

Research Report

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ESOL HOME TUTOR SCHEMES
RESEARCH PROJECT**

VALUING THE RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT OUR SERVICE

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INTRODUCTION

Valuing the resources that support the ESOL Home Tutor service survey was designed by the National Association of ESOL Home Tutor Schemes to collect more information on

** the needs, aspirations, motivations, costs, benefit gained and total time involvement (of paid and volunteer staff) with different aspects of the ESOL Home Tutor Service.*

There were two main objectives determined as the focal point for this study:

- To assist the National Association of ESOL Home Tutor Scheme to identify the true cost of its services (by measuring the unpaid work, donated goods and services and financial costs).
- To identify key factors that can assist in the recruitment and retention of its volunteers.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following key research questions formed the basis of the study:

- How much volunteer time and paid workers' time goes into the various aspects of our service?
- What other goods and services are donated to support our service?
- Why do volunteers join ESOL Home Tutor Schemes?
- What benefits have volunteers gained from being ESOL Home Tutors
- What factors might affect volunteer motivation to continue working with their ESOL Home Tutor Scheme?
- How can ESOL Schemes best recruit more volunteers for its service?

The research is part of the organisation's commitment to nurture and support its workforce, assist with its advocacy work nationally for the needs of refugees and migrants and for the resources that ESOL service needs to support its work. It is also considered as important information for government and the general public to consider in valuing and supporting the work of our volunteers in their local communities.

The research was broken into two projects - one was to design and pilot the research methodology most relevant for the objectives stated and the other to implement the full survey and analyse the data. This report relates to the first project. The second, involving full survey implementation will be considered for 2001.

This report presents the findings from the pilot study carried out with the Porirua Language Project who volunteered to help us in piloting the research tools for this project. Although the data presented in the report will not be statistically valid and reliable due to the low response rate, it does, however, indicated some important methodological issues which needs to be refined for the full survey to be conducted next year.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Case Studies

The case study approach has been adopted to describe five typical kinds of learners using the ESOL Home Tutor Service. It must be emphasized that each learner who accesses the ESOL HTS service is different and require different services based on his/her level of needs and particular learning goals. However, the case studies have been selected to describe the range and diversity of learners who enter ESOL Home Tutor Scheme services and to explore the different types and quantities of services required for different types of learners. This will enable the research to make the inputs, outputs and outcomes of our service more explicit in a learner needs focused manner.

The following cases are a draft used in the pilot stage of the research with room for refinement before conducting the full survey to provide an agreed description of the diversity of learners who use the ESOLHome Tutor service.

- 1) Learner who is literate in his/her own language. High need of both spoken and written English. Limited family support and have "medium level" of need for social support. The learner may stay with the scheme for a period of two to three years or more. For example, this may be a mother at home caring for children, who needs to find her way around schools, supermarkets, public transport systems, parenting issues and eventually part-time employment.
- 2) Learner who is literate in his/her own language as well as English. Need for focused, specific one to one and relatively short term help (i.e. less than six months, though some may stay for longer) with spoken and written English related to their employment or education needs, or because they need to pass an IELTS test. Has social support from either relatives or friends already in NZ and only require English language help from the service. For example, this person may be young to middle aged male, recently arrived in New Zealand and seeking employment or engaged in further study.
- 3) Learner who is not literate in English or his/her own language. Very high literacy needs as well as high social support needs. This person is more likely to be a recent arrival refugee who needs a lot of intensive support, especially over their first two years of settling into life in New Zealand, and often for longer. This learner receives both one to one tutoring and attends a social English group.
- 4) Learner who is in need of spoken English for conversational purposes, can read and write sufficient English for his/her everyday needs. S/he has a "medium level" of need for social support also. For example, this person may be an older person such as a grandmother living alone in a provincial centre. Her children have recently left home and are no longer as available for interpreting in situations where she needs to use English to participate in the community and meet her everyday needs. This learner attends a conversation-focused Social English Group weekly over a number of years to build her English language skills and new social support systems for herself.

- 5) Learner who has medium level of needs for both written and spoken English. Learning English is his/her priority. S/he has a low to medium level of social support from our agency because there are other community agencies involved in helping with these aspects of his/her life. For example, this learner may have come to New Zealand under the family reunification for refugees programme. They have access to some family, ethnic community and other community agency support. They are living in a large urban area where there is a waiting list for home tutors. They are meeting their English language needs through a more formal Social English Group, and hope to get into polytechnic classes soon when they can sort out how the fees for these classes can be covered.

Time Use Diary

The time use diary approach is designed to help measure the volume of service activities and the amount of time volunteer and paid staff allocate for each activity in each of the five different cases. This enabled a value /cost to be attributed to our service for each of the five case studies. The activities selected to be included in the time diary were the most common tasks likely to be performed by volunteers and paid staff in our service. They were asked to particularly identify the length of time spent on each task on a weekly basis. There was also a space provided on the Time Diary Table for any written comments they wish to offer in relation to learners needs, the kind of support tutors were offering over this time, and whether the amount and nature of support provided over this weeks is typical of their usual involvement. Participants were also asked to record any unreimbursed costs that they incurred while undertaking these tasks.

A brief overall questionnaire for scheme coordinators was also sent out which identified

- donated goods and services and their estimated value
- number of learners in their scheme that fall within each case study type
- estimated average length of service for learners in each case study type
- number of hours coordinators were paid per week over the diary period.

Pilot Survey

All volunteers and paid staff from the Porirua Language Project were asked to complete their diaries for a period of two weeks beginning Monday 9 October and ending Sunday 22 October. Pre-paid envelopes were provided to post back completed surveys to the National Association Office.

By the close-off time set, the total number of Time Diary Activity Tables returned was 37, together with the scheme coordinator questionnaire. Some workers were unable to complete the survey due to their unavailability at the time the survey was conducted. Some were out of the country or away on holiday, while others had some other commitments to attend to.

Of the 37 respondents, 31 were volunteer tutors and 6 paid staff members.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Table 1.1. Volunteer Time Diary

Activities	No of response	Total hrs	Average F/nightly	Average Weekly
Preparation for home tutoring lessons	22	35.75	1.6	0.75
Preparation for Social English Group Tutoring				
One to One lessons with learners	27	83.25	3.1	1.5
Social Eng Group time with learners	1	4		
Supporting learners outside lesson time	17	40.5	2.4	1.2
Participate in training (initial and ongoing), induction or support meeting for tutors	1	1		
Governance of scheme /committee responsibilities	2	8	4	2
Travel to/from lessons and scheme activities	28	30.5	1.1	0.5
Other (i.e. help with scheme fundraising, trip	4	11.5	1.8	0.9
Total	31	213.5	7	3.5

Note; All time specified has been rounded to the nearest hour- less than half an hour rounded down, half an hour or more rounded up.

The results presented in Table 1.1 indicates the total number of hours recorded by respondents for each task. Keeping in mind the 25% response rate and the length of time given to complete the time diary, these hours do not represent the total volunteer time input needed to provide the ESOL service.

Eight tutors indicated that their usual time involvement with the service is different from the time they recorded in their time diary for the survey period. Six indicated that their usual time involvement is greater than the time recorded, and 2 noted that they normally spent lesser time with their learners than what they recorded for the two-week diary period.

Conducting one to one lessons with learners was the most common activity respondents were engaged in (n=27) averaging 1.5 hours per week. This is an estimate of half an hour extra per week input time tutors contribute in this activity, compared to the time expected by the ESOL service. Preparation for home tutoring lessons and supporting learners outside lesson time were other common activities performed by tutors, where an estimate of 2 hours per week is spent on these tasks, (0.75hrs) and (1.25hrs). Other activities tutors were involved with during the survey period included helping with organising Social English Group farm trip, liaising with government agencies and assist with preparing for a family trip to South Island.

Volunteers gave an estimated average of 3.5 hours per week to undertaking ESOL work. However, this time commitment average may vary depending on what extra activities tutors engage in and the time period given to complete their time diary.

Not only do volunteers give their labour, some also contribute travel and other expenses in undertaking ESOL work. Ninety percent of respondents identified unreimbursed costs involved in their work. Costs for these volunteers averaged \$5 per week, and were mainly for petrol.

Learner Cases

Table 1.2. Number of learners in each case as identified by volunteer tutors.

Cases	No of learners matched with tutors who responded to survey	Total no of learners in scheme
Case 1	9	21
Case 2	10	18
Case 3	5	20
Case 4	3	17
Case 5	3	30
Total	30	106

The majority of learners associated with volunteer tutors who completed time use diaries have been identified with case study 1, and 2. This was to be expected given that most respondents indicated as working with only one learner. For those who chose case study 4, and 5 as the closest scenario, it is not clear that this is an accurate interpretation of the intended case study criteria, since this case study was meant to be for learners only in Social English Groups and these volunteers were in a home tutoring relationship.

When compared to the overall estimate of learners in the Porirua scheme, only 20% of the total number of learners have been sampled through the survey methodology. From these figures we can't really conclude whether the cases provided are representative of the types of learners ESOL service is dealing with. However it gives us an indication of how learners are varied within each scheme, in relation to meeting their needs with resources available.

Volunteer Comments on learners

Volunteer tutors provided comments on their learners needs, the support they offered, and other aspects in relation to the service. These comments are grouped into common themes and categories which are listed below. *(Note, that volunteer comments are attached in appendix a).*

The kind of support learners need. Several overall themes arise from volunteer tutors comments. Despite the differences in cases where learners have been identified with, the kind of needs that emerged from their comments were mostly to do with:

- The learners need to establish rapport and friendship. Just about all the respondents commented on their learners need for interaction with other English speaking people to build confidence, establish rapport and build a basis for friendship.
- The need to understand simple everyday conversational English. Several respondents identified their learners need to improve their everyday conversational ability.
- The need to improve awareness of their new neighbourhood and assist in some aspects when dealing with various services available (such as the Health, Education, Immigration, Income Support, Retail-Outlets etc.). The support needed by learners included locating different services, transport, form-filling, translating and reassuring that they understand the information they have been given.

The kind of support offered by tutors. The main themes that emerged from tutors comments include:

- Friendship and Support. Most of the tutors noted establishing friendship with their learners and offering them their support when ever possible.
- Adapting lessons to suit learners immediate language needs. Several tutors commented on offering lessons which they thought would be more suitable for the immediate needs of their learners.
- Offering their service/help to accompany their learners when visiting different agencies and services.
- Other comments. Fifteen respondents provided extra comments. Most were positive and very encouraging for both learners and the Porirua Language Project. The main theme that stood out of all these comments is the notion of volunteering as a rewarding and worthwhile experience.

Table 2.1. Paid Staff Time Diary

Activities	No of Responses	Total hrs	Average F/nightly	Weekly
Training tutors (initial and ongoing)	2	17.5	8.75	4.4
Supporting tutors working with 1 to 1 learner	3	4.75	1.5	0.75
Organising, running and supporting Social Eng Groups	4	38	9.5	4.75
Supporting learners directly with specific resettlement needs	1	1.5		
Learner interview, assessment, matching referrals	2	11	5.5	2.75
Administration, management of scheme	4	113	28.25	14
External community liaison and networking with other organisations	1	3.75		1.9
Servicing committee and participating in committee meetings	1	0.5		
Travel to /from scheme-not including travel between workplace and home	2	7	3.5	1.75
Other	2	7	3.5	1.75
Total	6	204	60.5	30.25

Note; All time specified has been rounded to the nearest hour- less than half an hour rounded down, half an hour or more rounded up.

Table 2.1. shows the total number of hours ESOL paid staff spent on different tasks. The highest number of hours (113hrs) is spent in administration and management of the scheme, as recorded by the 2 coordinators, and 2 administration staff. This is followed by the amount of time allocated to supporting, organising and running Social English Groups (38hrs), recorded by SEG tutors and scheme coordinators.

ESOL staff at Porirua Language Project contribute an average of 30.25 hours per week in undertaking ESOL work. This is an estimate of 5.25 unpaid hours per week, when compared to the amount of hours they were paid for during the diary period. However, this comparison can't be viewed as a representation of ESOL staff average unpaid hours per week, as four paid staff noted that their time involvement during the diary period was not typical of their usual involvement with the service.

Table 2.2. Time spent in different cases

	No of responses	Total no of hrs
Case 1	1	9.5
Case 2	1	0.75
Case 3	4	45.25
Case 4	1	0.75
Case 5	1	0.75
Total	6	57

About 57 hours was given by paid staff to directly support tutors/learners. This is an average of 4.75 hours per week. Over 80% of the time spent went to learners identified with case study 3. However, such estimate can't be seen as a representative picture of time spent in each case for all ESOL paid staff considering that this is only a small sample, over a short time period.

Three paid staff commented on learners/tutors needs and scheme support offered. The main themes from their comments include learners' differing literacy needs, assisting tutors find suitable resources, and liaising with facilitators of groups. (*See appendix b for actual comments*).

Donated Goods and services

Goods donated by individuals and organisations to help run the scheme varies from office furniture to stationary and computer equipment. Library assistance provided by a trained librarian and ongoing maintenance from the Polytech handyman were the main free services identified by the coordinators.

These donated goods and services have an estimate book value of \$6628 during this current financial year. This indicates just how much extra resources are needed to help run the scheme, and how these donations supplement the MOE funding allocation.

Focus group

The focus group discussion was designed specifically to explore the main issues in relation to volunteer retention and recruitment, which is the second objective of the research. It also provided an opportunity to feedback some of the findings to the participants and discuss some of the methodological issues. Six volunteers and one paid staff coordinator attended this group discussion for nearly 2 hours.

How people first became involved as ESOL volunteers

In relation to volunteer recruitment, it was interesting to find out how existing volunteers first got involved. Seeing an advertisement in the local newspaper was the main source of information volunteers identified. Others include hearing it from speakers in seminars or from friends talking about the ESOL service.

Main reasons for choosing to join as volunteer tutors

The main reasons for wanting to become ESOL volunteer tutors varied among the respondents. For some, it was their experience of working with refugees which drove them into the service with a vision of being able to help them in other ways. Others wanted to keep in touch with other languages, and see the opportunity of working with different ethnic identity learners as a good way to enhance such knowledge. Some were being involved as teacher aides for students with English as their second language, and wanted to do more for such a group. As for other volunteers, looking for something useful to contribute to the community was the main reason.

Main benefits volunteers have gained from ESOL work

The responses from the focus group confirmed a lot of comments provided by volunteers in their time diaries that they gain a great deal of satisfaction from their work, new skill and knowledge and a positive context for meeting new people and establishing friendship.

How does PLP help volunteers continue tutoring?

The professional approach and user-friendly atmosphere created by coordinators and other staff, together with their expert knowledge of teaching resources and commitment to helping tutors were the main things noted by respondents. Other factors that affect volunteers' interest to keep volunteering include interest in students progress, concern for learners needs, enjoying tutoring, the networks and friendship.

Main factors affecting continuing as a volunteer

Volunteers indicated that their time, health, change of location and paid work commitments would be major factors affecting their ability to continue in their work.

Suggestions to help ESOL retain its volunteers

Key supports volunteers identified include minimising barriers, such as financial costs, time commitment, and expectations. There is also a need for ESOL organisation to be seen as a user-friendly place for volunteers.

Suggestions to help recruit more volunteers

The comments offered by respondents were, public profile/publicity/advertising/word of mouth, emphasise need that you can make a difference, and advocate volunteers as ambassadors to recruit others.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Porirua Language Project volunteers give an estimated total of 3.5 hours per week to provide the ESOL service. About half of this time goes into conducting one to one lessons with learners (1.5hrs). This shows that volunteers give an extra half-hour a week in this activity than the minimum expected by the scheme.

Not only do volunteers give their labour, some also contribute travel expenses in undertaking ESOL work. Costs for volunteers averaged \$5 per week for those who indicated they had unreimbursed costs. These costs being borne by volunteers could represent a barrier to some in the community who would otherwise be interested in voluntary work with the ESOL organisation.

Volunteers showed their excitement and satisfaction in their work, and are happy to continue with the service. While this indicates their commitment, we must be aware that volunteers have their limits too.

The research also highlights that paid staff at PLP contribute 5.5 unpaid hours per week to provide the ESOL service during the survey period. However some paid staff indicated they normally work more unpaid hours than they did in the diary fortnight.

Feed back from the respondents during the focus group discussion helped us in trying to refine the research methodology. In hindsight there are some refinements to the research methods we recommend before the full study is to be conducted. These include:

- The need for a longer time-frame to complete the time diary. This would provide a clearer picture of the time spent on different activities that may vary widely from week to week and the kind of activities workers are most likely to undertake systematically on a regular basis.
- The need for coordinators to codify case studies first before volunteers and other staff filled in their time diary. This would ensure that the data collected is consistent across the scheme, as respondents appear to have had difficulties in matching their learners with cases provided.
- Consideration then needs to be given to whether the volunteer also has a chance to note the shift in language level of the learner since the coordinator first matched them. This introduces a different research objective of measuring outcomes but needs to be considered in the light of the Association's research needs in the coming year.
- Looking at the possibility of extending the number of case studies, and changing the order of cases to create a hierarchy based on the level of literacy/language need, (i.e. preliterate 1-10 advanced)
- Case study 5 should include one to one learners and redefine to make it clearer as it was difficult to code.
- A need for a different colour of time diary survey forms for coordinators and Social English Group paid tutors
- Paid staff time diary to be set up on daily basis to make it easier to fill out.

With these refinements, we suggest that the methods used in this research proved to be a success in collecting the kind of data relevant to the research objectives.

CONCLUSION

Although the findings of this study would not be statistically representative of the ESOL organisation, it does however, provide an indication of how invaluable volunteer and paid staff time input is, in supporting our service.

The findings highlight the importance of looking at measuring the costs of our service from a volunteer perspective. This would not only help us in identifying the true cost of our service, in relations to unpaid time and financial costs, but also the value of donated goods and services from individuals, organisations and businesses.

In doing so, we would be able to present those making policy in government with the estimated true costs borne by volunteers at the community level, which does not reflect in most policy changes. It is also relevant to our own service planning and management.

Appendix A

Volunteers comments

The kind of support learners need.

1) The need to establish rapport and friendship.

“ My learner needs weekly contact with English speaker. Contact establishes rapport with someone outside her ethnic group and forms an excellent basis for friendship and trust.” (case 4).

“My learner needs friendship, interest in her children, conversation, speaking with other women i.e. asking health questions, things about child’s school, just someone who knows her and interested in her children”. (case 1).

“My learner needs emotional support in times of stress/crisis. She needs empathy and friendship”. (case 2).

2) The need to understand simple everyday conversational English.

“My learner needs to improve her pronunciation and connotation. She is keen to improve her conversational ability as well”. (case 1).

“My learner is Samoan man aged 30yrs. He lives with his partner and extended family in Porirua East. Social life seems to revolve around small Samoan community. This limits occasions when learner can practice English speaking”. (case 2).

“My learner has extremely limited English, works with other non-English speakers so no practice at work. Married to English speaker but they can’t communicate”. (case 1).

3) The need to improve awareness of new neighbourhood and assist in some aspects when dealing with various services available (such as the Health, Education, Immigration, Income-Support, Retail-Outlets etc

“ My learner needs support with things such as hospital visits i.e. helps with forms and also to go over visits and explain outcome to learner and family where necessary”. (case4).

“ My learner requires help in getting to know her new neighbourhood and the family struggle with finding supply of National food” (case 5).

"My learner needs advice on employment related matters, (Employment Relations Act, Contract Negotiation and Industry work conditions)" (case2).

"My learner needs support when going to see the doctor; support in taking her shopping i.e. clothes or food for her baby"(case1)

4) The need for structured English both oral and written skills.

“ My learner needs to know everything about the written and spoken English” (case 2)

“My learner needs Career Guidance, English comprehension and related subjects” (case 2).

The kind of support offered by tutors.

1) Friendship and Support.

“Friendship with whole family involving not only myself but my husband and children too. Conversation and form filling as required by learner and or family members. Transport to or from hospital. References for job application”(case1).

“I take my learners to doctor's appointments also shopping. Trying to be her friend as she has no family” (case 1)

“I support my learner in the language as a friend, on visits to hospitals or medical clinics (smear mammograms, eye operation) where I am able to help reassure my learner, give her a better understanding of what is going on. Basically to be there for her” (case4)

“I speak my learners language and have found that we spend quite a lot of time speaking in her language because she is currently facing a lot of problems and has no support. English language takes a back seat to sorting out some of her more pressing needs” (case1)

2) Adapting Lessons to suit learners immediate language needs.

“I try to meet my learners speech structure and sentence bridging need as he indicated during our weekly lessons” (case5)

“I only visit once a fortnight. I discuss worksheets, and leave her to do more before next visit” (case1)

“First and foremost we look forward to our weekly contact. Enjoyable but full on hour of tutoring and learning” (case4)

I encourage her to borrow Classic English movies, as our lessons are focused entirely on building her conversational ability” (case1)

I offered weekly lessons of two and a half hours conversation to help meet my learners conversational English, pronunciation, word meanings and typical uses. Spelling and social procedure” (case 1)

Other comments

Fifteen tutors provided extra comments. Most were positive and very encouraging for both learners and the Porirua Language Project. As these tutors commented:

“Often my learner saves written information to discuss with me (i.e. notices put in her letter box about community events that she is unsure about such as garage sales, school

fairs, etc). I have also made phone calls for her gaining additional information about products they were seen advertised. My learner has been very lonely in her community. Her immediate neighbours have been unfriendly and in 1 or 2 cases suspicious and hostile, giving her no other opportunity to practice her English conversation. Very sad as my learner is a friendly person”

”I have had 5 learners since 93 and have never incurred any costs while tutoring apart from my time but this is given free”.

My learner is more intermediate level and she does not want formal lessons. We therefore go out lots (at least every second week) as she does not get to leave the house much otherwise. We have become more like friends who meet up once a week to catch up over a cup of coffee”.

”In the 12 months I have been involved with the Porirua scheme I have had oodles of support from the staff and found this voluntary work so rewarding”.

”Sharing life experiences outweighs any costs involved. Beginning to understand the multi issues involved for refugees, gives a window on their lives and concerns. Concern to see greater governmental support and involvement in making work and training for employment possible”

Appendix B

Paid Staff Comments

Learner/ Tutor needs and scheme support offered.

“This is a group of 4-8 women with levels of English varying from beginner to pre-intermediate. Some are literate in level 1 and a few are not. The needs I aim to meet are those involving English for day-to-day situations using handouts as a backup and lots of practice. I tried to build on known (elicited) English. I prepare and facilitate several other tutors, help with group work, we all, including a coordinator, help with transport. I claim separately for cooking ingredients when we do this. Coordinator contacts me regularly. (case 1, 9.25hrs)

“This is a group of 6-9 (increasing) men from Samoan, Tokelau who are part of the Town Walk Group run by the Opportunity Centre. Varying levels of literacy in level 1. Specific need for report writing, descriptions etc, understanding a written Police test, phone skills, etc. Confidence in use of known English”. The other two noted ; “ Liaising with facilitator, transporting learners, encouraging learners, touching base with them. S.E.G. interviews, all initial and matching, Helping tutors find suitable resources and support learner re WINZ course”. (case 3, 30hrs).

Other Comments.

“ I have not included time spent preparing for and running my English Conversational Class which is held weekly and paid for by Tawa College G.E.S. (5hrs work). Another worker comment: The scheme is very supportive of and interested in the progress of both classes. Each group is gradually increasing in size and learners assist each other and enjoy being together. None of the case studies exactly describes either group. I have used the nearest ones. One noted: “ I teach a Lao class at Porirua College. I have only included the women’s hours as they come twice a week, paid for by PCP Community Education. Once a week the men and teenagers are also included in one class (they attend daily, paid by Porirua College.