosetta Stone software was installed

on one of the laptops owned by the Putnam library. There was at least one learner who used it

extensively the first year of the program and found it beneficial. Unfortunately, it was installed

on only one laptop and the laptop broke. Neither LVECT nor the Putnam library could afford to

buy new software.

Personal Experiential Challenge

Despite my excellent TESOL training course (a SIT based program) in the spring of

2011, (reference?) I didn't feel that competent as a tutor. One of the main problems was that all

the frameworks that I had been taught were geared toward a conventional classroom and I didn't

know how to convert them well. Another issue was the 'new teacher's dilemma' described

beautifully by Tessa Woodward (Woodward, 2012, pgs. 3-4). It would take me a week to design a lesson. I can remember panicking when I was asked to take on a third student. The busier I got with tutoring, the less time I spent on planning. Much of the time, I would do little or no planning. When I look at my schedule from November 2012, I see why I had no time to plan. (Also my father had just died in August).

I did use principles that I had been taught – scaffolding, not introducing too much at once, clarity of instruction, etc. However, it was not done consistently or systematically.

I did do a lot of research online in terms of content and activities, worksheets and textbooks.

My education in the SIT MATESOL program was excellent. However I did find myself with some of the same dilemmas I found after finishing the TESOL certificate course. How to convert theory to practice. How to convert techniques geared towards the classroom into something that would work in a volunteer tutoring program. I did not have a way to consistently and completely share the knowledge with the other tutors.

Again, I did find myself using what I was taught, mainly in my own tutoring, trying out techniques like free writing, getting a much better sense of the TESOL field and its components as a whole. Sharing this knowledge with other tutors came haphazardly, when I was co-tutoring, in my choice of textbooks for the program and in the wiki I created for the tutoring program. If a tutor had a specific problem that we had covered in class at SIT, I would try and send them information on it via email.

I also found that the times when I most connected my ideas to my own teaching were when I was co-teaching in Costa Rica, in the last couple of weeks. The teacher I was co-teaching

with was able to help me with planning beforehand and give feedback afterwards (personal

communication, internship with Casa Espiral Mana, Costa Rica, January-February 2016) The

peer observation feedback times during my TESOL certificate course were also extremely

helpful.

It would be ideal to find a situation that would continue such support. I have been

hearted by the rise of teacher residencies and mentoring programs for new teachers. Likewise, I

have been fortunate to be taught the experiential cycle as a method of reflective teaching.

Similar to other beneficial activities, it is a practice that one must incorporate into one's teaching

routine to gain the full measure. Sharing my new knowledge with others and negotiating with

their experiences is another way to connect theory and practice.

Professional Development and Laying the Groundwork for a Tutor Training Program

New Assessment System

     Assessment rubrics. As noted, above, the ESLOA proficiency assessment (Shaffer & McLean, 1996) did not work well to assess intermediate level learners and above. The last five years has been a period of experimentation.

     There are two tools available for free online. One of these are "Can Do self-assessment worksheets."(National Center for Family Literacy and Center for Applied Linguistics, 2008) These became part of the initial interview with a new intermediate or advanced level learner. However, after the initial needs assessment, a more detailed assessment system is needed.

     There are also language level descriptors that different organizations use. This has been problematic in the past because Literacy Volunteers, Adult Education programs and college or private programs each use different descriptors, so that Advanced, for example, may mean something different according to which descriptor is used. Therefore, at the present time, the tutoring program will adopt the ACTFL descriptors and standards, including making use of their detailed "Can Do worksheet."(American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2017a, 2017c, 2017b) ACTFL levels continue into post-secondary levels, whereas other descriptors do not.(National Reporting System for Adult Education Programs, 2017) Their Proficiency rubrics are divided into different kinds of skill contexts, for example, interpersonal speaking skills versus presentational speaking skills, which is helpful in both diagnosis and curriculum design (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2017a)

However, it will be important for tutors to have a basic understanding of the varied

rubrics used by other organization for two reasons. One is that many of our learners participate

in these other educational systems and transition from one to the other. Therefore, tutors should

have a basic understanding of the scope of those systems and the rubrics they use, notably

Educational Functioning Levels that federally funded Adult Education program use (National

Reporting System for Adult Education Programs, 2017), which stop at secondary school level,

plus the basic systems used by community colleges and other post-secondary institutions. In the

past, if a learner was enrolled, or had recently been enrolled in a formal education program, I

would ask the learner what level they were in that program. I found very early that each program

had their own system of levels, so I had to guess across programs.

The second reason is that when tutors are looking for materials for their learners, they

should be armed with the knowledge that materials labelled by language level will not

necessarily be consistent. The solution to this will be a chart for tutors so they can see at a

glance how the different descriptors correspond.

Methodology for Conveying Tutor Professional Development and Tutor Training

An Integrated Framework

In the article, *Constructing 21ˢᵗ-Century Teacher Learning,* Linda Darling-Hammond

argues for "extensive and intensively supervised clinical work integrated with course work using

pedagogies that link theory and practice"(2006, pg.300). In both a formal tutor training program

and in professional development curriculum, elements will be in a continuum that link these

pieces together. I will use a format in which "how people learn" and SLA; lesson structures and

curriculum design; language elements and other content knowledge; pedagogy; activities; would

all be aligned. *See table pg. 56 for example of one aspect of this*. In a formal tutor training

classroom program, trainees will have a chance to practice this coordination by designing a

curriculum for an imaginary learner. The training will connect trainees to situations they will be

likely to encounter on the ground as soon as possible. This will be further integrated with a

scaffolded system of shadowing, mentoring and co-tutoring.

In the classroom, I will reinforce experiential learning through the Loop-intake method,

so that trainees will be experiencing the techniques they are learning as they are learning them.

In the article, *Reflective Practice in English Teacher Education: Why Activity Learning Is Not*

Enough, Anna Krulatz, a teacher trainer, deconstructs why her students didn't seem to be

learning the technique she was teaching them. She found that in class they had done the activity,

but it wasn't scaffolded through having enough explicit teaching. She found that they had not

done the full experiential cycle. They had missed out on the 'debriefing' part, which was needed

to process the technique completely. When she added the missing elements of the cycle to her

class, her students were able to incorporate their new learning into their teaching activities

(Krulatz, forthcoming). Therefore, especial care will be taken to make sure that trainees will be

able to go fully through the full experiential cycle in each class and deconstruct the learning they

have had. This will be especially important as I am a new teacher myself.

I will start each class with eliciting their experiences, helping to activate schema. This

will serve the double purpose of my learning about the tutees themselves and their own

experiences. I will use this knowledge to inform my own teaching and adapt the classes as the

training goes on. To cultivate their curiosity, I will engage them with a question at the end of class to be explored at the beginning of the next class.

True to the principles of learner based teaching and experiential learning, content will be shaped by the tutors being taught. In other words, I will not teach them material they already know. A Basic Tutor Training cannot contain the detail of a MATESOL program, but I will select building blocks from my own education. *See tables on pgs.57-60 for a proposed list of content elements from which material for classes will be selected.*

The overall training will have an orientation and at least fifteen hours of training. Massachusetts Office of Educational Licensure will accept tutoring as a percentage of teaching experience counting towards Adult Education Professional Licensure, but only if tutors have had at least fifteen hours of training. I would like this to be an option for future tutors. How this training will be scheduled over time is still to be determined. (Office of Educational Licensure, Massachusetts DESE, 2017)

Discussion of Pedagogical Skills

Assessment

The way that Kathleen Graves classifies assessment among *assessing students' needs, assessing students' learning* and *evaluating the course* is useful as is the distinction between *formative* and *summative* assessments (Graves, 2000). It is also useful to look at determining language levels as something that is within the greater initial needs assessment, but that can also be used for course design, ongoing assessment and summative evaluations.

Initial needs assessment/needs analysis. After the loss of the LVECT administration, there was a challenge of designing needs assessment and other intake questions for new learners, so as to provide support for tutors. The system that we used was for me, as lead tutor, to meet with a new learner and have an interview with them. Part of this interview was to find out their expressed needs and wants. In terms of meeting and assessing new learners, I did, eventually, work out a series of questions to ask which would be appropriate. This was designed through trial and error, after meeting many new learners. Some learners were very articulate about what they had done in the past and what they needed for tutoring. Others were more general in their expression of wants and needs, or did not articulate very much on this topic.

Input from tutor interviews regarding initial assessment. I asked if they had felt they had a good basic idea of what their learners needed and wanted when they started with them. Of the three tutors who directly answered that question, all said "Yes." One said that it was easy because she was taking over for me while I was away in Costa Rica. Currently we are working with long time learners, so tutors have had a long time to build on initial information and I have to take that into account, as it may bias these positive answers.

However, in a discussion, during the interview, with B and C about pronunciation difficulties that B had diagnosed their learner with, I mentioned *Learner English* (Swan & Smith, 2002) They had not heard of it, but thought that it would be a good resource. If each tutor had a quick guide to common language-specific problems that their new learner might face, it would be a good thing. This shows that the wiki I have set up needs to be improved by making content easy to find and the wiki itself easy to navigate. There is a pdf of *Learner English* (Swan & Smith, 2002), but, though B and C had looked at the wiki, they had not known it was there. In

contrast, when I asked another tutor, H, if something like *Learner English* (Swan & Smith, 2002) would have been helpful, she didn't think so, as she would have figured the issues out on her own.

Conclusion. A "Learner Information Packet" will be available for a tutor taking on a new learner. It will include language specific problems this learner could run into. Also, an outline of the process of initial needs assessment by a lead tutor and referral to a particular tutor will be part of the "Orientation to the Tutoring Program" in formal tutor training.

As interviews can only garner so much information and we cannot afford standardized tests, in the future, giving activity based proficiency assessments, done in a gradual, non-intimidating way, will be part of ongoing tutor training. Precisely which activities are chosen will depend on needs and goals gathered from the learner in the initial interview and guided by the ACTFL rubric (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2017a). This will be done in conjunction with whichever tutor the learner was due to work with in the future. For example, learners can write or speak briefly on a topic that will require them to use multiple tenses, or make marks on a piece of paper every time they hear a specific word in a short tape of conversational English (Stein, 2014).

Ongoing needs assessment/assessing student's learning/formative assessments. Much of ongoing assessment of learners was done informally by tutors. Ongoing needs assessment is probably the widest used form of assessment in tutoring.

Input from tutor interviews regarding ongoing assessment. This garnered some interesting discussion. B, C and I discussed this in some depth. B noted that one advantage of co-tutoring was that he was able to observe (and assess) what was going on with the learners

while the other tutor was leading the lesson. C felt that, based on her previous experience in education, periodic assessments were useful.

B, C and I talked at length about a particular learner, whom we have all known for years. This revealed some interesting lights on assessment. This particular learner had accomplished a great deal in a short time, despite many disadvantages, and has built up a close relationship with her co-tutors. She has been doing well in community college, but took a placement test to get into a particular career program and failed the reading comprehension and grammar part. This led to intense discussion between her and her tutors and between her tutors and me, and continuing follow up discussion that included this learner and others. This has been a very positive form of assessment, and has generated some promising ways forward. However, it has also shown that there is a gap in our present form of assessment that only targeted questions to the learner about how she reads revealed. Moreover, it revealed how important it is to understand the overall system of further education that ELLs negotiate in order to help them make educational and career decisions as further detailed in the report *Health Care Career Pathways and English Language Learners* (National Institute for Literacy, 2011).

Another tutor for an ELL learner also relied on constant observation and interaction with teaching materials to assess how her learner is doing. From the textbook they were using, which was a reading comprehension and vocabulary book, this tutor (H) realized that her learner was quite good at that kind of thing, so much so that, in a way, they were 'wasting their time' on it. So she changed the curriculum to focus on conversation. One to one tutoring makes it easier to change and adapt to the results of ongoing assessment because one is not as tied to a particular

material or curriculum. She had been trying out different materials and activities and gave me

some details on how they are working. She did also take notes on her tutoring sessions.

Sr. L's method of teaching has quite a lot of assessment built into it. Each of her learners

has a personal folder, basically a portfolio, as mentioned in Graves, (2000, pg. 120). Sr. L is

constantly observing, and judges when she may have to go back and review material, go over

earlier steps, and then move on again.   She also does periodic reviews of all things learned at

once, without any warning or the kind of assistance she would give during a normal tutoring

session, which is more of a summative assessment, but used in an ongoing assessment. She also

gave me a life skills checklist that she is going to use.

Evaluation of the course/summative/learner feedback. Tutoring in the program is not

divided into courses, per se. Tutoring pretty much goes on as long as the learner needs the

tutoring or is in the area. There have been times of natural breaks, for example, when finishing a

textbook or when a test is due. This can be a time to get learner feedback and has been done so,

informally. It has not been done very often, which is something that needs improvement. If a

learner does well on a test, passes their citizenship test, for example, it is a cause for celebration.

If they do fail an important test, it is an impetus for tutor reevaluation of the situation, to try and

figure out what went wrong.

Input from interviews. C seemed to feel, from her time as an ESL tutor and, having had

done teaching on and off all her life, that student feedback and some kind of assessment of the

teaching done is important. I talked about the difficulties of getting learners to evaluate how

they were taught when they might see it at criticizing the teacher. At the time, C conceded the

point.

Conclusion. C was right. There should be a framework to get periodic feedback from learners. There are ways to ask learners to grade the task, not the teacher that can be taught. There are definite pros and cons to assessments emotionally for learners. Not doing well on an assessment test could lead to awareness and motivation for a learner and tutor, but it can be very discouraging if done badly, or if the test doesn't match where the learner is.

Conclusions on assessment in terms of future tutor training and tutor support.

The current tutors do use materials and activities as assessment tools, as suggested in Graves (2000) and Woodward (2012). Therefore, in a tutoring program, new tutors should be taught how to do this.

Observation seems to be the most powerful and widely used form. It is also easier to observe when working with so few people. Discussion among tutors and learners, and asking careful questions does lead to better assessment. These are powerful arguments for including a scaffolded situation of shadowing and a co-tutoring mentoring system for new tutors. It is also an endorsement of continual supportive contact between tutors.

Moreover, the problem we had with the learner who failed the test is an argument to include specific information on difficulties learners may run into in mastering the four skills, such as problems in moving from reading word to word to reading fluently, although C came up with some clever solutions. Also, enabling learners who don't have metacognitive skills to acquire them is something that tutors should be able to do.

Understanding the whole life situation leads to better assessment. Knowing a learner over a long time period makes assessment easier. Tutoring, especially tutoring in an informal setting does have some advantages because there is a relationship between tutors and learners to

build on. Therefore, part of tutor training should be an understanding of this relationship and how it integrates with learning, and the many roles that a tutor plays. There should also be an understanding of the affective factors that can inhibit learning and how to work with these. This is another area where a continual support group of tutors can be helpful.

Lesson Planning, Curriculum Design and Note-taking

Types of curriculum design and lesson planning situations. There are several kinds of situations tutors have in terms of learning context. One is when tutoring is the learner's sole source of English language learning and the goals are general language improvement. Another is when the learner has a specific goal and a short deadline. This covers studying for the citizenship test, or an entrance exam, or they have homework assignments that must be completed. There is also a hybrid of the two. This is where a learner wants to go back to school or get into a particular career field; or they are in school, but needs help in skills like academic writing; or they want to improve their English to get a better job. These are fluid and a learner may be in all of these situations at different times. In situations where learners must master a great deal of information in a short period of time, curriculum is pre-set and the ideal emphasis shifts to teaching techniques that will promote deeper learning. In the other two situations, planning is important but can be problematic. Tutors and learners each bring expectations about learning and planning to the tutoring context and each brings his or her own style. In the egalitarian situation of one to one tutoring between adults, planning becomes an act of negotiation.

Input from tutor interviews. The amount of planning, preparation work and note-taking afterwards varied. H spends about an hour a week on prep and takes notes afterwards. She said that she found the tutor training book, PACE Yourself, (Dale & Young, 2003) was useful in lesson planning. When I asked B how much planning he did, he said, maybe a half an hour after each session. B and C were each doing an hour session with their learner, one after the other, for a total of two hours. It may be that B and C conferred together for a half hour after that two hour session.

Sr. L works from a curriculum that she designed and lots of detailed materials that she has designed, plus some of the program material she used and recycled. For planning style, C, rather than designing a set curriculum, works from the detailed needs of the learner as they arise. C has a mixed background of teaching and tutoring. For the last sixteen years, before retiring, she was an ELL tutor in a private middle school. Sr. L mainly was a classroom elementary teacher, though she also worked with adults later in her life.

A third style is the tutor who, instead of designing a curriculum, works from a textbook. Learners also have their own style. Some prefer a textbook or a strict curriculum, others like flexibility and to change the topics of lessons or to spend tutoring time in informal conversation. They, too, move from style to style.

Tutor Training. Lesson planning and curriculum design will be the medium to bring together other elements of tutor training. The foundation of starting from a learner's needs and wishes to determine goals and curriculum, advocated by LV and in line with progressive education, will be maintained. Much more attention will be given to scaffolding trainees through

the process of curriculum and lesson design, to armor new trainees for real life situations.

Curriculum design:

- Early on, I will hand out profiles of "imagined learners" and by the end of the training, the trainees will have come up with a basic curriculum for this learner, with some lesson plans and contingency plans for changes in circumstances

- Strategies to help with possible situations that will arise when planning, and carrying out plans

- Varieties of curriculum design

- Integration of other aspects of the training/adapting Graves' "system design"(2000, pg. 3) to tutoring:

    o Assessment as a complex, ongoing process to enhance trainees understanding of their learners and to help plan accordingly

    o SLA to understand the learning process their learners are going through to inform planning, techniques and expectations

- Using the experiential cycle to evaluate their lessons and their own learning as teachers and to use for future planning.

Lesson planning and formats:

- There are a variety of ways to plan lessons and courses and a variety of formats

- Basic elements of language lesson structure:

    o Scaffolding

    o Recycling

- o   The delicate art of introducing enough information to engage learners without overwhelming them

- Specific lesson formats that would:

  - o   Enable them to use principles learned in language acquisition

  - o   Work well in one to one situations

  - o   Suit the teaching of specific skills, especially considering physical learning, for example:

    - ▪   Decoding words heard in spoken speech (Field, 2008)

    - ▪   Speaking new sounds

- How to adapt textbooks so that text is servant, rather than master

Teaching Techniques and Activities

Input from tutor interviews. In the interviews with tutors, teaching techniques were not covered in any detail. All tutors endorsed some form of repetition and Sr. L gave details about how she used recycling.

She also told me about the activities she used with her Basic Literacy learner. B, C and H all told me about the activities they used with their learners.

Tutor training. Some teaching techniques covered will be expressing yourself clearly to learners, using techniques to verify learner understanding like CCQs, the gentle art of correction, and specific techniques for one to one tutoring, such as maintaining student talk time when there are only two of you.

Scaffolding New Tutors – Shadowing, Mentoring, Co-tutoring

Another important element is scaffolding and long term support. In the past, our program experimented with shadowing. New tutors sat in on tutoring sessions and observed. This had different outcomes. Sometimes it turned into a co-tutoring situation. Sometimes, the new tutor took over for the previous tutor or took on a new learner. It was informally operated and there were occasions where too many tutors were shadowing at a time, or the roles of the different tutors was unclear. At least one tutor became frustrated before she moved onto independently tutoring her own learners.

Input from interviews. We talked about shadowing during the interviews. Each tutor I spoke with had had a different experience of shadowing. B had been shadowed quite a bit, but never shadowed someone else. H had shadowed two times. Sr. L and I didn't talk about shadowing directly, but I knew that she had sat in on several sessions with each of the tutors she was going to take over for.

C being a sort of unofficial tutor as far as our program was concerned, C had never shadowed with us, but during her time as a tutor/teacher professionally, she had been part of peer observations. She thought it was valuable.

B talked more about co-tutoring and its advantages than shadowing. We did agree that, if too many tutors were shadowing a group, it didn't work out very well.

H said that two shadowing sessions turned out to be enough, especially as she was taking over for me and I had been working with her learner for a while (originally she was going to sub for me while I was in Costa Rica) and because they were at that time working from a textbook. Also, she said that she knew she could ask me for help.

Shadowing and mentoring. Due to these past experiences, in the future, after a trainee tutor has gone through classroom training and practiced on an imaginary learner, I will design the following structure. A trainee tutor will 'shadow' a few tutoring sessions. They will also be set up with a mentor, similar to the co-tutoring/mentoring situation I had in Costa Rica. It will be long term mentoring.

This will be supplemented by regular, supportive get-togethers for the entire group, where tutors could be social and also exchange ideas.

Other forms of Tutor Support

Sharing Ideas and Meeting as a Group

Sr. L talked about the two Literacy Volunteer trainings she had done with other branches of LV, and that, even though she knew the content, they were good ways to meet the other tutors, so that they could be part of a group and share ideas. B spoke fondly of the tutor get-together that we had some years ago. He said that, though it started out as a social meeting, it ended up as a great way to share ideas. When I asked B and C if they would be interested in doing things like that on a regular basis, they were enthusiastic about it. They also said that they were happy to share what they knew with new tutors. H spoke about how she has met other tutors (about once a month) when they were tutoring their learners at the same time at the library. She mentioned a time that she and B had met and compared notes, and that their learners also were able to get together and talk a bit.

One of the things that I had been hoping to find out through interviews was how much of a group feeling the tutors have. I was concerned because the tutors seemed to be operating fairly

independently and may not have even met all of the other tutors in the group. Ideally, I have

hoped for an egalitarian group that helps and supports one another. I was happy to find out that

the tutors I spoke to all seemed to be in favor of sharing ideas and experiences with one another.

The biggest challenge will be finding regular times to meet when all the tutors have such busy

schedules.

Problem-Solving based Professional Development in Lieu of Classroom PD

       Tutor's input on their past tutor training in the classroom. Sr. L said that, though she

knew the content material in the LV tutor trainings she went to (in other areas), it was a good

opportunity to meet other tutors. H said that though she had done fine without it, she could see

that others, with less experience with people, could use it. B admitted that it was a bit repetitive.

Due to this input, I propose an alternative to classroom based PD.

       Problem-solving based Professional Development example. Two of our learners had a

common goal – they had expressed an interest in careers in the health care field, possibly

nursing. Four tutors were directly or indirectly involved with these learners and three of the four

had knowledge or connection to someone with knowledge of the health care field. Research was

needed to see what pathways into the field for ELLs were available and what other programs had

done in blending English instruction with supporting career paths. (National Institute for

Literacy, 2011) We needed to find out about any local versions of this that might exist, or

pathways that would ease the transition between one program and another. As our learners

would be making choices between certificate courses, community colleges and university

programs, an understanding of the different assessment systems and entrance requirements used

by the different kinds of schools was needed. We also needed a way to assess our learner's

specific English skills that is consistent across schools. Additionally, what is needed is a way to

break down the differences among the fields (nursing, lab work, administration) and the

requirements therein so that the learners can make informed decisions. The next step is to pool

our knowledge in a meeting, perhaps with the learners, and help them to make choices and then

set up targeted English tutoring (in the fields of Workplace English and Academic English) to

support them.

Indirectly, this will be a way to introduce the tutors to using the ACTFL (especially the

proficiency guidelines and the "Can Do" list) (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign

Languages, 2017c) as a way to diagnose learners' abilities, and also as a way to set language

goals for a curriculum. It will provide a focal point for scaffolding tutors through curriculum

design and introducing the experiential cycle to them as a way to evaluate lessons. The other

tutors will get an introduction to English for Specific Purposes, thus connecting them with the

TESOL field, while evaluating medical 'workplace English' textbooks will be an opportunity to

teach evaluating textbooks as a general skill. I will also provide back up through the wiki,

english-is-crazy@wikispaces.com (Cass, 2017)) which gives an access point to learning the

technology of the wiki. Lastly, the tutors will gain a practical understanding of the different

systems ELLs move through and other programs we could model.

Subject Specific Professional Development

Input from past experience and from interviews. We have a very committed,

compassionate and creative group of tutors. They are talented, knowledgeable, and resourceful.

Since my time at SIT especially, though, I have noticed gaps in their knowledge and a lack of connection to what is going on in the field of TESOL. Tutors have made a number of specific requests for assistance in the past five years. Some examples:

- o Tutors note very specific pronunciation issues and want to know how to solve them.

- o   One tutor asked for specific material for advanced students.

- o   One tutor noticed that one learner of a pair mastered material more slowly and thought it could be a memory issue.

Subject-specific classroom-based PD. Language skills, like pronunciation and listening, are good candidates for classroom PD, as they have physical elements to teaching and learning them. Teaching technology and research skills so that tutors can connect to the field themselves is another subject best done face to face with the technology and help on hand. *See notes on pg. 60 for more details on a "Technology and Research" class.*

Research Methodology

This paper recorded what I and others connected to the tutoring program did from late 2011 to the present. Sources were my memory and records, plus interviews with some of the current tutors. Reflections of myself and other tutors were also included.

Tutor Interviews

I drew up a long series of questions for the tutors. I asked each tutor individually, and as a group, if they would be willing to meet with me and discuss these issues, using the questions as guidelines. I wanted to keep the meetings informal and low pressure. I emailed them copies of the questions in two different formats.

Although the tutoring program has had quite a few tutors over the years, the interviews for this paper were limited to 4 current, active tutors. Another tutor had agreed to meet, but was having too many medical complications to do so. I hope to get his feedback later.

One interview was with a married couple and lasted 2 hours. One of the couple had never been part of our training infrastructure, as she came in unofficially to help out a particular learner.

The second interview was an impromptu one, catching the tutor in the time before her tutoring session began, and extending to seeing what she was currently doing in the first part of the tutoring session. She said she was just too busy at the moment to set up an appointment, but was happy to talk. Some information from her is being drawn from previous conversations we have had. We spoke for about 25 minutes before her learner came and I sat in on the tutoring

session for about another 20 minutes. Her learner is one who I tutored for a few years in the past

and who still calls me regularly to chat.

The third interview was a phone interview and lasted 45 minutes. Most of the questions

were answered in this time.

Limitations of Methodology

My first finding was that interviewing itself is a skill. I knew that, but I hadn't lived it. I

loved reading about the process of open ended ethnographic interview in ICLT and wanted to

make sure that I was open to whatever came up. I am curious to know what the results would

have been if I had had the chance to do multiple interviews and had been more skillful in my

questions. There were a lot of questions that didn't get answered, or didn't get answered fully in

the first two interviews. It did set up good dialogue. There is at least one promising thread, the

interest that all tutors had in meeting and sharing knowledge with one another that I would like

to pursue for the future. We did tangent from the questions. In the first interview, especially, we

spent serious time troubleshooting what was going on with a particular learner.

I also came to the interviews with a very broad focus. I was checking how the ideas that I

(and others) came up with worked out. I was checking on how I had served, administratively, to

replace LVECT. I wanted to explore multiple ideas around tutor experience and tutor training.

Another limit on methodology is the limited information gathered. There have been at

least 10 tutors who have volunteered significant time with the Putnam program since 2011, and

others who volunteered for shorter periods. A sample size of three or four tutors is not

representative of these full experiences, although I have tried to include past input from those

who were not interviewed, but it may be colored by my memory. There is also a literature of

tutor training and teacher training. Only a small representation of that literature has been

included here. Lastly, most information on other tutor training programs outside of LVECT has

been from secondary sources. I looked at websites, but the only direct conversation I had with a

tutor trainer was from 2013 and my notes regarding tutor training were minimal.

Conclusion

This is a preliminary evaluation, with many theoretical elements that will need to be tested. The use of experiential learning for professional development and tutor training holds promise, as do. Given the limits of the methodology and the changing demographics in the area - we have had a couple of new learner inquiries, both from novice level learners - more research is advisable to refine the ideas in this paper. Proposed ideas will need to be tested and refined as well.

I am heavily indebted to all the people who made this paper possible. Thank you.

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Tables

Learners Past and Present

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
T	BLL	T	2/7/12	USA	English	life		Killingly, CT	Sr. L
A	BLL	T	9/1/11	USA	English	life		Putnam, CT	Sr. L
P&T	ELL	T	3/28/12	Russia	Russian	5 years	Low-Int	Putnam, CT	B, T, self
H	ELL	S	8/31/15	Vietnam	Vietnamese	2 years	Mid-Int	Putnam, CT	H, self
V	ELL	S	1/17/12	Laos	Laotian	31 years	Low-Adv	Oxford, MA	B, C, self

Key

1. Basic Literacy Learner (BLL) or English Language Learner (ELL)

2. Tutored actively (T) or supported (S). Supported learners have been tutored in the past but, for external reasons, are not being actively tutored at the present.

3. Learner began being tutored

4. Country born

5. L1

6. How long in USA?

7. Language level estimated by ACTFL. For Basic Literacy Learners this applies to reading and writing only

8. Town learner lives in. Note: V recently moved from Killingly, CT

9. Tutor or tutors who tutor or support this learner.

Notes

The learners from Russia are an older couple who had retired from being tutored but returned to study for the Citizenship test. The two ELL learners we support are from Laos and Vietnam and are both women in the 30s and 40s, balancing multiple demands. The current focus has been on helping these learners to navigate entry into health care fields via community colleges, supporting their English and helping them to understand the system. (reference article on ELLs and health care careers)

Between August 2012 and May 2015, most learners from the program were connected to the Putnam Science Academy. Most of the staff were from Turkic cultures. We worked with the spouses of staff members and with Resident Assistants here on student visas. Also, the program worked with several learners from Mexico, in three different towns. Two were tutored individually earlier in that time period and the other two were tutored as a pair, in 2014. Most of these learners were intermediate to advanced level. In addition, there was a small group of Eastern European immigrants who were tutored as a class. They ranged in levels from high novice to advanced. There has also been a scattering of ELLs from other countries, including two from China, two from India and one from Afghanistan.

Tutors' Demographics and Experience

Tutor Demographics

	1	2	3	4	5	6
B	Yes	2012	ELL	retired	Yes	
C	Yes	2016?	ELL	retired	Yes	
H	Yes	2015	ELL	Semi-retired	Yes	
T	No	2012	ELL	retired	Yes	
Sr. L	Yes	2015	BLL	retired	Yes	
J	No	2015	ELL	Owns business	Yes	
me	N/A	2011	ELL/BLL	MA student		

Key

1. Interviewed (available in February 2017)

2. Began Tutoring with Putnam Program

3. Tutored ELLs, BLLs, or both

4. Retired, semi-retired, etc.

5. Time or health constraints or both

Currently, there are more tutors than learners in the tutoring program. The number of active tutors varies from month to month, due to outside issues. There is a core group of about six or seven tutors, including myself. Most have some level of medical issues. Some work part time and several have multiple volunteer commitments.

Tutor's Background and Training Experience

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
B	Hospital Admin	No	?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
C	Teacher/Tutor Incl. ELLs	No	Yes	?	No, other training	No	No	Yes
H	Nurse/Crisis Counselor	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	?
T	Human Resources	Some	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sr. L	Teaching/Nun	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, other LV org	Yes	No	No
J	Accountant	No	Yes	?	No	Yes	No	?
self	MATESOL student	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Key

1. Background – those with education background highlighted

2. Second Language Fluency

3. Experience with learning language

4. Time abroad or international contact before teaching

5. LVECT classroom training

6. Shadowed other tutors

7. Was shadowed

8. Co-tutored

The background of tutors varies widely. Until recently, most have not had a background

in education. Occupations in the past and present have been: lawyer, human resources, business,

hospital administration, trauma counselor/RN, nun/teacher, adult students, math and ESL

tutor/teacher, history teacher, and those with a varied career/job history.

A surprising number of current tutors have some level of fluency in French. One did not

speak English until she went to public school, another lived in France as a child, another speaks

French fluently, while another majored in French. Ironically, we have never had a French-

speaking learner.

Example of Content and Pedagogy Integration

How People Learn	Lesson Structures Curriculum Design	Teaching Techniques	Activities/ Loop-input
• Connecting past to present • Top down/bottom up processing • Engagement	Schema Building @ beginning of lesson (in connection to ECRIF or skill specific lesson)	• Using topical pictures to elicit conversation • Informal questions	• Pictures to elicit past learning experiences • Decompression period

Content Knowledge

Interrelated Language Elements

Language Skills	Language Structure	Language Use
Listening	Syntax	Functions
Speaking	Grammar	Speech Acts
Pronunciation	Phonemes/Morphemes	Register
Reading		Cultural mores
Writing		
Vocabulary Acquisition		
TESOL sub-fields		

- o Common issues in language skills

  - ▪ reading word by word rather than reading fluently

  - ▪ the differences between spoken and written English

  - ▪ understanding fast speech

  - ▪ accuracy versus fluency.

- o Common issues in language structure

  - ▪ how people use top down and bottom up processes to distinguish sound

    and meaning

  - ▪ other common issues

- o Common issues in vocabulary acquisition

  - ▪ conversational versus academic English

  - ▪ how much vocabulary to introduce at once

- o TESOL subfields

- English for Specific Purposes – health care, workplace, communicating
  with institutions (for example parents communicating with their children's
  school)
- Academic English

Further Content Elements for Tutor Training and PD Integrated with LV Tutor Training Objectives

Sources for LV Objectives/Training Content taken from LVECT worksheet (2011) and portion of interview with H. Christo, Program Director of LVSCM (July, 2013)

Note: All content and format in the following are preliminary examples to be enhanced by continued planning.

LV Training Objectives	Proposed Tutor Training	Details
Discover how language is acquired Multiple Styles/Multiple Intelligences	The basics of SLA and what to expect	Rough timelines of SLA and individual variation
	Deeper learning	Multisensory learning
		Spaced repetition/iteration

		Connecting to previous experiences
	Basics of memory	Individual variations in learners
	Elements that affect language acquisition	The difference between BICS and CALP
		Interrupted learning How different the L1 is from English
Discover how adults learn effectively List the common characteristic of adult ELLs	Teaching adults vs teaching children	
Explore the collaborative learning process that Proliteracy promotes	See curriculum design/lesson planning/techniques Experiential learning	tutoring vs teaching in a classroom
Practice techniques for setting goals	See curriculum design, tutor support framework	
Practice determining a student's literacy level	See Assessment	

Practice techniques used to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills	See integrated content, pedagogy,	
Cultural sensitivity	Basics of cultural differences as they could play out in the language learning environment /ICC	culture shock
		cultural adjustment

Plan a prototype lesson for an adult ESOL learner	Used to unify and apply content/pedagogy knowledge throughout training	
Review and reflect on what you have learned	Experiential learning Loop-input	

Plus:

- Orientation

- How to research. This will be especially important, given that fifteen hours of tutor training will not cover all the teaching issues that will arise for new tutors. For those who are unfamiliar with technological skills, I will teach the basics, and connect them to resources like the wiki I have set up for the tutoring program, as well as other ways to find materials and to connect with the TESOL field.