

Meeting Date: November 9, 2020
Type of Item: Information
Subject: English as a Second Language (ESL) Mentoring Service
Presented by: Eileen McCluskey, Anne Million, and Monique Ramos
Recommendation: Information Only

Background

In November, 2019, Eileen McCluskey and Anne Million were approved for an Innovation grant to launch an ESL Mentoring service. The service pairs ESL Learners with a specific goal (career, academic, personal, life) to work with a volunteer mentor who can do two things:

1. Tutor them in English at an academic/professional level.
2. Provide expertise and social capital to assist with reaching their goals.

The Conversations in English program at OTL has shown us that many immigrants in our community are benefitting from many aspects of this library service:

- 1) Practice speaking English in a comfortable environment with an appropriate level of grammar and vocabulary correction;
- 2) Instruction and practice in elements of grammar and pronunciation that can be difficult for ESL learners
- 3) Equally important, the creation of a community that provides friendship, support, and social opportunities for new residents of Fort Collins.

However, as we’ve grown and modified this program to welcome and assist all levels of participants, we’ve identified very diligent individuals in our community that could benefit from targeted mentorship in improving their English skills in areas that would help them achieve well-defined goals. Anne Million and Monique Ramos, Library Assistants at OTL, are preparing to launch the Library District’s ESL Mentoring service in the coming months.

Based on research about how adults learn and stay motivated, the mentoring service uses a project-based approach to mentoring. Every 8 weeks or so, each mentor/learner pair will complete a new project in some way related to their goal which will include some public-facing result.

Ideally, learners with guidance from their mentor, would have the opportunity to research, interview community members, interview professionals, integrate their own experience, and produce a video, a blog/post, a brochure, a letter to the editor, a play, or any other kind of presentation of what they’ve learned. Unless the project requires a different kind of presentation, the Conversations in English program will be the normal audience for the presentation.

The success of this service will depend on the volunteer mentors we recruit.

- internships with TEFL Masters students from CSU
- other known community members
- work on recruiting mentors with specific experience as we build out the service.

Anne and Monique will provide initial training to help mentors become familiar with teaching English to adults and the project-based model. We'll then have ongoing training, a repository of teaching resources, and social (Zoom) events for mentors to share experiences and ideas.

Recommendation

Information Only. The ESL Mentoring team hopes that the Board of Trustees members will share information regarding the service to their community connections.