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Meeting the Training Needs of Des Moines-Area Adult ESL Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The population of immigrants and refugees in Des Moines, Iowa, has grown rapidly in recent years, leading to an increased demand for adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. As ESL programs turn more and more to volunteer instructors to meet the demand, it is important that teachers, both volunteer and professional, are prepared and equipped to deliver quality instruction.

This study seeks to better understand the training and professional development needs of Des Moines-area ESL instructors in order to make recommendations for adult ESL programs. Data was collected through surveys of 32 ESL instructors from a variety of professional and educational backgrounds, teaching contexts, and organizations. Additional data was gathered in the form of follow-up interviews with seven participants.

Participants' self-described training needs range from ESL-specific topics like teaching pronunciation to classroom management challenges such as incorporating technology. Many look for training and resources on their own and sometimes have a difficult time finding activities and materials that are appropriate for their classroom settings. Because participants' training needs are specific to the individual instructor, this capstone recommends that adult ESL programs seek understand the needs of their instructors individually and offer multiple opportunities for teacher development. Opportunities should follow Knowles's principles of andragogy and include reflective practice options which reflect Kolb's cycle of learning. With a wide array of available training options, instructors can create a teacher development plan that best fits their needs and the needs of their students.

Introduction

In Polk County, Iowa, where the state capital Des Moines is located, the population of immigrants and refugees is estimated to have grown by nearly 20,000 people since 2000, almost doubling in size (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). In a county of 467,000 total people, these "New Iowans" now make up 9 percent. With this growth has come an increased demand for adult English language classes, and therefore a demand for English language instructors. In recent years, English language programs have increasingly turned to volunteer instructors to meet that demand, not just in Des Moines, but U.S.-wide (Henrichsen, 2010). Spurred on by what they saw as a huge need for trained instructors, three programs in the Des Moines area partnered together to start a teacher training program. This trio included my practicum site, Iowa International Center (IIC).

The group, now known as the Iowa Adult ELL Academy, offers a yearly series of five English as a Second Language (ESL) workshops to instructors from programs around Central Iowa. These trainings differ from formal education in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in that they are less expensive, are offered in shorter amounts of time, and do not result in certification or a degree. Instructors from more than a dozen Des Moines-area organizations attend these workshops voluntarily, in order to improve their teaching. They come from a wide range of educational and professional backgrounds, with some having years of English language teaching experience and others having no teaching experience whatsoever. Not all of the workshop attendees are volunteers either, as some are paid instructors.

As an organizer of Iowa Adult ELL Academy's workshops and an adult ESL instructor myself, the topic of teacher training is deeply personal to me. I believe that professional and volunteer instructors alike are capable of fulfilling their students' language learning needs and

helping them achieve their goals. Instructors want the best for their students and should be fully equipped to offer quality language instruction. In part, I view this capstone on teacher development as an embodiment of my own professional development as a teacher, teacher trainer, and ELL program coordinator.

Having well-prepared ESL teachers is one more step toward providing quality English language instruction to adult New Iowans. For this capstone, research into best practices and training support needs of ESL instructors was intended to lead to recommendations for the Iowa Adult ELL Academy and other adult ESL programs. This capstone sought to answer the question: How can adult English as a Second Language (ESL) programs best meet the training and professional development needs of their diverse instructors?

Conceptual Frameworks

Kolb's (1984) cycle of experiential learning forms a basis for understanding teacher training. This model focuses on learning as a process, emphasizing the forming and re-forming of ideas through experience. In Kolb's cycle, concrete experience is reflected upon, leading to the formation of theory and then to active experimentation. Here, the learning process begins again. One can view teacher training as a piece of the cycle, perhaps the theory piece, as best practices for the classroom are introduced. Teachers must then be encouraged to test those theories in their classes and reflect on their experience. Thereafter, teachers can revisit the theory, adapting their idea of it based on what they have seen in their classes. Because the ESL teachers attending training have different background experiences, their ideas about teaching may vary widely. In Kolb's cycle, this does not matter. Both the instructor with 10 years of experience teaching ESL and the novice instructor with no teaching experience can go through the cycle together, connecting new theories to past experiences and integrating their new ideas as

they test them out. Using Kolb's model as a basis for training may also lead to instructors integrating the model into their own teaching approaches. As Perry and Hart (2012) point out, instructors often revert to the teaching styles they have experienced in their lifetime. By weaving Kolb's cycle into the training, teachers can encourage reflection, theorizing, and experimentation in their own students. This capstone will culminate in recommendations for ESL teacher training programs in Des Moines, with Kolb's cycle serving as the lens for these recommendations.

Literature Review

This literature review focuses on adult English language learners, best practices in teaching adult ESL, and ESL teacher training. Compared to the fields of adult literacy and K-12 ESL, little research exists for the field of adult ESL, particularly in the context of teacher training. However, some best practices can be gleaned from these related fields.

Adult English Language Learners

Adult English language learners (ELLs) cannot be defined by one set of characteristics. They are learners aged 16 to over 90 of all genders and are both culturally and ethnically diverse (Finn, 2011; Mathews-Aydinli, 2008). ELLs living in the United States may be immigrants (documented or undocumented), refugees, asylum-seekers, permanent or temporary residents, and/or U.S. citizens. It is important to note that the term "English as a Second Language (ESL)" may not be fitting for all ELLs, as some speak two or more languages before English. Adult ELLs may have any level of education, including no formal education at all, and can range in English proficiency from pre-literate to nearly fluent (Finn, 2011; Mathews-Aydinli, 2008). With the intersection of all of these characteristics, adult English language learners have specific, individual needs. As Mathews-Aydinli (2008) points out, however, they are an understudied group, particularly outside of academic settings.

Motivations for adult English language learners also vary. Some have career- or job-related goals, some wish to pursue further education, and some are looking for stronger community connections (Finn, 2011). For many, the tie of English language ability to economic stability and success is a main factor (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008). Learners may have multiple goals, and for many, goals and interests change over time (Vafai, 2016). Adult ELLs face a number of barriers to learning English. They might work multiple jobs or jobs with erratic schedules, lack access to affordable childcare, or have a hard time finding transportation (Finn, 2011). Because of their diverse motivations and the numerous barriers to access, adult ELLs are also likely to stop attending class if it no longer meets their needs (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008). Absenteeism can also be caused by anxiety about learning, dissatisfaction with the curriculum or program, and/or boredom (Schalge & Soga, 2008). Learners weigh the opportunity cost of participating in ESL class, measuring their time and money spent against the skills they gain (Finn, 2011). For many, it is easy to lose motivation when progress is not quick enough, and language learning can be a slow process for adult learners.

Adults have specific learning needs. Malcolm Knowles defined andragogy, the instruction of adults, as different from pedagogy, the instruction of children (Knowles, Swanson, & Holton, 2005). Knowles's six principles of adult learning are:

1. Adults need to know why they are learning something.

2. Adults are responsible for their own decisions and lives and should be treated as capable of self-direction.

3. Adults bring a wealth of experiences into the classroom with them.

4. Adults want to learn things that are immediately relevant to their lives.

5. Adults have a task- or problem-centered orientation to learning.

6. Adults are primarily internally motivated, although external motivations also exist.

(Knowles et al., 2005).

When preparing to teach, adult ESL instructors should keep Knowles's principles in mind. They should address students' need to know by demonstrating how lessons and activities are meeting that need. In the classroom, the principle of self-direction can be incorporated through learner-selected topics or learner-led projects. Instructors should draw on learners' prior experiences in lessons, particularly in cases where students can help their peers. For ESL instructors, drawing on students' different backgrounds and experiences in a culturally sensitive manner can lead to a richer learning experience. While it can be challenging to balance the interests of all students in a diverse ESL class, instructors should try to craft lessons which are immediately relevant to students' goals. For example, an ELL parent with a 5-year-old child may find a unit on the local school system particularly useful, while a learner without children may find that unit irrelevant. Because adults learn best from task-centered approaches, instructors should create activities in which the learning addresses the problems their students face. For newly-arrived refugees, for instance, a unit might focus on how to use local public transportation. Adult English language learners are motivated by external factors such as improved jobs or salaries and also have internal motivations like job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life (Knowles et al., 2005). Taking all of these principles into account, it is critical that instructors view learners as whole people who have careers, families, hopes, accomplishments, and histories, instead of reducing the individual to an English language learner only (Schwarzer, 2009).

Best Practices in ESL

Best practices in the adult ESL classroom are based, in part, on Knowles's description of adult learners. Teachers should validate and utilize learners' experience and knowledge, drawing on it in class activities (Finn, 2011). Lessons can incorporate storytelling, peer-helping, and student-led projects. Content should be adapted to suit learners' interests as well as language learning needs. For example, instructors can add student-selected topics to existing curriculum (Schwarzer, 2009). For adult learners, having agency over one's own learning is motivational. Language instruction should be practical, relevant, and rooted in context in order to create meaningful learning (Schwarzer, 2009). For a student seeking U.S. citizenship, for instance, relevant language instruction includes practicing both formal interview questions and small talk topics which may come up with the immigration officer. Although it can be a challenge, teachers should try to find activities that are neither too difficult nor too easy (Finn, 2011). Both can lead to demotivation, as activities that are too hard can be frustrating, and those that are too easy can be boring. In order to account for all of the above, instructors must be able to identify the needs of each of their students and know how to respond appropriately (Finn, 2011).

The learning environment should also be carefully constructed. The room should be set up for adult learners rather than child learners, with special attention given to seating arrangement and materials (Finn, 2011). The teacher can consider, for instance, if they prefer to stand at the front of the room with students facing them, or seat themselves and the students in a circle. Creating a supportive environment that addresses learners' potential doubts and anxieties is key. This allows students to develop a sense of community in which they feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes (Schwarzer, 2009). For teachers, knowing the importance of social factors like race, gender, and culture and recognizing the diversity present in the classroom

is part of creating a supportive learning environment (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008).

According to Brown (2002), no single method is "best" or fits all contexts. As such, instructors must be able to assess learner needs and adapt or use the approaches they feel best address these needs. One such approach is a focus on effective communication rather than accurate grammar. For this, teachers should build learners' vocabulary early on, providing a basis for learning the rules of the language (Schwarzer, 2009). Successful interactions are the goal, so students must develop multiple skill areas, such as speaking, listening, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Pair and group work, embedded in the supportive environment, are an excellent way to build communication skills as a whole. Having classroom routines takes the guesswork out of learning and does not necessarily have to be boring. For many students, this routine reduces anxiety and allows them to focus on learning (Schwarzer, 2009). Instructors should also practice giving feedback that allows students to self-correct, building self-esteem in addition to solidifying learning (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008).

Adult ESL Programs and Classes

In Des Moines, adult English language classes are offered by at least 17 organizations, which reflect the diverse array of programs available across the United States. Adult English language learners attend classes at universities or community colleges, many of which offer both credit and non-credit ESL classes. Classes are also offered at faith-based organizations, which have a religious affiliation. Even more ESL options exist at community-based organizations, a category which encompasses libraries, nonprofits, and private sector programs (Durham & Kim, 2018). Usually, faith- and community-based programs are less formal than universities and community colleges and do not result in academic credits or a degree. Because faith- and community-based programs attract ELLs that might shy away from academic contexts, their

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students tend to have a wide range of backgrounds, including some with interrupted learning or no formal learning background (Pettitt, Ekers, Campbell, & Gure, 2017). Such organizations typically operate on a tight budget and lack the resources to provide fully equipped classrooms, particularly in terms of technology (Pettitt et al., 2017). However, faith- and community-based organizations fill a gap in nonformal instruction, usually offering classes at little or no cost to students, with few prior education and attendance requirements (Durham & Kim, 2018).

Adult ESL programs offer classes beyond general English language skills, which focus on everyday grammar and vocabulary. In addition to general ESL, programs may have cultural orientation classes for new arrivals to the United States and citizenship preparation courses for those hoping to become naturalized U.S. citizens. For ELLs seeking a different or better job, career readiness programs are available, as well as computer literacy classes. All of the above classes use ESL as a basis for the specific subject matter. ESL courses can be broken into levels of English proficiency (i.e., beginner, intermediate, advanced), but many are multilevel, especially in community-based ESL programs (Pettitt et al., 2017). Different class formats exist, including one-on-one tutoring, small group, and large group.

Adult ESL Teachers

There is no one route or background experience that leads instructors to teaching adult ESL (Pettitt et al., 2017). They may have studied TESOL, or they may have taught K-12 for many years before switching to teaching adults. Some instructors have no teaching background whatsoever but want to devote their time to improving the lives of ELLs. For professional adult ESL teachers, available work is often part-time, so teachers may work at multiple programs and locations (Crandall, 1993; Florez, 2001). This is due in large part to the dearth of funding faced

by adult ESL programs. This scarcity of funding is also the reason many organizations turn to volunteer teachers.

Instructors of English can be nonnative English speakers. Native English speakers, particularly those who speak the dominant or preferred form of English spoken in their teaching context, often receive hiring preference over nonnative speakers or speakers of marginalized forms of English (Maum, 2002). Nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), however, are not by nature less qualified than native speakers, and they do have certain advantages in the classroom. For example, having already been through the process of learning the language, NNESTs tend to be more aware of the linguistic and cultural needs of the students (Maum, 2002). As the number of NNESTs grows, trainers of English language instructors will need to understand more about how their needs differ from those of native English-speaking teachers (Anderson, 2015).

According to Al-Seghayer (2017), successful ESL teachers are more than just proficient in the language. They also possess knowledge about the process of learning and about language acquisition. Effective teachers have pedagogical knowledge, which includes instructional methods, classroom management, lesson planning, and student evaluation, as well as technology skills. In addition, certain personal characteristics are well-suited to teaching, such as flexibility and adaptability, patience, passion, tolerance, and a dedication to self-improvement (Al-Seghayer, 2017).

ESL Teacher Training

Adult ESL teacher training can take various forms. For those seeking certification or credentialing, there are short-term TESOL training courses or master's degrees in TESOL.

Teachers who attend these programs are often looking for employment in the field of adult ESL (Hobbs, 2013). However, few organizations, especially community-based ESL programs, require TESOL certification. Instructors who work or volunteer for such organizations are not likely to be interested in committing time and money to certification courses. This poses a challenge to ESL programs wanting well-trained instructors. Many adult ESL programs, therefore, turn to teacher training like workshops to develop their instructors' knowledge and proficiency.

Because of the amount of diversity in the programs, learners, and teachers, preparing training for adult ESL instructors is difficult. Adult ESL teachers can be paid instructors with degrees in TESOL, unpaid volunteers with no experience teaching whatsoever, and every combination in between. There is little research into the training needs of volunteer adult ESL instructors, but research into volunteer adult literacy teachers is comparable. Programs relying on volunteer teachers may lack the funds to train their instructors, who are more likely than professional instructors to be underprepared (Durham & Kim, 2018). Some volunteers, though fluent in English, may not know the basics of the language, such as grammar and syntax rules. Henrichsen (2010) points out that volunteer instructors may also lack pedagogical knowledge, or knowledge of how to teach. They might not know the needs of adult learners versus the needs of children. Volunteer teachers could also be missing critical cultural information about their students, leading to misunderstandings in the classroom. On the other hand, Ziegler, McCallum, and Bell (2009) found that adult literacy volunteers often had just as much content knowledge, that is, knowledge of the subject, as paid instructors. It also cannot be assumed that volunteers are untrained. Volunteers can have a variety of professional and academic backgrounds, including teaching experience or language learning experience. In addition, volunteers are

typically committed and passionate, and they often possess characteristics of good teachers, such as patience and enthusiasm (Henrichsen, 2010; Ziegler et al., 2009).

Experienced teachers, whether professional or volunteer, can also benefit from training. According to Rodríguez and McKay (2010), "experienced" can be defined by number of years taught and ability to manage a classroom. They note, however, that being experienced does not always mean having expertise. Experienced teachers may be more resistant to professional development, as they may believe they already know what is being taught (Rodríguez & McKay, 2010). However, workshops offer a way for these teachers to share their knowledge and refresh their enthusiasm for teaching, as well as potentially learn new best practices. For experienced instructors, training should acknowledge the skills and knowledge they have acquired in their careers (Rodríguez & McKay, 2010).

Various approaches to training exist. Programs may offer pre-service (that is, before beginning to teach) workshops to provide instructors with a basic knowledge of teaching ESL. Another option is to hold in-service trainings on specific topics throughout the term. In-service training formats include, but are not limited to, single workshops, workshop series, conferences, and summer institutes (Kutner, 1992). Henrichsen (2010) suggests offering "the least you should know" to novice ELL instructors, providing just enough information upfront to get teachers started without overwhelming them (p. 16). This approach is also fitting because novice instructors may not yet have an idea of what leading a class looks like, and some concepts will only make sense after the novices have started teaching. Schaetzel, Peyton, & Burt (2007) point out that one-day workshops without follow-up tend to result in little change in teachers' classroom actions. Belzer's (2006) approach addresses this, structuring teacher training with less initial information and more ongoing/in-service sessions in order to avoid knowledge loss over

time. Such an approach also reflects Kolb's model, allowing teachers to test out their new knowledge in class, reflect on the approaches they try, and re-form their ideas about teaching ESL.

Moving from theory to practice can be a challenge for teachers and trainers alike. It is difficult to know if teachers are actually using what they learn in the classroom. Perry and Hart (2012) state that instructors often revert to the teaching styles they experienced in their lifetimes, which for language teachers might mean emphasizing grammar repetition instead of conversational fluency in the classroom. One suggested approach is to reinforce training with guided learning on the job (Perry & Hart, 2012). This could take the form of an apprenticeship or a mentor/mentee relationship with another teacher. Connecting instructors into mentor and mentee pairs is a great way to encourage participation from more experienced teachers while supporting novice teachers (Rodríguez & McKay, 2010). It also fulfills instructors' desire to network with and learn from other teachers, something Perry and Hart (2012) found in their research.

Incorporating reflective opportunities is a flexible and practical way to encourage theory-to-practice learning (Florez, 2001). According to Florez (2001), instructors can use reflective practice as a "continuous cycle of self-observation and self-evaluation in order to understand their own actions and the reactions they prompt in themselves and in learners" (p. 2). Reflective practices include individual approaches like reflective writing, in which a teacher maintains a regular journal, and action research, in which a teacher identifies an issue to research and reflect on (Farrell, 2008). Collaborative reflective opportunities can take the form of professional learning communities or study circles, in which instructors get together to read and discuss research on instructional approaches, sometimes also incorporating workshops, peer

observations, and classroom implementation tasks (Abbott, Lee, & Rossiter, 2018; Echelberger, McCurdy, & Parrish, 2018). In all reflective approaches, teachers gather data about their classroom practices, analyze the data and their own assumptions and beliefs for patterns, consider the alternative actions in the situation, and create a plan to incorporate their insights (Florez, 2001). This approach follows Kolb's experiential learning cycle, allowing instructors to reflect on their experience and learning in the classroom. An advantage of reflective practice approaches is that they are flexible, allowing instructors from different teaching contexts to make the learning personal and relevant to their own practice (Abbott et al., 2018; Echelberger et al., 2018). In addition, instructors of all experience levels with all types of available resources can make use of different reflective opportunities (Farrell, 2008).

Finally, as Ziegler et al. (2009) note, much of teachers' learning comes from independent study. To encourage and guide this learning, trainings should provide instructors with more resources to explore later. Only so much information can be imparted and processed in the span of one or even a few trainings, and having extra resources to consult later allows instructors to seek out information pertinent to their classroom experiences. Although online training methods like webinars are not the most effective approach, they are another good option for many instructors, since they are inexpensive and convenient (Smith, 2017).

ESL training has many facets, and selecting the appropriate content and approaches depends not only on best practices but also on the training support needs of the instructors. Identifying these needs allows programs and trainers to more effectively prepare teachers for delivering quality English language instruction.

Research Methodology

To answer the research question, data was collected via online surveys of and follow-up interviews with adult ESL instructors from various organizations in and around Des Moines, Iowa. The surveys and interviews sought to elicit the self-identified training support needs of volunteer and paid, novice and experienced teachers.

Surveys included multiple-choice and open-ended questions pertaining to instructors' classes, such as the number of students, the types or levels of ESL, and the number of hours per week they teach (see Appendix A). Information was also gathered about teachers' educational and professional backgrounds, including specific questions about their experience with ESL. Participants were asked to categorize the type of organization they teach for, as well as whether their position is volunteer or professional. The surveys also elicited information about what kind of training support participants have received at their current organization, and what kind of training they might like to receive.

Surveys were emailed to 87 instructors on the Iowa Adult ELL Academy mailing list as well as to 10 adult ELL program coordinators to distribute to their instructors. There were no set parameters for participation beyond teaching in an adult ESL classroom, and as such, participants included volunteer and paid, novice and experienced teachers. Participants were affiliated with a variety of organizations and programs, resulting in a diverse data pool. Programs varied in many characteristics, such as class size, credit or non-credit, and type of organization (faith-based, community college, etc.). A total of 32 instructors completed the surveys.

Survey participants remained anonymous, unless they opted to be interviewed. In this case, names and email addresses were provided but not disclosed in the final capstone. Certain

demographic information about the participant and their organization was collected. Participants were not asked to disclose the name of their organization.

Participants interested in interviewing filled out a consent form prior to being interviewed, indicating whether they consented to have the interview recorded. Follow-up interviews were conducted face-to-face or over the phone and recorded with a voice recorder. They allowed participants to expand on their survey responses and describe their classroom and training experiences in more detail (see Appendix B). If a participant chose to not be recorded, notes were taken on a password-protected computer. Seven follow-up interviews were conducted. In the final capstone, participants are referred to as "Interviewee 1", "Interviewee 2", etc.

Presentation and Discussion of Data

Survey Responses

A total of 32 participants completed the survey. These respondents represented a range of educational and professional backgrounds and ESL programs, reflecting the diversity noted by Pettitt et al. (2017). Of the 32 participating instructors, 31 (97 percent) spoke English as a first language, with one (3 percent) indicating Spanish as a first language. Three (9 percent) participants indicated that high school was their highest level of completed education. The remaining 29 (81 percent) had completed a tertiary degree, including fourteen (44 percent) with a bachelor's degree, 12 (38 percent) with a master's degree, two (6 percent) with a terminal professional degree such as MBA or JD, and one (3 percent) with a PhD.

Many participants noted that while they did not have formal ESL qualification, they had other related qualifications, such as a bachelor's or master's degree in education or experience

teaching English language learners within a larger K-12 classroom. Participants who commented on their related experience reinforce the point that ESL certification is just one of many valid paths to teaching adult ELLs. Of the 32 instructors, six (19 percent) had some kind of formal ESL qualification. One (3 percent) respondent had a TESOL certificate, one (3 percent) had a K-12 ESL endorsement, and two (6 percent) had master's degrees in TESOL. Additionally, one (3 percent) instructor had attained both a K-12 ESL endorsement and TESOL certificate, and one (3 percent) other had a both TESOL certificate and master's degree in TESOL. Proportionately more professional instructors (33 percent) had formal ESL qualifications than volunteer instructors (13 percent). This is unsurprising, since organizations with paid teaching positions are more likely to hire those with certification or credentials.

Twenty-two (69 percent) of participants indicated that, prior to teaching adult ESL, they had some kind of teaching experience. Participants' teaching backgrounds were diverse, representing preschool and elementary, middle and high school, college and adult contexts. They had taught a variety of subjects in both formal and nonformal settings, including German, Spanish, general K-12, HiSET (a high school equivalency test for adults who did not complete high school), music, special education, math, accounting, and Bible school, among others.

Participants' current adult ESL class contexts also varied (see Figure 1). Respondents were asked to choose one or more categories to describe the organization(s) they taught for. One (3 percent) participant selected "ethnic community-based organization", "community-based organization", and "faith-based organization", two (6 percent) participants chose "nonprofit organization" only, and three (9 percent) respondents stated that they taught at a community college. Seven (22 percent) chose "faith-based organization" only, nine (28 percent) respondents selected multiple categories in some combination of "community-based organization", "faith-

based organization", and "nonprofit organization", and ten (31 percent) selected "community-based organization" only. So, the majority (81 percent) of respondents taught for a community-based, ethnic community-based, faith-based, and/or nonprofit organization, as opposed to a formal setting like community college.

Nine (28 percent) of the 32 participants indicated that they were paid employees of the organization(s) they taught for, and 23 (72 percent) indicated that they were volunteers. All respondents who were volunteers taught at nonprofit, community-, or faith-based organizations.
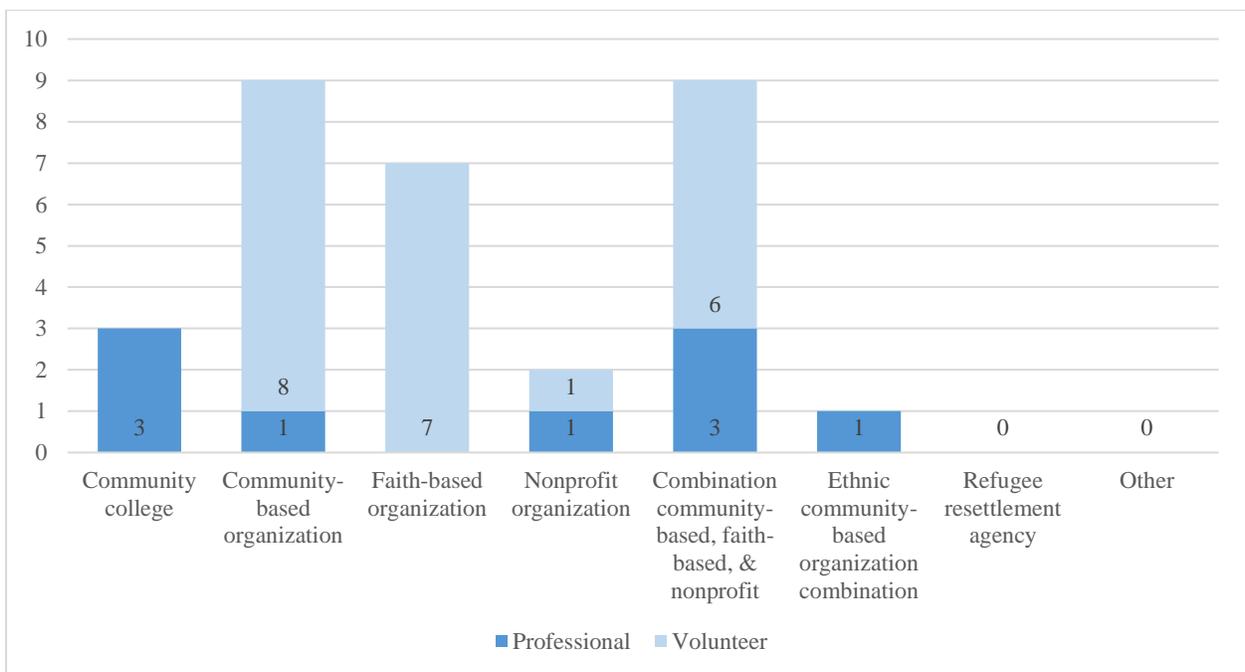

Figure 1: Professional/Volunteer Participants' Organizations by Category

In their classroom role, three (9 percent) participants served as co-teacher, four (13 percent) as classroom assistant, seven (22 percent) as one-on-one tutor, and eighteen (56 percent) as lead instructor (see Figure 2). All paid instructors held lead instructor positions.
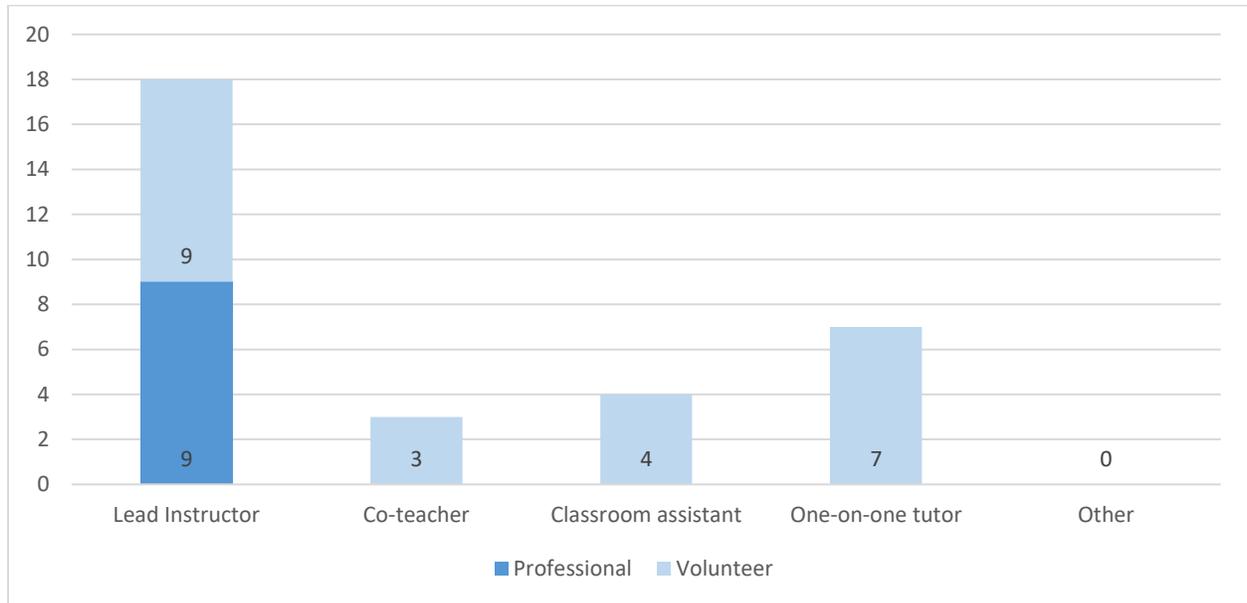
Figure 2: Professional/Volunteer Participants' Teaching Position

Participants were asked to categorize the type of classes they taught, with the option of selecting multiple categories. The majority (60 percent) of respondents taught general ESL classes only (see Figure 3). The rest (40%) taught a combination of general ESL and career readiness, citizenship preparation, cultural orientation, and computer literacy subjects.

Class sizes varied, with six (19 percent) respondents teaching one student only, twelve (38 percent) teaching classes of 2 to 5 students, seven (22 percent) teaching classes of 6 to 10 students, six (19 percent) teaching classes of 11 to 15 students, and one (3 percent) respondent teaching a class of more than 15 students. English proficiency levels of students ranged from low literacy to advanced. Sixteen (50 percent) participants indicated that, on average, their students' English language proficiency was in the low literacy to beginner to high beginner range. Eleven (34 percent) indicated that their students had a low intermediate to high intermediate English proficiency, and two (6 percent) indicated that their students were at an advanced level. Three (9 percent) respondents stated that their students' proficiency levels were too varied to determine.

On average, participating instructors taught 4.2 hours per week, not including preparation time. Participants in paid positions taught more hours on average (7.5 hours per week) than those in volunteer positions (2.9 hours per week). No participant taught more than 20 hours of ESL per week. Including preparation time, participants devoted an average of 6.4 hours per week to their adult ESL classes. For paid instructors, the average instructional and preparation time was 11.6 hours per week, and for volunteer instructors, the average was 4.3 hours per week. No instructors exceeded 30 hours of instructional time plus preparation time per week, following the trend of part-time adult ESL instructors mentioned by Crandall (1993) and Florez, (2001).

Only three (9 percent) of the 32 participants stated that no training was provided at their current organizations (see Figure 3). Eight (25 percent) received pre-service training, which includes ESL or teaching best practices, eight (25 percent) were provided mentoring, shadowing, or interning opportunities, and eighteen (56 percent) participants received a program orientation, which includes an introduction to organization-specific policies, materials, classroom, and staff but does not include ESL or teach best practices. Twenty-three (72 percent) participants had the option to attend ongoing or in-service workshops. One (3 percent) participant stated that, while training was offered, they did not attend, as they felt comfortable in their volunteer assistant role without it. Two (6 percent) participants noted that they received other training from their organizations, such as class observation or weekly supervisor check-ins. Of the 29 participants who were offered training through their organizations, 12 (41 percent) participants stated that they were not required to attend any of the provided training opportunities. The remaining 17 (59 percent) were required to attend some type of training.
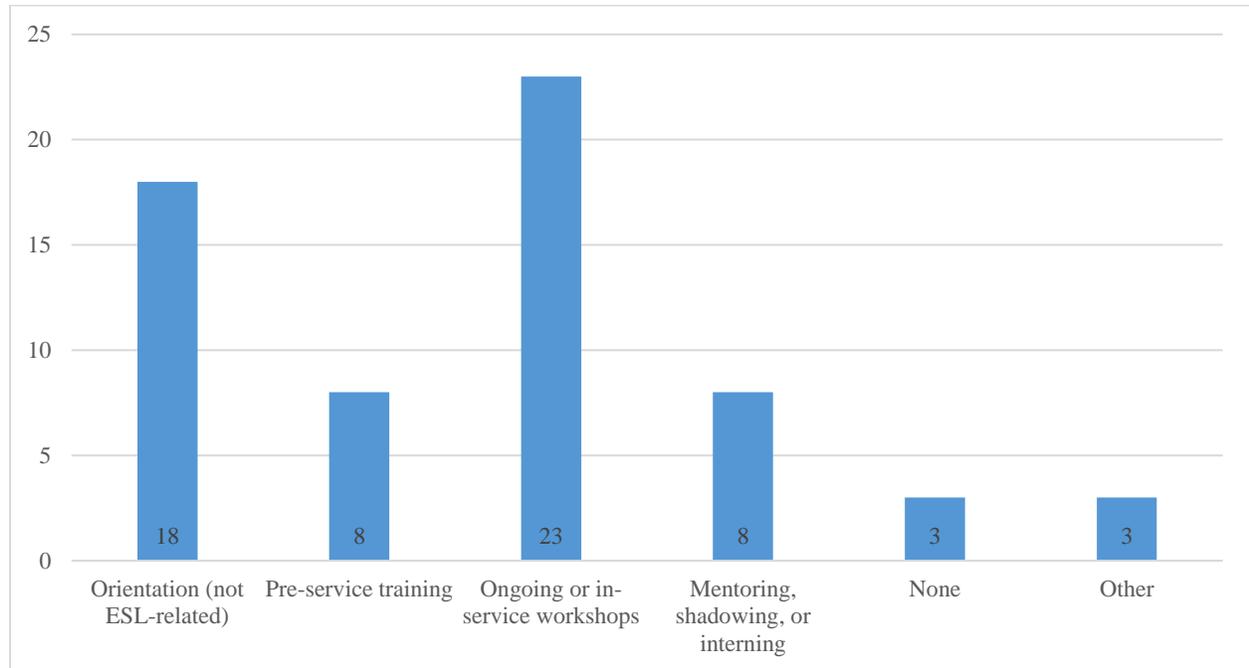
Figure 3: Training Support Received from Current Organization(s)

When asked how many hours of ESL-related training (not orientation) they received at their current organization, seven (22 percent) participants stated that they received no ESL-related training at all. Three (9 percent) indicated that they received less than one hour, six (19 percent) 1 to 3 hours, nine (28 percent) 4 to 6 hours, two (6 percent) 7 to 9 hours, and five (16 percent) 10 or more hours. Seventeen (74 percent) of the 23 volunteer instructors received at least one hour of ESL-related training, while five (55 percent) of the 9 paid instructors received at least one hour.

The majority (75 percent) of participants indicated that they meet with other adult ESL instructors. Of these 24 participants, 15 (63 percent) interact with other instructors in a meeting facilitated by their organizations. The remaining nine (37 percent), described their meetings with other ESL instructors as informal and infrequent.

Participants were also asked about training they sought outside of their organization (see Figure 4). Eight (25 percent) participants did not seek outside training. Twenty-four (75 percent) respondents had pursued some kind of ESL training, including articles and books, professional conferences, professional development workshops, and online webinars and trainings. One of these participants wrote that they pursued a master's degree in order to receive more training. Of the seven participants who stated that they received no ESL-related training from their organizations, four sought outside training. Three (9 percent) participants received no training from their organizations and pursued no outside training. All three of these participants were classroom assistants. Paid instructors were more likely to seek multiple outside training sources than volunteer instructors.

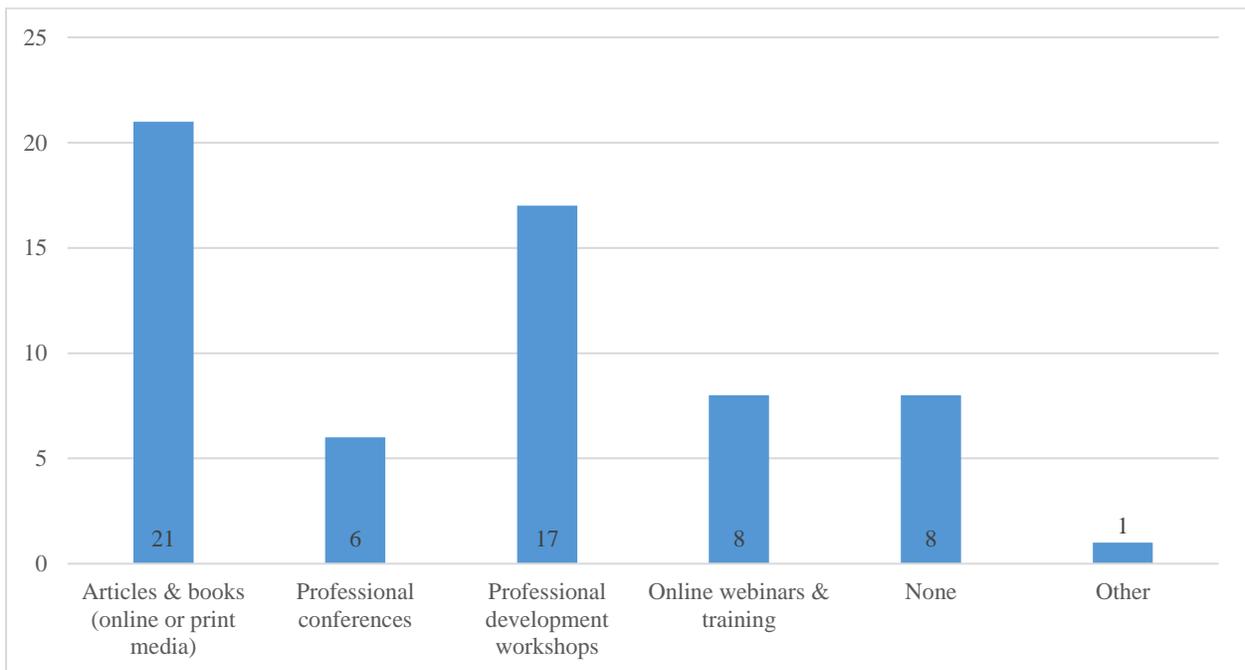
Figure 4: Training Sought Outside of Participants' Organization(s)

Asked to describe how training has helped them become a better adult ESL instructor, participants' responses varied. Some mentioned that they found better resources, tools, and

activities through training. One stated that in-service workshops gave them "practical information I could use immediately," echoing one of Knowles's six principles of andragogy. Three participants mentioned feeling an increase in comfort as a result of training. One difference between volunteer and paid instructors is that volunteer instructors shared that they gained empathy and a better understanding of students' experiences and cultures through training.

Those who did not find training helpful included two volunteer classroom assistants, who felt they did not need training to fulfill their specific role. Two other participants wanted more training, particularly that which applies specifically to their students' proficiency level, also mirroring Knowles's principle of immediate relevance. One respondent stated that they rely on instinct in the classroom, and another mentioned that they rely on their experience teaching children instead of attending trainings.

Participants' ideas of effective training largely echoed the literature on the topic. They wrote that the most useful training activities included shadowing and observing other teachers and comparing their experiences with other instructors. Some participants mentioned their preference for trainings in which they actually try out activities. Participants also stated that reading articles or attending lecture-only trainings was less effective. Others noted that activities which simulate language learning helped them understand what their students are experiencing in the classroom.

Another common response was that training which applied to the teacher's classroom context and students' needs and goals was the most effective. Contexts mentioned included proficiency level of student(s), class size, and available technology and resources. Volunteer

instructors stated that anything that did not apply to their own teaching context was not useful. Paid instructors, on the other hand, wrote about adapting materials and activities to suit their class contexts.

Participants were asked to detail the aspects of teaching ESL they wish they knew more about. Language-related topics included writing, phonics, speaking/conversation, pronunciation, and the process of language acquisition. A few volunteer instructors noted their need to refresh their memories on or learn more about English language grammar rules and terms. Some participants responded that they would like to know more about their students' cultures, experiences as refugees, and challenges faced in U.S. society. Respondents also wanted to increase their cultural sensitivity and learn more about incorporating students' cultures into their lessons. Two participants stated that they would like to learn strategies for maintaining student interest and attendance, and one noted their interest in getting better feedback from students about their needs and goals. The participant whose first language was Spanish had a goal to improve their own accent, although they noted that having an accent may help students become more comfortable in class, calling to mind Maum's (2002) description of nonnative English-speaking teachers. Finally, one instructor wrote that they would like to know more about learning disabilities in the ESL classroom. It is clear from the topics mentioned above that participants' training needs center on improving instruction for the benefit of their students, rather than for the purpose of increasing their own teaching skills.

Participants also described their idea of an effective training program. Responses included a need for content specific to different levels and contexts and for content which addresses challenges specific to volunteer instructors, again reflecting Knowles's principles about relevance and problem-oriented learning. For many participants, effective training

combines lecture with practical, hands-on activities and incorporates videos of actual classrooms followed by discussions. Shadowing and mentoring with observation were also mentioned, as well as ongoing, long-term support as new instructors adjust to the classroom. One participant wrote that it would be helpful to always have additional resources to explore after trainings. Another stated that training should encourage and welcome culturally diverse instructors.

Interview Responses

Seven participants participated in follow-up interviews. The interviews allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences teaching adult ELLs, including challenges and successes in the classroom, and share further thoughts on training they have received and would like to receive.

Interviewee 1 is a lead instructor at a faith-based, nonprofit organization. In her interview, she stressed the importance of getting to know students individually, so that teachers can address their specific needs. She noted, however, that it is often challenging to get student feedback to better understand those needs. An instructor with years of teaching and a master's degree in TESOL, Interviewee 1 has developed a teaching philosophy which ties in with her own pursuit of learning. She explained that the teacher sets the tone for students, so confident, self-directed instructors lead to confident, self-directed learners.

Despite her seemingly extensive ESL experience, Interviewee 1 said she regularly pursues and participates in training such as conferences, in-service workshops, and online resources. She noted that training has made her a more strategic and mindful teacher. Her process involves modifying new resources, reflecting on their level of success, and then tweaking them. Interviewee 1 has found that online resources can be difficult to figure out, and that trainings which give examples and work through new approaches together are more

effective. Topics of further training which interest her are remote cultural exchange and digital literacy.

The second interviewee, like the first, possesses a master's degree in TESOL and a long teaching history. At the community-based, nonprofit organization where she teaches, Interviewee 2 was initially worried about being an effective teacher in an unfamiliar teaching context. She feared she "would be inadequate to the task because my own experience has been with a complete different population". However, she leaned on her previous language teaching experience and soon became comfortable in the classroom. As she phrased it, her teaching career gave her "the right instincts of what I should do in these classes". She also shared her experience of taking a course on adult ELL learners while starting to teach ESL. Through her coursework, she learned and read about learners in the community-based ESL context, then "saw how that played out" in her classroom. She would examine what she was doing with her students, then read more on it. In her opinion, language teaching experience is the best form of training.

Although her organization has offered orientation and ongoing training and supports its instructors attending professional conferences, Interviewee 2 has not attended all of the trainings on offer, citing other commitments and time constraints. For her, training is useful for solidifying her prior teaching experience and allowing her to connect with other instructors in the same context.

Interviewee 3, who also has a master's degree in TESOL, is currently a lead instructor at a community-based organization. In the interview, she described the challenges she faces in her current classes, like balancing different ability levels within one class. After running into some difficulties planning for a multilevel class, she took notice of what was working and solicited feedback from students in order to then change her approach. At her current organization,

Interviewee 3 had the opportunity to attend in-service workshops. She noted that implementing learning from different trainings is not always successful because the workshops might be targeting teachers with classroom settings different than her own. For example, trainings that focused on incorporating technology were a challenge to utilize in her own setting.

Prior to teaching in her current classroom, Interviewee 3 wished she had learned more about the cultural and political contexts of her students and how those contexts might impact their language learning. On the topic of cultural awareness, she said, "I had to learn the hard way on the job how to do it, and … I made a lot of mistakes, but I certainly learned a lot." She recognized that instructors do not always know students' backgrounds beforehand, so they should be prepared to learn about cultures as quickly as possible.

Interviewee 4 came to adult ESL from a background in elementary education. Recently, she shifted from general ESL to career readiness at a faith- and community-based nonprofit organization. In her career readiness class, Interviewee 4 recognized the need to "tailor our program to the population, instead of expecting that we're going to create this class and the right people are going to show up". Using her knowledge of students' interests, she was able to make the class more about workplace literacy in general rather than a specific field of work.

At her current organization, Interviewee 4 received orientation on the program's curriculum, in-service training, and the option to attend an ELL conference. The training helped her "compare those teaching strategies that I had used with children to what was appropriate for adults and … see how much overlap there is". However, she noticed that it is difficult to truly understand the similarities and differences until spending time in the classroom and doing some self-guided research. Early in her adult ESL teaching experience, Interviewee 4 found it useful to learn activities and approaches that can be implemented immediately. For her, the most useful

training combined lecture with tools to solve classroom issues. Interviewee 4 wished she knew more about what support exists for students with learning disabilities and what a teacher should do if they think a student might have, for example, dyslexia.

The fifth interviewee volunteers as a classroom assistant at a community-based organization. Her interest in adult ESL stemmed from wanting to do something meaningful with her time. Interviewee 5 has a bachelor's degree in liberal arts and no formal or informal teacher training. Her organization offered in-service workshops, but the interviewee was unable to attend them due to scheduling conflicts. However, Interviewee 5 felt that she did not need training to prepare for the classroom. As assistant, she takes cues from the lead instructor, who creates and teaches practical lessons. Her role includes taking small groups of students aside for activities, assisting individual students throughout the class, and occasionally presenting on topics. Interviewee 5 emphasized that she feels comfortable in large part due to working with a competent lead instructor. She also noted that she draws on her background experience, though not specifically in teaching. For example, presenting in front of the class is easy for her thanks to her experience performing in choirs. She did not feel she was lacking any training or skills.

Interviewee 6 is a lead instructor at an ESL program which was founded recently in response to the need in the area. The program is led and taught by volunteers, which initially presented a challenge, as many volunteers did not know how to teach ESL to adults. The interviewee herself relied on her more than 30 years of teaching experience and academic background in education, creating lessons in response to students' lives and interests. She noted that adapting lesson plans to suit her students can be difficult, since her students' English proficiency levels tend to be much lower than lesson plan designs.

Because of the relative newness of the program, no training is available through the

organization itself. However, Interviewee 6 and other program volunteers took part in the Iowa

Adult ELL Academy workshops and looked up resources online. Her background in elementary

education influenced her understanding of her adult students, in that "they learn through music,

they learn through actions, not just through using textbooks". She mentioned that, while her

education background prepared her with certain strategies, the trainings provided her with adult

ESL-specific teaching tips. For her, watching videos of teachers in a classroom was the most

helpful training, and she wished for more videos specific to low-level English language learners.

Interviewee 6 and other volunteer teachers at her program also reached out to other adult ESL

programs in the area to visit and observe their classes. After some time, the volunteers without

teaching experience began to feel more comfortable in the classroom.

The final interviewee currently teaches career readiness at a faith-based nonprofit

organization. When she first started working at the organization in a different role, Interviewee 7

spent time researching ESL best practices and volunteering in classes. She cited class

observation as useful for learning about managing activities and the classroom. She received

orientation and a basic resource guide with tactics and activities but noted that, of her own

accord, she "oriented myself with the workplace and the workplace goals and student needs more

individually".

Interviewee 7 also had the opportunity to attend in-service training. She noted that one

particular session on teaching multilevel classes helped her to meet the needs of different

students without planning entirely separate lessons. Interviewee 7 shared a number of challenge

areas or topics she wished she knew more about. Her students often ask her about pronunciation,

and she would like more tools to provide them with pronunciation practice. Another area of

interest was higher level grammar, as she has found it hard to teach and to find materials for her

intermediate-level or higher students. Finally, Interviewee 7 recognized that skills beyond ESL, like digital literacy, are crucial to adult learners but can be difficult to incorporate into classes.

Through the interviews, a few patterns emerged. Experienced and trained instructors often mentioned the role their teaching experience plays in making classroom decisions. They emphasized classroom experience as a learning tool, noting the benefits of testing out activities and approaches. A hint of Kolb's learning cycle appeared. Interviewees noticed when approaches did not work in their classroom, and they used various processes to address the issues, such as gathering student feedback, doing research, and reflecting on the situation. In Kolb's cycle, this data collecting would be followed by analyzing, a step also mentioned by two of the interviewees. The instructors would then form a theory or solution, test out that approach, and start the cycle anew.

Many of the interviewees indicated an awareness of Knowles's principles of adult learning, although not necessarily by name. For example, they discussed student ownership of learning and adapting topics and activities based on student feedback. They also noted the importance of relevant materials and content.

Multiple interviewees and survey participants mentioned having difficulty finding or identifying appropriate materials for their learners. Some were referring to low level materials, saying there are far more for intermediate and advanced students. Other participants stated the exact opposite. There is a disconnect between the materials and activities instructors are accessing and the ones they feel fit their classroom and learners best.

Two interviewee's volunteer experiences provided a contrast to each other. The volunteer classroom assistant felt comfortable in her role without ESL-related training, since she had the guidance of a lead instructor. The volunteer instructor in the new program, however, sought

many different sources of training, hoping to ensure both appropriate instruction for the learners and comfort for herself and the other volunteer lead instructors.

Finally, networking with and learning from other adult ESL instructors was another common theme. This could take the form of idea-sharing during trainings, observing other classes, or volunteering in the classroom to gain hands-on experience.

Conclusions

Survey and interview results indicated that the training needs of Des Moines-area adult ESL instructors vary widely, due in large part to the diverse educational and professional backgrounds, classroom roles and contexts, and programs of the participants. Participating instructors expressed a desire to gain content knowledge on ESL-related topics like pronunciation, grammar, writing, phonics, and speaking. Pedagogical knowledge, such as instructional techniques, lesson planning, student feedback, and incorporating technology is also needed to support content knowledge. Additionally, cultural knowledge and understanding were emphasized, including the importance of learning about students' backgrounds and how to appropriately incorporate cultural elements into a lesson. Participants framed teacher development as a way to improve their instructional skills for the benefit of their students rather than for their own gain.

For the most part, it is difficult to trace the trends back to any particular characteristic of teachers or programs. In this study, no large gaps in training were identified. Instead, individual instructors had individual gaps in ESL and pedagogical knowledge. With such varied and teacher-specific needs, a single training program cannot effectively fill these gaps. Therefore, multiple, equally varied training options should be offered by adult ESL programs separately and collectively in order to support their instructors' learning. With a wide array of teacher

development options available, instructors can select a "package" that is right for them, piecing together their own personalized training program (Smith, 2017).

When developing a training structure, program administrators and trainers should keep in mind both Kolb's cycle of learning and Knowles's principles of adult learning. Training should acknowledge instructors' experience and knowledge, even for novice instructors. Any and all prior classroom experience can serve as the concrete experience to be built upon in Kolb's cycle. Instructors should be encouraged to reflect on their observations and prior experiences to determine areas for improvement or change. Selected content for training should come from the instructors themselves, allowing room for self-directed learning. Training content should be relevant and applicable to instructors' current teaching contexts and should also seek to address problems teachers encounter in their classes. Thus, instructors can learn and develop theories which can be utilized immediately in their classrooms. By testing out new theories, approaches, and activities, instructors can determine what fits in their class and what might need adjusting. Actively experimenting with new learning allows instructors to begin Kolb's cycle again by then reflecting on the experience and adapting or even abandoning the approaches used.

A diverse teacher training program would include mentoring and networking, workshops, conferences, access to new research and materials, and reflective practice opportunities, many of which already exist in Des Moines. Recognizing that not every ESL program has the resources to offer multiple training options, the following best practices and suggestions can be adapted to suit different contexts.

First and foremost, instructors and program administrators should be involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating training. As adult learners themselves, instructors are

self-directed, and training programs should acknowledge instructors' responsibility for their own learning. This study indicated that instructors are already guiding their own learning through self-sought training. By soliciting instructor input and feedback, programs can ensure that administrators and instructors have the same goals for teacher training and that the training is meeting instructors' needs.

As teachers are largely self-motivated to improve their instruction, programs should encourage self-directed learning. One approach is having instructors create their own individual teacher development plan with the guidance and support of program administration. Such a plan could include attending the TESOL and adult basic education conferences that take place in or near Des Moines every year. If possible, instructors from the same organization or teaching context could attend together and discuss their learnings afterward. Instructors should be given access to other self-guided learning opportunities as well. For example, programs could obtain an account or subscription to an ESL-related journal, allowing instructors to stay current on instructional research and trends. If instructors are uncertain where to look for useful and appropriate materials for their classroom context, they can be pointed in the right direction by program administration, teacher trainers, or other instructors. Having access to context-specific resources and training, a need which appeared over and over in the study, is crucial to teacher learning. Equipped with new theories and methodologies from their self-study, instructors can then test them out in their own classrooms.

Communicating with other instructors, particularly those in a similar teaching context, allows teacher to compare notes and share ideas. Survey participants highlighted classroom observation as an effective training method. For novice instructors, programs might facilitate a mentor-mentee relationship. In this method, a novice instructor can try out new approaches in a

real classroom while a more experienced mentor observes. The mentor can then provide targeted

feedback and suggestions for improvements. Observation and feedback are also useful for

experienced teachers, who could be paired with a peer coach to attain many of the same benefits

provided by a mentor-mentee relationship. In addition, networking opportunities, either within

the organization or with instructors from other organizations, allow teachers to discuss common

challenges and share ideas.

Iowa Adult ELL Academy and other collective efforts also have a role to play in teacher

development. By collaborating to offer additional training, programs can use their resources

efficiently while giving their instructors access to options like workshops. While not the most

effective method on their own, workshops are effective at exposing instructors to best practices

on specific topics and are usually convenient for those with time constraints. As participants in

this study mentioned, the most useful workshops include hands-on activities like role plays,

which allow instructors to practice new techniques without fear of making a mistake. Training

should also include videos showing activities and approaches in actual adult ESL classrooms.

Hands-on activities and videos should be followed by discussion with other workshop

participants. Workshop learning can also be followed up in study groups or professional learning

communities, organized either by the Iowa Adult ELL Academy or the individual programs.

Topics covered in workshops and other learning opportunities should address specific

contexts as well as the issues and challenges instructors face in their classrooms, in order to

match Knowles's principles of self-directed and problem-oriented learning. To address

challenges beyond the scope of ESL and teaching knowledge, such as cultural awareness or

students with learning disabilities or trauma, trainings could be offered in partnership with other

organizations. For example, adult ESL programs can collaborate with ethnic community-based

organizations to offer cultural trainings or with refugee resettlement agencies to provide more information on the resettlement process and related resources available.

In order to foster learning through Kolb's cycle and facilitate the move from theory to practice, programs should encourage and provide opportunities for reflective practice. This approach to teacher development is flexible and requires a relatively small time and financial commitment, which makes it ideal for instructors and programs with limited resources. Reflective practice also incorporates many of Knowles's principles, as it is self-directed, context-specific, and relevant to instructors' interests and goals. Programs can introduce individual reflective options like journaling or teacher research and/or collective options like study groups or professional learning communities. All of these reflective practice opportunities allow teachers to actively reflect on classroom challenges and discover and try out new approaches to face these challenges. They can then reflect further on and adapt new learnings, integrating them into their own theories and teaching philosophies.

Adult ESL programs should seek to understand the needs and goals of their instructors individually and offer program-specific training and access to additional training options. In order to ensure the effectiveness of individual instructors' teacher development plans, programs should regularly assess how instructors' learnings are being implemented in the classroom and whether they are benefitting students. As teacher needs may change over time, programs should reevaluate and update the available training and resources. By understanding instructors' needs and continually supporting their development, programs can provide the training that instructors need to deliver quality ESL instruction.

Limitations and Further Research

One particular limitation of this capstone study was the broadness of the research question, which aimed to find the training needs of all kinds of ESL instructors. This led to general survey questions and unspecific responses. Due to the complex categorization of organizations and multiple factors which comprised teachers' backgrounds and class contexts, it was difficult to trace trends back to specific characteristics. As a result, recommendations were unable to be tailored to groups of instructors, such as volunteers or teachers with experience.

In order to determine more specific needs of instructors, further research could include a thorough, more detailed needs assessment. For example, individual adult ESL programs could survey and interview all of their instructors, as well as program administrators or coordinators, to determine the training needs that exist in that particular program. Another direction for research might include participants' motivations for attending or seeking training, as these motivations could be taken into account when planning training programs. For those already implementing a training program, it might be valuable to evaluate of the effectiveness of the trainings, including whether and how learnings are being incorporated in the classroom. Evaluation should also look into the impact on students' learning, as their education is the basis for any and all teacher trainings.

<div align="center">Closing</div>

The training needs of Des Moines-area adult ESL instructors are as varied as their backgrounds and teaching contexts. It would be impossible to create one training program to meet all of these needs. Instead, adult ESL programs should make a concerted effort to determine and support individual instructors' teacher development. When possible, they should offer access to local TESOL conferences, match instructors with mentors or peer coaches, and encourage

individual or collective reflective practice. Like in the case of Iowa Adult ELL Academy, programs should collaborate to provide workshops and continuous learning opportunities. With multiple teacher development options, instructors can create their own personalized training program and address their unique training needs. By equipping teachers with the tools to deliver more effective instruction, adult ESL programs can support their instructors and fulfill the English language learning needs of their students.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Survey Questions

Introduction to survey:

The purpose of this study is to better understand the training needs of adult English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and tutors in order to develop recommendations for improved trainings and workshops.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue at any time. Your identity and your organization's identity will not be asked for and will not be published. Completion of this survey will require approximately 30 minutes of your time. If you would like to participate in an optional follow-up interview, you will be asked to provide your name and email address at the end of the survey. The interview will require 30-45 minutes of your time.

By clicking "I agree" on page one of the survey, you are consenting to participate in the survey. Please read the informed consent form on page one carefully before clicking "I agree".

Informed Consent Form:

Page one of the survey is the informed consent form.

Instructor Information:

1. What is your first language?
       a. English
       b. Other   Please specify:

2. What is your highest level of completed education?
       a. High school
       b. Associate's degree
       c. Bachelor's degree
       d. Master's degree
       e. Terminal professional degree (e.g., MBA, JD)
       f. PhD

3. Which of the following ESL-related qualifications do you have? Select all that apply.
       a. K-12 ESL endorsement
       b. TESOL/TESL/TEFL certification
       c. Minor in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
       d. Bachelor's degree (Major) in TESOL
       e. Master's degree in TESOL
       f. Other   Please specify:

4. Prior to teaching adult ESL, did you have any teaching or tutoring experience?
      a. Yes
      b. No

5. If you responded "Yes" to Question 4:
      I) What subject(s) did you teach or tutor?
      [Free response]

      II) What age(s) did you teach or tutor?
      [Free response]

      III) How long did you teach or tutor prior to teaching adult ESL?
      a. Less than 1 year
      b. 2-5 years
      c. 6-10 years
      d. 11+ years

6. How long have you been teaching adult ESL (at your current organization(s) and prior)?
      a. Less than 1 year
      b. 2-5 years
      c. 6-10 years
      d. 11+ years

Organization and Program Information:

1. How would you classify the organization(s) at which you teach adult ESL? Select all that apply.
      a. Community-based organization
      b. Community college
      c. Ethnic community-based organization
      d. Faith-based organization
      e. Nonprofit organization
      f. Refugee resettlement agency
      g. Other   Please specify:

2. Are you a paid employee of the organization(s)?
      a. Yes
      b. No

3. If you responded "no" to Question 2, are you a volunteer at the organization(s)?
      a. Yes
      b. No   Please elaborate:

4. Which of the following best describes your role in the ESL classroom?
      a. Lead instructor
      b. Co-teacher

      c. Classroom assistant

      d. One-on-one tutor

      e. Other   Please specify:

5. What type of class do you teach? Select all that apply.

      a. General ESL

      b. Career readiness

      c. Cultural orientation

      d. Citizenship preparation

      e. Other   Please specify:

6. On average, how many students do you have in a class?

      a. 1

      b. 2-5

      c. 6-10

      d. 10-15

      e. 15-20

      f. 20+

7. What is the level of English proficiency of the majority of your students?

      a. Low literacy

      b. Beginner

      c. High beginner

      d. Low intermediate

      e. Intermediate

      f. High intermediate

      g. Advanced

      h. Too varied to determine

8. How many hours of adult ESL do you teach per week (not counting preparation time)?

      [Free response – Number of hours in decimal format (e.g., 2.5)]

9. How many hours do you spend on preparation time per week?

      [Free response – Number of hours in decimal format (e.g., 2.5)]

Training Information:

1. What training support have you received from your current organization(s)? Select all that apply.

      a. Orientation (Includes introduction to organization-specific policies, materials, classroom, staff, etc. Does not include ESL or teaching best practices)

      b. Pre-service training (Includes ESL and teaching best practices)

      c. Ongoing or in-service workshops

      d. Mentoring, shadowing, or interning opportunity

      e. Other   Please elaborate:

      f. None

2. If you selected any of answers A through E in Question 1, which of the following were required by your organization(s)? Select all that apply.

      a. Orientation (Includes introduction to organization-specific policies, materials, classroom, staff, etc. Does not include ESL or teaching best practices)

      b. Pre-service training (Includes ESL and teaching best practices)

      c. Ongoing or in-service workshops

      d. Mentoring, shadowing, or interning opportunity

      e. Other   Please elaborate:

      f. None

3. Approximately how many hours of ESL-related training (pre-service, ongoing/in-service, mentoring/shadowing/interning) have you received from your current organization(s)?

      a. 0 (None)

      b. Less than 1

      c. 1-3

      d. 4-6

      e. 7-9

      f. 10+

4. What training have you sought on your own (outside of the organization)? Select all that apply.

      a. Articles and books (can be online)

      b. Professional conferences

      c. Professional development workshops

      d. Online webinars and training

      e. None

      f. Other   Please specify:

5. Is there any other training support you have received (beyond your current organization(s) or self-sought)?

      a. Yes   Please elaborate:

      b. No

6. Do you feel that the training you have received or sought has helped you be a better adult ESL instructor? Please explain your answer.

      a. Yes   Please elaborate:

      b. No   Please elaborate:

7. How do you implement what you learned in the trainings?

      [Free response]

8. Which were the best/most effective training activities/lessons and why?

      [Free response]

9. Which were the least useful training activities/lessons and why?

      [Free response]

10. Are there aspects of teaching adult ESL you wish you knew more about?
      a. Yes   Please elaborate:
      b. No

11. What do you think an effective training program should look like?
      [Free response]

12. Do you ever meet with other adult ESL instructors?
      a. Yes
      b. No

13. If you responded "yes" to Question 6, are these meetings facilitated by your organization(s)?
      a. Yes
      b. No   Please describe how often you meet with other adult ESL instructors and why:

14. Is there any additional information about the topic you wish to share that you feel has not been addressed in the survey?
      [Free response]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey on *Training Needs of Des Moines-Area Teachers of Adult English Language Learners*. If you would like to participate in a follow-up interview on this topic, please include your name and email address below. You will be contacted via email to arrange a time and contact method for an interview.

Name:
Email:

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the final capstone paper, please include your email address below. Email addresses will not be used for identifying purposes.

Email:

Appendix B – Guided Interview Questions

Interview begins with a review of interviewee's biodata, as given on survey.

Interview Questions:

1. Can you elaborate on your educational and professional background?

2. What has led you to teaching adult ESL?

3. What has your experience been in your current ESL classes?

      a. What challenges, if any, have you faced?

      b. What have been your successes?

4. You stated in the survey that you received [X] training. Can you elaborate on that a bit more?

5. How has the training you've received helped prepare you for your position as an ESL instructor?

6. How have you implemented information from past training experiences in your classes?

7. Is there training you wish you could receive? If so, please elaborate.

8. Is there any other kind of support you wish you could receive? If so, please elaborate.

9. Is there any additional information about the topic you wish to share that you feel has not been addressed in the survey or interview?

Thank you again for taking the time to interview on *Training Needs of Des Moines-Area Teachers of Adult English Language Learners*. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, please feel free to contact me at any time. If you would like to receive a copy of the final capstone paper, please let me know, and I will email it to you.