

***Professional Development in training and Tutoring
Case of third year EFL students, language sciences and didactics,
Department of English***



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الملخص:

إن الممارسة ليست مهمة سهلة في التدريس و خاصة في التعليم العالي. في الواقع، يوجد حاليا العديد من الأدلة تقترح وجود علاقة قوية بين المشاركة الفعالة و نوعية الخبرة في مجال التدريس. و نعني بالمشاركة الفعالة هو مساعدة المتعلم بالاقتران بالموضوع المدرس في ظروف مفيدة ممتعة و ذات تفاعل في اطار المتابعة العينية والدقيقة داخل المجمعات.

Abstract
Practitioner engagement is not an easy task in teaching in higher education. In fact, there is much evidence now to propose a strong relationship between active engagement and the quality of the teaching experience. But what exactly do we mean by 'engagement'? For many it simply refers to assisting students to connect with the subject material in a way that generates interest, enjoyment and interaction. Generating active participation is particularly important in tutorials or small group teaching, where tutorials 'by design', are intended to provide students a different kind of learning experience than the lecture. It is also through active engagement that both, teachers and students take greater ownership for their teaching craft and learning process. This concept assists in the development of an overall design or structure to support such engagement and active participation. The more organized and clear the teachers and students are, the more likely it is that they will get the desired and target results. In addition to this, active engagement of teachers should be reinforced by a reflective practice which is an active process too of attending to their own experience of teaching in order to explore it in some depth. It is in fact a 'dialogue of thinking and doing through which teachers become more skilled. This process develops by thinking critically and deeply about what teachers are doing in order that they may transform that experience and reapply it in new contexts. In many respects, Professional Development in training and tutoring has been designed to motivate reflection on one's teaching practice and mostly where teachers have an opportunity to see others in practice. The article's results have been derived from the interpretation of the data collected through designing an interview addressed to the only special student of the department and show the researcher's experience as a teacher and an administrator with Abdenour, this is how I like to call him, a blind student, but his determination and willingness to succeed in his higher studies made of him a remarkable young man. Special tutoring and training sessions have been designed to enable him fully integrate the learning community. Therefore, this article has been directed to focalize on the pedagogical decisions based on implementing and considering the training and tutoring sessions as a necessity to develop first the

teaching craft and then help, advise and guide our students towards more success in their studies. Is not it mentioned in the official document (Journal officiel de la République Algérienne N°23 du 4 Mai, 2008 ; articles 33,34, 35, ...) « to receive the students 3 hours/week to advise and orient them »?

Key words: Professional Development, Training and Tutoring, Special student, Active engagement, Active participation, Motivate reflection, Critical thinking.

1. Introduction

Practitioner engagement is not an easy task in teaching in higher education. In fact, there is much evidence now to propose a strong relationship between active engagement and the quality of the teaching experience. But what exactly do we mean by ‘engagement’? For many it simply refers to assisting students to connect with the subject material in a way that generates interest, enjoyment and interaction. Generating active participation is particularly important in tutorials or small group teaching, where tutorials ‘by design’, are intended to provide students a different kind of learning experience than the lecture. It is also through active engagement that both, teachers and students take greater ownership for their teaching craft and learning process. This concept assists in the development of an overall design or structure to support such engagement and active participation. The more organized and clear the teachers and students are, the more likely it is that they will get the desired and target results. In addition to this, active engagement of teachers should be reinforced by a reflective practice which is an active process too of attending to their own experience of teaching in order to explore it in some depth. It is in fact a ‘dialogue of thinking and doing through which teachers become more skilled. This process develops by thinking critically and deeply about what teachers are doing in order that they may transform that experience and reapply it in new contexts. In many respects, Professional Development in training and tutoring has been designed to motivate reflection on one’s teaching practice and mostly where teachers have an opportunity to see others in practice. An opportunity to learn about a number of effective and innovative practices which can improve students’ engagement and participation as well as developing the teaching craft in higher education has been provided through the implementation of the new educational reform in these institutions; the implementation of the LMD system. It is however very important to have some clear ideas about the new system and the notions it is structured around.

2. Tutoring

According to the official and governmental journal of the Algerian Republic (JORADP N°23 of May 4th, 2008: articles: 33, 34, 35,) it is stated that among the different tasks the university teacher has to fulfill there is the tutoring task. It is then stated that the teacher is to receive the students three (03) hours/week to council/advise and orient them. This task, although clearly stated has been worked with differently in most of our departments (University of Bejaia). Some consider these three hours as optional, others think they are taken as extra hours; but most of them think one hour tutoring per week is what utmost could be done.

So much so, this article has been directed to focalize on the pedagogical decisions based on implementing and considering the training and tutoring sessions as a necessity to

develop first the teaching craft and then help, advise and guide our students towards more success in their studies.

3. Considerations regarding Tutoring and Training in higher education

Improving outcomes for students at risk of education failure is a major concern of government, communities, and school systems. Students who do not develop the necessary academic skills are at risk for continued education failure, underemployment, and the inability to participate fully in society (Hock et al., 2001). In an effort to improve academic achievement in youth, there has been an increase in programs that provide additional educational support. Increasingly, efforts have turned to after school (and sometimes during school) tutoring programs which include services ranging from homework assistance to one - on-one strategic skill building. Indeed, some Mentoring, observing and interviewing are three important strategies in developing a tutoring program to develop students' learning skills and teachers' professional competences and understanding. Furthermore, a review of the literature demonstrates that tutoring programs have shown some promise in reducing the gap in achievement and increasing students' academic success. Supplemental one on one instruction has been shown to be an effective avenue for increasing student achievement, especially for students at risk for academic failure. Evidence also indicates that well-designed tutoring programs using trained volunteers and non professionals can be effective in improving children's reading skills (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Tutoring models vary and can focus exclusively on homework assistance, skill building, or some combination of both. Depending on the type of tutoring program, specific outcomes can also range from acquiring new skills to increasing homework assignment completion (Hock et al., 2001). Tutoring programs also vary in the types of tutors they employ: community volunteers, same age or older peers, and certified teachers.

An overview of the research on tutoring highlights a number of specific practices that appear to increase the quality of tutoring programs and improve the chances of achieving positive impacts for students. Based on the available research, Gordon (Gordon et al., 2004; Gordon, 2009) has developed key best practice strategies for tutoring programs:

- Training tutors, especially novice tutors, on effective instructional strategies is critical to providing an effective tutoring program.
- A diagnostic/developmental template should be used to organize the tutoring program for each student.
- Formal and informal assessment needs to occur for each student to guide the tutoring process.
- Tutors should track the progress of students in order to adjust their content and strategies to improve tutoring sessions.
- Tutors should closely collaborate with the students' classroom teacher to maximize tutoring effectiveness.
- Tutoring programs should be structured around principles of learning and follow a sequentially arranged approach.

3-1- Why Tutoring?

Tutoring is the process of getting students to become independent through questioning. Tutoring should help students develop self-confidence and improve study skills. In addition, the tutoring session should provide students with an opportunity to speak up and ask questions, an opportunity sometimes unavailable or missed in a regular classroom situation.

Tutoring is a well-balanced question/information exchange in which both parties participate and, therefore, both benefit. Tutoring provides the practice and drill in specific course material needed by the student, while giving the tutor valuable review opportunities and the chance to develop and sharpen educational and communication skills.

Tutoring is not teaching. There are important differences between the role of the tutor and that of the classroom teacher. Approaches, relationships, and techniques are different. The tutor works in very close proximity with the student, usually one-on-one. The student may not be accustomed to the close contact and the interchange that occurs during a tutoring session. The tutor may have to consciously strive to develop a good rapport with the student within this environment. Therefore, and according to these strategic elements and explanations, we can add that the following statements reinforce our understanding of what tutoring is actually and mostly why introducing and designing tutoring sessions in our universities appeal and need great engagements. As a matter of fact:

- Strategic tutoring reveals to be effective in improving the academic performance of the majority of participating students (Hock et. al., 2001).
- In a synthesis of research, out of school time programs have been shown to have positive effects on reading in low achieving students (Lauer et al., 2004).
- Out-of-school-time programs that provide one-on-one tutoring appear to be particularly effective for improving reading achievement (Lauer et al., 2004).
- An after-school tutoring program in which low-achieving students were tutored for one hour twice each week by university teachers generate strong improvements in the tutees' reading skills.
(Morris, Shaw and Perney, 1990).
- Wasik and Slavin (1993) reviewed five one-on-one reading tutoring programs and concluded that all of the programs found significant positive effects (Elbaum et al., 2000)
- Tutoring programs can focus on activities in addition to academics (such as social enrichment) and still be effective (Lauer et al., 2004).

3-2- Setting Up the Tutoring Session

It is important to shape and organize the tutoring environment and sessions. According to the official texts, (Journal officiel de la République Algérienne N°23 du 4 Mai, 2008 ; articles 33,34, 35, ...) it has been clearly notified that university teachers are to receive the students 3 hours/week to advise and orient them. This can be difficult in the busy foreign Language teaching and learning syllabi; however, it is also very

important to consider the tutoring scheduling as part of the syllabi for the reasons that not only the students are foreign language learners and that practicing the language taught and learnt outside the educational institutions is quasi not functioned with; but because the language teaching and learning processes are based on the language sciences, its culture and its literature. This is why if you follow these simple procedures, you will have a successful session.

- Get prepared for the tutoring session: A proper and a sound tutoring environment with quiet surroundings, minimal distractions, ample lighting, fresh air, and comfortable temperature is very important, and it is your responsibility to provide it. The environment in which the tutoring takes place can mean the difference between success and failure. the right time, and mainly enough information about the student to be tutored are also necessary for good tutoring sessions,
- Prepare a greeting and review expectations bearing in mind that each greeting will differ depending upon how well you know your tutee. It is your job to make each tutee feel comfortable. Greetings and introductions are an excellent way to accomplish this. Tell your tutee a little bit about yourself. Mention your major hobbies, interests, and anything else that could help your tutee get to know you as a person, not only this can be considered as “a breaking the ice and walls” between you and the student as the tutoring session may be considered as a medical consultation, I.e.; the student is expected to express his feelings, wounds and incapacities in the learning process; but it is a way of paving the way to progress, self-confidence and studies community integration as well. Likewise, find out about your tutee’s interests, hobbies, etc...Not only will you get to know your tutee better, but often, during a tutoring session, you can relate material directly to your tutee’s hobbies and interests. This could make the material much more easily understandable to your tutee. If Applicable, take a look at the class syllabus and text. A class syllabus can often help in planning for future sessions.
- Be prepared for potential problems: consider the first tutoring session as the preliminary phase to gather data about the student. Knowing well about the student not only renders the tutoring task easier and well achieved through assessing his understanding of the subject by asking questions, determining his needs for success in the subject and suggesting strategies in which to fully and actively engage him to foster learning autonomy; but enables the student be more fluent and more confident. The communication techniques and skills that you demonstrate as a tutor can significantly impact the session. Communication also plays an important role in creating an environment in which your tutee will never feel embarrassed or “dumb” during a session. For the success of these strategies, the tutor had better not to lecture but attempt to use good questioning techniques, select some positive ways of correction and problem solving.

4 - Procedure

The preliminary phase

The first task of the tutoring session with Abdenmour has been to assess his needs for a tutoring program. This assessment and investigation has included an inventory of the current student's initiatives and difficulties with an indication of their nature and scope, in order to measure existing services which might meet these needs, and to pinpoint the gaps to be filled by the new program which has been built on the student's skills and interests providing thus activities of direct benefits. For this task, the principle of honesty has been of great importance as we informed our tutee that we did not have answers for all the problems but would not stop there. We added that the tutee was permitted to consult another tutor for such circumstances as we strongly believed that it is possible that the answer can be discovered with a little research getting the tutee involved. Furthermore, we found it appropriate to challenge our tutee to do some work or research on the problem and present his work at our coming session making him know that we were listening by verbally acknowledging our tutee's situation.

Defining the mission

The next step for our tutoring session was to define the tutoring program's overall mission; a brief statement describing what the program intends to do to address the identified needs.. In developing the mission statement, we considered the important contributions to supporting our tutee's literacy development made by his family as we have had the opportunity to meet his father in our office and had long discussions about many topics which were directly related to our tutee's health, determination to carry on his studies, to succeed and his devotion to engage into activities challenging his handicap. The mission statement guided us towards suggesting at the very first stage, to offer our tutee a recorder "Dictaphone" with setting goals and objectives as most of his teachers complained about frequent courses interruptions, frequent but pertinent questions during courses delivery and, according to these teachers, the situation hindered their courses progress

Design the program

The program design described how the tutoring program would carry out its mission and achieve its goals and objectives.

In designing the program, we needed to discuss and answer questions such as the following:

- How will the student in need of tutoring be identified?
- How and when will the program conduct pre- and post-investigation?
- How will the program ensure that student who needs special education and care or other services, in addition to or in place of tutoring, will receive such help?
- Where and when will tutoring take place?
- How will the program ensure that tutoring services delivered to the student during the regular school day are beneficial and outweigh missing regular classroom activities? How will the program track the student's progress?
- How will the program support the tutors

Get it started

A flexible format with instructional goals which we gathered from the tutees' teachers to increase his motivation for learning, allowed us to use strategies that seemed tailored to address his learning style, skills, interests, and needs. This flexibility ensured that our student would receive individualized and developmentally appropriate support and would encourage him to think about what he might learn during the planned tutoring sessions. Not only this; but he might involve talking or making comments that we would write down.

5- The impact of tutoring on professional development

Qualified tutors are a critical element in the success of any tutoring program if this ensures that they have the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their roles effectively through methods such as workshops, group meetings, and on-site visits. In the Algerian Universities, there is no special tutor qualification; university teachers play both roles: teaching and tutoring. Furthermore, training and supervision of the students' needs for tutors not only acknowledge and build on experiences, provide information that can be used immediately, but allow for practice and skill development as well. Since tutoring addresses a range of topics; however, all will be tied to effective implementation of the teaching and learning curriculum. In a nutshell, the following table illustrates better the positive impacts of the tutoring on the teaching professional development and this through demonstrating that both tasks are completing and reinforcing each other:

Tutoring	Teaching
Based on a tutoring approach which is:	Based on a teaching approach which is:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learning curriculum used by the tutoring program • The learning approach used by the educational system • Tailoring the curriculum to address individual needs, planning sessions for interaction, communication, involvement, critical thinking, motivation, production, • Assessing the students' learning abilities and tracking their progress as tutors play an important role in the assessment of students' work and in ensuring that students receive helpful feedback on their work, • Ongoing training and supervision of the students • Resources (materials, books, workshops, web sites, list serves), • Strategies for handling problem situations • Coordinating with tutoring program partners • Following the tutoring program's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Teaching/ learning curriculum designed by the educational syllabus • The learning approach used by the educational system • Tailoring the curriculum to address individual needs, planning sessions for interaction, communication, involvement, critical thinking, motivation, production, • Assessing the students' learning abilities and tracking their progress as teachers play an important role in the assessment of students' work and in ensuring that students receive helpful feedback on their work, • Ongoing training and supervision of the students, • Resources (materials, books, workshops, web sites, list serves), • Strategies for handling problem situations, • Coordinating with peers • Following the higher education program's policies and procedures,

<p>policies and procedures,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not focusing the session on small grammatical concerns. May address one or two issues by teaching the students about the problem, but will not make changes for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutors do not tell students what kind of grade they can expect on their paper. This decision is for course instructors and teaching assistants to make.
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In addition to the aforementioned elements, both teachers and tutors need continuing support not only in addressing the students' needs; but students with severe learning difficulties. At this stage, training should address the multiple factors that contribute to such learning difficulties and the tutoring as well as the teaching strategies are of vigor in helping students gain the skills needed to learn. As the development process of the teaching and the tutoring activities moves from planning to implementation, to assessment, to readjustment, both sides continue to provide input related to their areas of expertise.

7- Recommendations and Conclusion

Teaching and tutoring are actually the primary vehicle through which students are afforded an opportunity to develop and demonstrate key generic skills, such as critical thinking or team work. Well-formulated and delivered teaching/ learning and tutoring processes ensure that students have clear expectations of what's required of them, and are an important tool for teachers to use to stimulate the type of learning that they want their students to achieve in addition to enable teachers reflect on their teaching craft as an active process of attending to their own experience of teaching in order to explore it in some depth. Furthermore, Teaching and tutoring present a powerful opportunity to learn through reflection, to improve the educational experiences provided for students and to identify the professional education needed to further develop the capacity to teach well. Other elements as mentoring, observation and interviews are actually important strategies in developing teachers thanks to which teachers and tutors will be able to draw on a wide range of relevant experiences, strategies and techniques from other aspects of their work. A teacher's ability to impact student learning is directly related to high-quality, sustained professional development in a collaborative and collegial learning community.

Finally, we cannot but focus on the fact that there is more than one "right way" to tutor, and there are plenty of "wrong ways" as well. Anything the teachers do as tutors that gets positive results is a "right way" of tutoring. Teachers have to be creative and not be afraid to try new ways of presenting skills, processes, or material because what works with one tutee may not work with another.

Encouragement, Patience, understanding, and praise are other effective ingredients to teaching and tutoring as we strongly believe that when students feel welcome, accepted, safe, listened to, valued and confident this can help increase the students and tutees self-esteem and actually produce independent and autonomous learners. And the goal of an effective tutor and an effective teacher is to develop protagonist in setting the culture of the tutorial and teaching processes and thus set parameters for creating a learning culture and environment which recognize and honor students' diversity.

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