

Learning for LIFE:

An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework

Government of Alberta ■

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Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework

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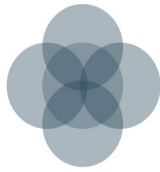


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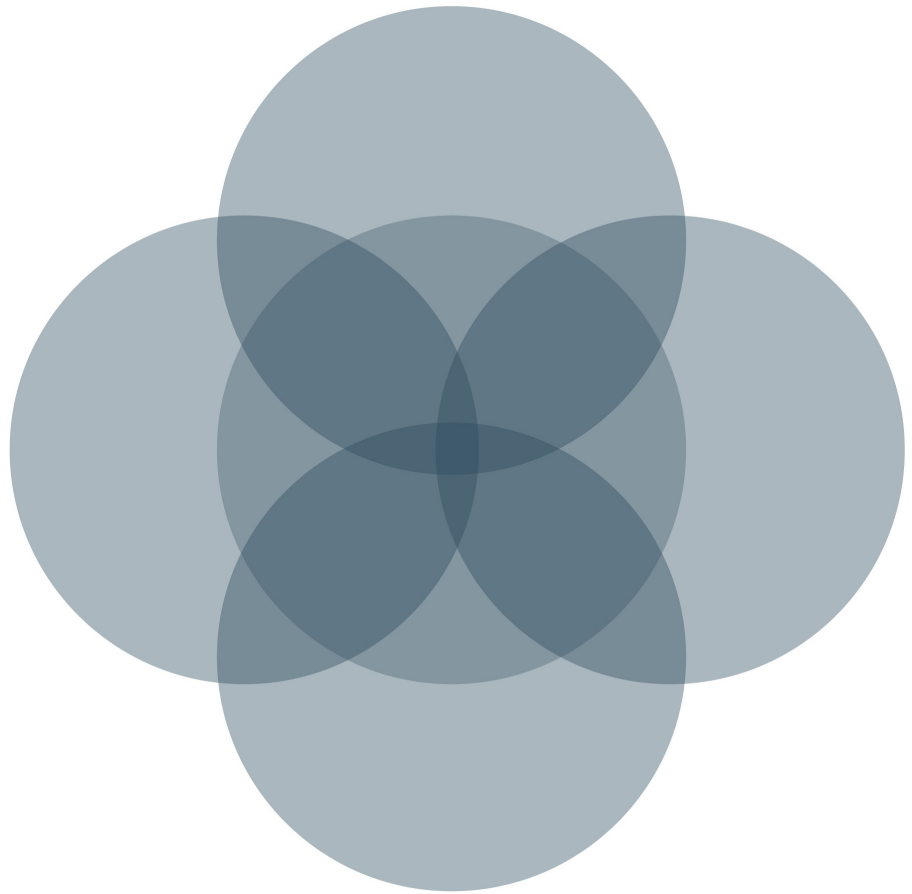
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework*. It is our hope that this framework will help you develop effective and responsive curricula in the context of adult ESL literacy.

Literacy skills are important for all Albertans, including learners in ESL literacy programs. We live in a knowledge-based society, and literacy has become more than just an ability to read and write. Literacy also requires people to be “able to create, evaluate, use and share information and knowledge to improve their quality of life and achieve their full potential” (Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, 2009, p.1). Increased literacy skills in Alberta have personal, social and economic benefits for individuals, families, communities and the province.

This section provides answers to some of the questions you may have as you begin exploring the resource.

Who is the Framework for?

This framework has been developed for practitioners in adult ESL literacy programs in Alberta. Our intended audience includes adult ESL literacy program administrators, curriculum developers and instructors. Although not specifically designed for volunteer tutors, much of the information provided will be useful to tutors as well. Program administrators may wish to adapt the material in this framework to suit the needs of volunteers who serve adult ESL literacy learners.

Adult ESL literacy is an educational field that addresses the learning needs of adult English as Second Language (ESL) learners who have limited or interrupted formal education. These learners are developing literacy skills at the same time as English skills. Learners with Interrupted Formal Education (LIFE) have unique learning needs. This framework provides information and guidance in the process of developing a curriculum that meets the needs of LIFE.

What Does the Framework Provide?

A framework provides a basic structure that supports the development of a product. As this is a curriculum framework, we have aimed to provide information, guidance, and a structure that will help you to develop a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of learners in your particular adult ESL literacy context. It addresses curriculum development from both programming and instructional perspectives.

An effective curriculum is one that is responsive to learner needs and reflects the context in which it operates. Adult ESL literacy programs in Alberta are diverse, serving different learner populations in both urban and rural contexts, in part-time and full-time settings. A single adult ESL literacy curriculum for the province would not be effective in meeting diverse needs. This framework addresses the commonalities in learner needs and provides support and direction for program administrators and instructors in a variety of contexts.

This framework aligns with the Phases of literacy development outlined in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000). The ESL literacy curriculum framework does not replace these benchmarks, but frames them in the context of curriculum development and ESL literacy needs in Alberta.

What Beliefs are Reflected in the Framework?

This curriculum framework reflects four main beliefs:

- LIFE, and the ESL literacy programs that serve them, are diverse.
- Curriculum development is an organic and ongoing process.
- Literacy is best understood in terms of a developmental continuum.
- Skills can be transferred to a variety of contexts.

LIFE, and the ESL literacy programs that serve them, are diverse.

Learners with Interrupted Formal Education (LIFE) come from diverse backgrounds and are unique as individuals. They are adults, bringing with them a variety of experiences, strengths and skills, as well as challenges and needs. The learning needs of LIFE are distinct from mainstream adult ESL learners, who have a firm foundation in first language literacy. Having solid first language literacy skills facilitates the process of learning English. Learners in adult ESL literacy programs have unique learning needs, which are addressed throughout this framework.

Adult ESL literacy programs in Alberta are diverse. Learners in urban and rural programs have different needs and face different challenges. Some adult ESL literacy programs focus on transitioning learners to further education; others provide community orientation or support to families, and others focus on employment preparation. This framework is designed to help ESL literacy practitioners in all of these contexts. We recognize the diversity of ESL literacy programming in Alberta, and throughout the framework we encourage you to make decisions about your curriculum, so that it is tailored to fit your context.

Curriculum development is an organic and ongoing process.

The process of developing an effective and responsive ESL literacy curriculum is **organic**, rather than linear. This framework outlines five main stages in the process and we encourage you to move between the stages, as they are all linked to each other. This organic process of moving back and forth between the stages is necessary to ensure that your curriculum is consistent throughout, and meets the needs of learners in your context.

Curriculum development is an **ongoing** process. An effective curriculum is not fixed or unchanging over time, but is a living document. An important aspect of the curriculum development process is to establish process for curriculum revision and renewal. This helps you ensure that your curriculum continues to be responsive and relevant.

Curriculum is both planned and lived (Aoki, 2005). The planned curriculum is the formalized curriculum which is developed in response to an understanding of the needs of learners as a group, the needs of your community and the wider environment of which your program is a part. The lived curriculum is the way in which the planned curriculum is addressed in the classroom, as instructors respond to the needs, interests and learning styles of individuals. Understanding curriculum as lived is one way of acknowledging “the uniqueness of every teaching situation” (Aoki, 2005, p. 165).

This understanding of curriculum as both planned and lived is reflected throughout the framework. We have designed this framework with the intention of guiding you through the development of the curriculum as planned, while encouraging you to remain sensitive and responsive to the curriculum as lived.

Literacy is best understood in terms of a developmental continuum.

This framework reflects our assumption that literacy skills are developed over time, and that LIFE continue to need literacy support throughout their language learning process. We base our understanding of literacy development on the **ESL Literacy Benchmarks** (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000), which describes what learners are able to do in four phases of ESL literacy development:

- Foundation
- Phase I
- Phase II
- Phase III

Based on this understanding, we encourage programs to provide specialized ESL literacy classes for LIFE in and beyond the earliest phases of literacy development.

Skills can be transferred to a variety of contexts.

Your context will be an important factor in the kind of information you provide, the kind of skills focused on, etc. This framework provides guiding principles for developing curricula in a variety of program contexts, but is based on the principle that the skills can be transferred to other contexts. In this framework, **skill development** is prioritized over delivering content information. Programs are encouraged to determine which content will be necessary for their learners, and to gradually increase the amount of content provided to learners as they progress in their literacy development.

How was the Framework Developed?

The development of this framework was funded by Alberta Employment and Immigration, which has within its mandate a) coordinating resources to “support the settlement and integration of new Albertans” and b) helping Albertans “train for, find and keep employment” (AEI, 2010).

This framework was developed as phase two of a three-phase project. The other two phases of this project are:

- *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook* (Bow Valley College, 2009)
- *The ESL literacy Network*, www.esl-literacy.com, a website that provides resources, information and online learning opportunities for practitioners in the field of adult ESL literacy.

The development of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework* took place in three main stages:

- Research
- Consultations
- Development and ongoing feedback

Research

The first part of the research stage involved reviewing current research and theory in adult ESL literacy and adult first language literacy acquisition to identify common themes, needs and trends. This process highlighted the need for professional development resources and tools in adult ESL literacy.

The research stage also included a review of current curricula and curriculum framework models. To date, there is no other curriculum framework specifically for adult ESL literacy programs, so this stage involved reviewing curriculum models from a variety of sources:

- *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*

- Adult ESL literacy curricula in Canada and in other countries (U.S.A, Australia, U.K)
- Adult ESL curricula in Canada
- Adult ESL curriculum frameworks in Canada and other countries. Two sources that were influential in the development of this resource are: *Manitoba Adult EAL Curriculum Framework Foundations: 2009* and *Massachusetts Adult Basic Education Curriculum Framework for English for Speakers of Other Languages* (2005).
- The Alberta Learning *K-9 Program of Studies* for Language Arts, which provides learning outcomes for the development of basic literacy skills

A critical component of the research stage was to investigate the needs of ESL literacy practitioners in Alberta. In this process, we contacted ESL literacy providers across the province and conducted phone interviews and site visits, where possible. The purpose of the needs assessment was to identify skills that learners need for success both inside and outside of ESL literacy programs. In addition, we sought information on the types of resources that would be helpful to adult ESL literacy practitioners.

Key findings from the provincial needs assessment include:

- Learners need language, literacy and non-literacy skills for success.
- The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Literacy Learners* document provides helpful descriptors, but instructors need support in prioritizing the skills outlined in the ESL Literacy Benchmarks.
- ESL literacy practitioners need support and direction, but do not feel that a single prescriptive curriculum for the province would be effective.
- Instructors, curriculum developers and program administrators in ESL literacy would all benefit from a curriculum framework.

Consultations

We built on the research findings by conducting consultations with two main groups of adult ESL literacy practitioners:

- The *Alberta Advisory Committee on ESL Literacy* was formed, made up of representatives from urban and rural contexts across the province. The advisory committee was made up of people with a variety of areas of expertise. The committee met several times and individual members were consulted for input and

feedback as the framework was developed.

- Adult ESL literacy instructors at Bow Valley College, in Calgary. At several stages throughout the development of this framework, we sought input, both formally and informally, from instructors with expertise in a wide range of levels of ESL literacy instruction. The input focused on both general directions for the framework and development of specific aspects of the content, particularly with the learning outcomes and assessment components.

Development and ongoing feedback

The framework was developed in a collaborative process involving experienced ESL literacy instructors at Bow Valley College. Experts in specific areas or levels of ESL literacy instruction contributed to various components of the framework and provided feedback regarding the usability of the resource. The members of the *Alberta Advisory Committee on ESL Literacy* provided valuable direction, insight and feedback on the framework throughout the development process. The framework was reviewed in its entirety by both Bow Valley College and external experts.

How is the Framework Organized?

This framework outlines a process of curriculum development in five stages. The stages are:

- *Stage 1: Understand Needs*
- *Stage 2: Determine Focus*
- *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*
- *Stage 4: Integrate Assessment*
- *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*

Each stage is one section of the framework. Throughout the stages, we highlight key considerations in the curriculum development process, addressing the unique needs of practitioners and learners in Albertan adult ESL literacy programs. Although the stages are presented in sequential order, we encourage you to move back and forth between them as you move through the organic process of curriculum development.

Stages of Curriculum Development	
Stage 1: Understand Needs	Each Stage includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a table of contents• background information for the stage• Program Principles – the guiding principles for curriculum development, from a program perspective• Classroom Concept – a summary of a key point in effective adult ESL literacy instruction. Each classroom concept is further supported by guiding principles for instruction.• a summary• a list of helpful resources
Stage 2: Determine Focus	
Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes	
Stage 4: Integrate Assessment	
Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability	

The framework also provides **additional resources**. These resources provide more in-depth information in specific areas of ESL literacy.

Additional Resources
Curriculum development guide This resource identifies key tasks in the curriculum development process, providing information and guiding questions for steps in the process. We recommend printing this resource and using it as you move back and forth through the curriculum development stages. The related page from the curriculum development guide is presented at the beginning of each curriculum development stage.
Guiding principles for ESL literacy program contexts ESL literacy programs operate in a variety of contexts and with different purposes. Background information and guiding principles are provided in <i>Stage 2: Determine Focus</i> . The guiding principles are provided for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• community orientation and participation ESL literacy• family ESL literacy• employment ESL literacy• educational preparation ESL literacy
Special considerations for learners with 0-3 years of formal education These considerations highlight the unique learning needs of learners with very limited formal education, and provide suggestions for effective instruction. They are integrated throughout the framework
Appendix A: Recommendations for integrating numeracy This section provides recommendations for integrating numeracy into an adult ESL literacy curriculum. It includes a sample excerpt of a curriculum and guiding principles for effective instruction.
Appendix B: Recommendations for integrating technology This section provides recommendations for integrating technology into an adult ESL literacy curriculum. It includes a sample computer skills curriculum and suggestions for effective instruction.
Glossary of terms This section provides definitions and descriptions of the way key terms are used in the framework
References A list of works used and cited in the framework is provided.

The framework also connects to **other resources**, which are highlighted throughout.

Links to Other Resources

Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook (Bow Valley College, 2009)

The ESL literacy Curriculum Framework is a companion document to *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*. Throughout this framework, readers are directed to chapters of the handbook for more information, support and examples.

Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta (ATESL, 2009)

The best practice statements are highlighted throughout this framework. These illustrate how the framework aligns with the best practices identified for adult ESL programming in Alberta.

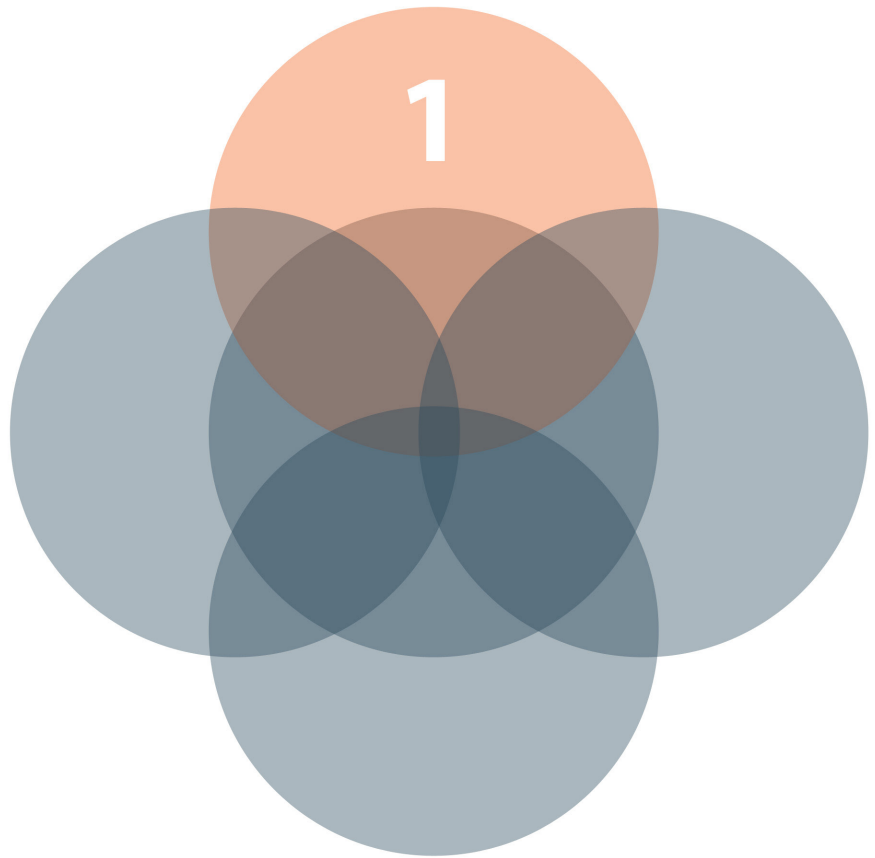
How can I Use the Framework?

As you use this framework, begin with what is manageable in your context and build from there. You can use the framework to help you develop an adult ESL literacy curriculum in a variety of situations:

- developing a new curriculum or program
- revising an existing curriculum
- improving the way you plan for instruction
- improving the kind of instruction you provide

This framework is built upon an assumption that curriculum development is an organic, non-linear process. We recommend that you move back and forth between the five stages of curriculum development as you work through the process. In each stage, you will find information and resources for *program administrators* and *instructors*.

The *ESL Literacy Network*, www.esl-literacy.com, website will also help you as you move through the process of curriculum development. The website provides information, resources, tools and online learning experiences to help you in many areas of adult ESL literacy programming and instruction, and specifically supports the use of this curriculum framework.



STAGE **1**

Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework
STAGE 1: UNDERSTAND NEEDS

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT GUIDE: STAGE 1

Stage 1: Understand Needs Summary: Understanding needs is the critical first step in curriculum development. Developing a curriculum that is responsive and effective depends on having a thorough understanding of your context, the needs of your community, and of the learners you intend to support.	
Development tasks	Process and guiding questions
Conduct an environmental scan	Think about the context in which your program operates. Consider demographics, immigration patterns, funding regulations and other contextual factors.
Conduct a community needs assessment Conduct a learner needs assessment	Frame your community and learner needs assessment in terms of the settlement process and existing ESL literacy programming contexts in Alberta. Conduct learner and community needs assessments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are the needs of learners in your community? What settlement needs do the learners have?</i> • <i>What are the community needs?</i> • <i>What types of programs are currently offered in your community?</i> • <i>What are the current programming gaps?</i>
Identify your target audience Identify your program niche	Define the group of learners that your program will aim to support. Define the programming niche in the community that your program aims to fill. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are the common characteristics of the learners your program will aim to support?</i> • <i>What will be unique about your program in the community?</i>
Refer to the needs identified as you develop the curriculum	Use the information gathered in this stage to inform how you determine your program's focus. See <i>Stage 2: Determine Focus</i> .



STAGE 1: UNDERSTAND NEEDS

Understanding the needs of learners and of the community is a critical aspect of both curriculum development and effective instruction. When program administrators and instructors have a clear understanding of their context as well as the needs of learners and the community, they are able to develop curricula that are effective, responsive and accountable. Understanding needs is the first stage in curriculum development and influences all other stages of the process: *Stage 2: Determine Focus, Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes, Stage 4: Integrate Assessment and Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability.*

This section of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework* aims to help you develop an understanding of needs in the field of ESL literacy, from the broad context of Alberta through to programming and classroom considerations.

In this section, you will find:

- an introduction to the field of ESL literacy
- information on the needs of ESL Learners with Interrupted Formal Education (LIFE)
- information on ESL literacy needs in Alberta
- *Program Principles* for understanding the needs of learners and the community
- *Classroom Concept: Know your Learners.* Classroom considerations for understanding and meeting learners' needs
- a summary
- helpful resources

✔ Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #39

Curriculum development and renewal is responsive to learner needs, based on input from the learner population as well as community, educational and or/workplace stakeholders.

WHAT IS ESL LITERACY?

ESL literacy is the educational field that serves learners who have language **and** literacy development needs. It is a unique field that intersects with the fields of second language acquisition and adult literacy acquisition. In this framework, we work with the same understanding of ESL literacy as is presented in the Bow Valley College companion document *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook* (Bow Valley College, 2009). Learners in ESL literacy programs face “two main educational challenges: learning to speak English and developing the ability to read and write” (Bow Valley College, 2009, p.3).

There are a variety of definitions of adult ESL literacy in the research literature and in communities across Alberta. In this framework, we define learners with ESL literacy needs as adults who have less than 10 years of formal education and who are **simultaneously** learning English **and** learning to read and write.

We advocate for an understanding of ESL literacy as a developmental continuum, rather than in terms of “literate” and “illiterate”. This developmental continuum is described by the literacy Phases outlined in *Canadian Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000). These benchmarks are used throughout Canada to describe the progression of literacy and language skills through four main phases: Foundation, Phase I, Phase II and Phase III. The literacy continuum described in these benchmarks ranges from learning how to form letters (Foundation Phase) to reading short authentic texts, with support (Phase III).

In addition to language development, all learners described in this framework require focused instruction that develops literacy skills, due to their limited or interrupted formal education. Learners with Interrupted Formal Education (LIFE) have unique learning needs and these will differ based on the extent of their formal education, the environments from which they come, and their familiarity with literacy.

Who are the Learners in Adult ESL Literacy Programs?

Learners in adult ESL literacy programs are very diverse. They represent a variety of age groups, family situations, countries and cultures of origin, languages, lengths of residency in Canada, interests and skills and may be from literate or non-literate contexts. Learners in these programs have a range of experiences of formal education, from none at all to completing nine years before coming to Alberta. Many learners fall somewhere in the middle of the range and have had two or three years of consistent schooling or interrupted formal education over a greater number of years. Learners in ESL literacy programs often have significantly higher oral skills than literacy skills.

There is increased recognition that Learners with Interrupted Formal Education (LIFE) have unique learning needs. Although learners’ formal educational opportunities have been



limited, they bring knowledge, experience and a history of informal learning to their studies in ESL literacy programs. Effective programs understand and build upon the strengths that learners bring, both individually and collectively.

Why do the Learners have Limited or Interrupted Formal Education?

The circumstances in which LIFE have been formally educated vary. Some common learner profiles in adult ESL literacy programs include:

- learners from non-literate contexts, such as rural/village areas in which the language has no written form, and no formal schooling exists
- learners from literate contexts who may have been prevented from attending school due to poverty or cultural/religious beliefs about who is entitled to a formal education
- learners who have begun school but had their schooling interrupted by war, political unrest or displacement
- learners who were unable to continue their schooling after several years, due to family obligations, economic circumstances or a limit on the number of years of publicly funded education
- learners who attended school over a greater number of years, but intermittently
- learners who were schooled in religious texts only, for a limited number of years
- learners who were schooled in refugee camps (often sporadically)

The common result of all these scenarios is that learners have not had the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and strategies that are commonly assumed of adults in Alberta. To varying degrees, LIFE find it difficult to cope with the literacy expectations they face in this new context and in mainstream ESL classes.

LIFE are adults and bring a wealth experience and knowledge from their own background to their learning. Because of their age, LIFE face all the demands and responsibilities of being an adult in Canadian society, regardless of their literacy skills. Responsibilities such as paying bills, filling out forms, parenting, gaining and maintaining employment, and navigating systems cannot wait until these learners have mastered reading and writing to a high school level. Age and trauma (experienced by many LIFE) can also be factors in how quickly oral and literacy skills are acquired. In effective programs, instruction and support in managing adult responsibilities is integrated. Resources used need to be appropriate for adult learners and reflect the realities and concerns of adult life in Alberta.



For more information on the background and characteristics of learners in ESL literacy programs, and on identifying learners with interrupted formal education, please refer to Section 1 of Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook.

Learning Needs of LIFE

Learners with Interrupted Formal Education (LIFE) have unique learning needs. Some of these needs intersect with the needs of mainstream adult ESL learners and also with adult first language literacy learners. There are, however, important differences in each area.

These differences are outlined in this section, with the intention of helping you develop a clearer understanding of what makes the learning needs of LIFE unique.

LIFE are Different from Mainstream Adult ESL Learners

In most mainstream ESL classes, it can be assumed that learners have completed high school and can read and write in their first language; many are highly educated professionals. Learners in ESL literacy programs have interrupted, limited or non-existent formal education. The impact of this is more than not being able to read and write; LIFE have not had the opportunity to develop the skills, strategies and behaviours associated with successful school learning.

LIFE may not have the “common knowledge” often taken for granted in mainstream ESL programs. These can include basic science, math, historical, and geographical concepts, skills and knowledge that adult ESL learners with high school education are generally assumed to have.

For example, the following may be unfamiliar to LIFE:

- **science concepts:** the earth is round and revolves around the sun
- **math skills and concepts:** numbers, accurate counting, addition, place value, greater and less than, estimation, measurement and the measurement of time (e.g. years divided into months, months into weeks, hours into minutes.)
- **historical / geographical information and concepts:** knowledge of world events, understanding of world maps, countries, etc.
- **language-learning concepts:** abstract categories for describing language (e.g. parts of speech, verb tenses) are often unfamiliar to learners. Instruction that addresses these concepts in a concrete manner (e.g. re-casting past/present to yesterday/today) is most effective with LIFE.

Many LIFE come from non-literate contexts and depend on verbal interactions for conveying and learning information. For many learners, the high value placed upon literacy skills in Alberta is a new concept. In contrast, learners with high levels of formal education already



have an understanding of the connection between print and meaning and are familiar with the practices of a highly literate society. These learners have already learned to read and write once and can then apply these skills (and related strategies) to learning English.

In contrast, LIFE need to develop English language skills **and** develop an awareness of print in their environment. This includes learning that print conveys meaning, which involves:

- developing literacy-related skills and strategies for the first time
- understanding that reading is a primary method for learning new information in Alberta and begin to acquire new knowledge through print
- developing an awareness of the high value placed on literacy in Canadian culture
- developing skills and strategies for learning in a formal educational environment

Implications for programs and instruction:

- Many adult education environments are based on principles of adult learning, which understand learners as active learners that are goal-driven, oriented towards applying their learning, and able to articulate their preferred learning styles (Cafarella, 2002). Skills for meeting the expectations of adult learning environments (e.g. managing one's learning, transferring learning to other contexts, appropriate classroom behaviour) need to be explicitly taught and supported in adult ESL literacy programs.
- LIFE need explicit instruction in learning strategies. In effective programs, metacognitive skills (learning about learning, thinking about thinking) are taught and supported.
- In effective programs, instructors and coordinators make no assumptions about learners' background knowledge, skill levels, etc., but strive to understand the nature of individual learners' educational background.
- Program administrators and instructors need to understand and build upon the strengths learners bring.
- Program administrators and instructors can use the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* to understand learners' language and literacy development in the areas of reading, writing and numeracy.

Mainstream ESL classes generally cater to the learning needs of people who have been able to access basic education and have well-developed first language literacy skills. Learners with ESL literacy needs are still developing the language, literacy and learning strategies necessary to be able to thrive in a literate context. For this reason, we advocate for a separate stream of ESL literacy classes dedicated to addressing the language, literacy and strategy development needs of adult ESL learners with interrupted formal education.



LIFE are Different from Adult First Language Literacy Learners

Adult literacy programs in Alberta generally address the needs of Canadian-born, native-English speaking adults who have low literacy skills. LIFE share some similarities with these learners, in that both are adults acquiring basic literacy. However, the main distinction is that LIFE are developing literacy and learning a new language at the same time.

In addition to learning to read and write, LIFE need to develop:

- oral communication skills in English
- English vocabulary, and strategies for learning and comprehending new vocabulary
- an understanding of the way the English language works
- an understanding of culture in Alberta and Canada
- an understanding of the value placed on literacy and the importance of print in Alberta and Canada

All of the above areas can generally be assumed when working with Canadian-born native English-speaking adults in literacy programs. Canadian-born first language literacy learners have grown up in a literate environment and are aware of the value accorded to literacy in this culture. Additionally, LIFE may be more socially isolated from mainstream Canadian communities and many are unaware of the range of social supports available to them.

Implications for programs and instruction:

- Building oral skills is **key** to developing literacy skills. In effective programs, listening and speaking instruction provides the basis for literacy instruction.
- Learners need to build their vocabulary, accuracy and fluency in all skill areas: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Effective instruction gradually builds from the concrete and familiar to more abstract, unfamiliar topics and vocabulary.
- Instruction for LIFE includes developing an awareness of print and its connection to meaning.
- Effective resources for ESL literacy classes include vocabulary development, a high degree of visual support and do not take Canadian cultural knowledge for granted.
- The *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000) is an effective tool for understanding literacy and language development in the areas of reading, writing and numeracy.

Special Considerations: Learners with 0 to 3 Years of Formal Education

Learners in ESL literacy programs have unique learning needs that relate to the non-existent or interrupted nature of their formal education. This section provides background information for understanding and meeting the needs of learners with the **most minimal exposure** to text and literate practices.

For the purposes of this framework, we have defined this group of learners as those with 0 to 3 years of formal education, although we recognize that there is still a range of learning needs within this category. Throughout this framework, we highlight considerations for working with learners with 0 to 3 years of formal education. These considerations are provided as a way of drawing attention to the general characteristics and needs of this demographic of learners in ESL literacy programs.

Learners with 0 to 3 years of formal education come from a variety of backgrounds and countries. Rather than coming from big cities where print is all around them, these learners are usually from small, rural communities where the spoken word plays a greater role in transmitting information than the written word (Achren & Williams, 2006). Although they are from a variety of backgrounds, what they have in common is their limited (or lack of) formal education. Although they are competent adults with a host of other skills, their extremely limited experience with formal education and literate practices influences their learning needs and classroom behaviours. Learners with 0 to 3 years of education generally need extensive time and support in order to develop their language and literacy skills.

Learners in this group are unfamiliar with print and its significance in our culture. In general, these learners' past learning experiences have been orally based, or they have learned a task by watching or participating in it because it had an immediate application in their lives.

Learners with 0 to 3 years of education will need to develop, for the first time:

- a bank of basic sight words
- an understanding of sound/letter correspondence
- the basic mechanics of writing (e.g. hold a pencil comfortably, form letters accurately, copy from another source)
- an understanding of where to write on a page
- an understanding of directionality in English text (and how to follow along with a text)

In programs that place learners according to the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*, learners with 0 to 3 years of education are usually placed in a Foundation Phase class.

Learners who have had no prior formal education and have only recently become aware of print in their lives need **continued support** throughout their literacy development.



For example, in a Phase I ESL literacy classroom, there may be learners who have gone to school for more than 3 years as a child, thus having a firmer literacy foundation than the learners with 0 to 3 years of formal education. Both groups of learners have developed the skills outlined in the Foundation Phase, but learners with 0 to 3 years of education will usually require more support as they progress through Phases I - III.

Some ways that you can provide this continued support to learners with 0-3 years of education include:

- **Providing background knowledge.** Learners may lack “common knowledge” such as simple science or geographical facts (e.g. a province is bigger than a city). They may lack the concept that their age changes each year or that, when asked their eye colour, we are referring to the colour of the iris.
- **Providing more scaffolding.** Learners may need more examples, larger font and increased white space, more modeling and more opportunities to do the same activity or use the same format over time.
- **Providing more time.** Reading and writing (and their related learning tasks, such as matching, copying, etc.) may take more time for these learners. Their speed of work, and their rate of acquisition, may be slower than those learners with a more solid background in formal education.
- **Making the abstract concrete.** Learners may need more scaffolding to complete the tasks that deal with abstract ideas. For example, a learning task may involve reading a story that contains information to be put into a personal information form these learners may instead fill out the form about themselves rather than about the character in the related story. Help learners move from concrete to abstract by introducing vocabulary with tangible objects or physical actions, then building to photographs, to illustrations, to the printed word.



See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes *for more information on scaffolding.*

Although the learning outcomes in the Phases I - III are the same for all learners, those with no prior education may complete the tasks under a different set of conditions and may need more scaffolding in order to do so. Learners with 0 to 3 years of education may remain highly self-referent and highly concrete learners, but with continued scaffolding and support, they will succeed in achieving challenging learning outcomes (Achren & Williams, 2006) and in continuing their literacy journey.

ESL LITERACY NEEDS IN ALBERTA

In Alberta, the threshold of literacy skills for coping in our society is equivalent to high school completion, or level 3 of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). Increased adult literacy levels have been linked to lower crime rates, increased economic productivity, increased physical and mental health for individuals and more engaged citizens (Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, 2009).

Alberta has established a goal of increasing the literacy of seventy percent of the adult population to IALS level 3 (Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, 2009). Investing in programming that addresses the specific needs of adult ESL learners with interrupted formal education contributes to achieving this goal.

"Forty percent of Albertans aged 16 and older struggle with their ability to understand and use information from texts."
(Alberta Advanced Education & Technology, 2009, p. 1)

This section of the framework provides background information on the range and nature of ESL literacy needs in Alberta.



For more information on the field of ESL literacy and the unique needs of learners with interrupted formal education, see *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

Understanding Settlement Needs

Research conducted for the development of this framework involved interviews and site visits to adult ESL literacy providers in Alberta. An advisory committee also provided information on ESL literacy programming in Alberta.

A key finding from this research is that settlement needs are something that all learners in ESL literacy programs share. In this framework, we recommend that programs and instructors first consider learners' needs as they relate to the process of settlement. This provides a starting point for understanding learners' needs and informs both curriculum design and instruction. There are many working definitions of settlement. In this framework, settlement is viewed as a process that takes place over a period of time. The settlement process can be understood in three main stages: acclimatization, adaptation and integration (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998; Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2009).

These stages can be represented as a continuum:

ACCLIMATIZATION ➡ ADAPTATION ➡ INTEGRATION

Newcomers to Alberta will require differing levels of support and have differing needs over time during their settlement process. Settlement experiences and the duration of the settlement period vary by individual. Although settlement can be understood on a continuum, it is not always a consistently linear process. For example, learners may move into



the adaptation stage in terms of their family or community life, but find that they still have acclimatization needs in some areas, such as when entering the workforce.

This section describes the three main stages of settlement in more detail.

Stages of Settlement

Acclimatization: In this stage, the focus is on becoming familiar with a new language, culture and environment.

During the acclimatization period, settlement needs often relate to accessing:

- food
- shelter
- clothing
- health services
- transportation
- language instruction
- survival employment
- community information and orientation
- funding and financial support

For many people, this stage is characterized by coping with a new situation and *receiving assistance* to meet needs.

Adaptation: In this stage, the focus is on learning how to manage one's situation in Alberta more independently. People in this stage have an increased ability to meet their own needs, but still require settlement assistance.

During the adaptation period, settlement needs may relate to accessing:

- advanced or specific language instruction
- education or training to upgrade skills
- legal assistance
- employment advancement opportunities

For many people, this stage is characterized by increased participation in and contribution to the wider community.

Integration: In this stage, the focus is on learning how to participate actively and contribute fully as a member of Canadian society.

For many people, this stage is characterized by developing skills for overcoming systemic barriers (e.g. institutionalized racism) that prevent their full participation as equals in Canadian society. The objective is productive and meaningful participation in civic life. In some cases, this is not achieved until subsequent generations.

Adapted from Canadian Council for Refugees (1998), Mwarigha (2002), and Anisef & Kilbride (2004)



A learner's settlement needs and degree of settlement may depend on a variety of factors, such as:

- physical and mental health
- the circumstances under which he/she came to Alberta
- family obligations
- age
- language and literacy skills
- prior work and educational experiences
- having support from family or friends already in Alberta
- personal disposition and interest in integration

Throughout the settlement process, learners will need support to develop skills and understanding in the following three areas:

- **Rights and responsibilities:** Learners may be unaware of their legal rights and responsibilities in Alberta and Canada. They will need skills for asserting these rights and meeting these responsibilities.
- **Cultural expectations:** Learners will need to develop an understanding of the culturally-based expectations for behaviour in a variety of contexts, such as education, employment, community life, etc. When learners understand these expectations, they can make informed decisions about the degree to which they will conform to or challenge them.
- **Resources and opportunities:** Many learners in ESL literacy programs are isolated and unaware of the resources and opportunities available to them. They may also lack the language and literacy skills to take advantage of them. Learners will need skills and strategies for accessing resources and opportunities throughout their settlement process.

Understanding learners' needs in terms of the settlement process allows programs to clarify which aspects of settlement they address. Effective programs aim to help learners move through the stages of settlement and draw closer to integration. By integrating content and skills that address these areas, programs and instructors ensure that learners receive the information and develop the skills that aid them in their settlement process.



See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes *for information on integrating these areas into thematic instruction.*

All learners in ESL literacy programs will have needs related to the stages of settlement outlined in this section. Understanding learners' needs in terms of the settlement continuum helps programs and instructors identify the kinds of needs they are targeting. This understanding informs the program's purpose and goals and helps in planning for instruction.

A range of ESL literacy programming exists in Alberta, and all programs address needs related to the settlement process. The large urban centres of Calgary and Edmonton offer the widest variety of ESL literacy programs, targeting proficiency levels from Foundations to Phase III. Rural areas and smaller centres are able to provide ESL literacy programming, with a more limited range of options, due to a smaller learner population.

A variety of ESL literacy program models are in place across Alberta. These include:

- full-time (20 hours or more per week)
- part-time (less than 20 hours per week)
- small group tutoring
- 1:1 tutoring

ESL Literacy Program Contexts in Alberta

ESL literacy is taught by both paid instructors and volunteer tutors. Some programs offer ESL literacy classes at several levels along the literacy development continuum; other programs are only able to offer one ESL literacy class. In ESL programs with only one ESL literacy class, the class is either multi-level or focuses on the low end of the literacy continuum, with the assumption that learners will transition into mainstream ESL classes.

Through the research and consultations for the development of this framework, we identified **four program contexts** of current ESL literacy programming in Alberta. All of the programs identified address needs along the settlement continuum. For the purposes of this framework, these programs are grouped by their main focus, though there is some overlap between the categories.

The four program contexts are:

- **Community orientation and participation ESL literacy programs:** These programs focus on addressing needs related to the acclimatization stage of the settlement continuum.
- **Employment ESL literacy programs:** These programs provide ESL literacy **for** the workplace or ESL literacy **in** the workplace.
- **Family ESL literacy programs:** These programs focus on providing ESL literacy development for parents and children, and also often address parenting skills.
- **Educational preparation ESL literacy programs:** These programs aim to transition learners from ESL literacy to adult basic education programs or other training opportunities.



This framework outlines five main stages in the process of ESL literacy curriculum development. The guiding principles in each stage of curriculum development apply in all of the program contexts.



See Stage 2: Determine Focus *for a detailed description and guiding principles for each of the program contexts.*



See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes *for key text types for each of the program contexts. Key text types are the recommended types of texts to focus on in the areas of community orientation, family, employment and educational preparation ESL literacy.*

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Needs assessment is a critical stage in curriculum development that provides useful information for program administrators, curriculum developers and instructors. Information from a needs assessment influences other stages of curriculum development: determining your program's focus (Stage 2), setting learning outcomes (Stage 3), integrating assessment (Stage 4) and demonstrating accountability (Stage 5). Regular needs assessment ensures that programs and instruction are continually in tune with the needs of learners and the communities of which they are a part.

What is Needs Assessment?

Needs assessment is an **ongoing, cyclical process** in which program administrators, curriculum developers and instructors identify and examine the context in which their program operates, the needs of the community and the needs of the learners.

In order to develop and maintain a responsive and effective ESL literacy curriculum, conduct needs assessments to understand:

- the broader context in which your program operates (e.g. demographic trends, existing programs in the area, etc.)
- the contexts in which learners live and work
- the knowledge and skills learners bring to functioning in those contexts
- the knowledge and skills learners need to develop for those contexts
- the learners' preferred ways of learning
- the learners' personal goals and wants

Adapted from Holmes, Kingwell, Pettis & Pidlaski (2001, p. 28)

When needs assessment is understood as an ongoing process, it helps instructors and programs balance between "curriculum as planned" and "curriculum as lived" (Aoki, 1991). These two faces of curriculum address the tension educators feel between implementing a formalized curriculum developed in response to needs assessments (curriculum as planned) and responding to the needs and interests of learners within a given class (curriculum as lived). In this section, information on needs assessment is provided for programs (*Program Considerations*) and instructors (*Classroom Concept: Know Your Learners*).



PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

How can we apply these ideas in our program?

The information provided earlier in this section gives an overview of the needs of LIFE and ESL literacy in Alberta. It is also important to investigate the needs of learners and of the community in your particular context. Effective needs assessment is critical for setting a program's purpose and goals, determining learning outcomes and evaluation and demonstrating accountability to stakeholders.

This section addresses three areas for needs assessment from a program perspective:

- environmental scanning
- community needs assessment
- learner needs assessment

The information on community and learner needs assessment has been summarized and adapted from *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook* (Bow Valley College, 2009).

Conduct an Environmental Scan

Prior to investigating the particular needs of your community, it is important to consider the wider context of which your program is a part. This involves conducting an environmental scan. An environmental scan is a part of strategic planning for organizations. "Environmental scanning is the acquisition and use of information about events, trends, and relationships in an organization's external environment" (Choo, 2001). This understanding assists program administrators in planning for the future.

Consider asking the following questions as part of an environmental scan in ESL literacy program planning:

- How does our program fit into the wider contexts of our community, our town/city and Alberta?
- What factors (e.g. demographics, immigration patterns, funding regulations) currently influence the direction and goals of our organization and our ESL literacy program?
- What future changes, trends and factors might influence the direction of our organization and program?

Understanding the wider context of which your program is a part assists program administrators in understanding community and learner needs, providing pathways for learners and planning for the future.



Conduct a Community Needs Assessment

The process of conducting a community needs assessment involves learning about existing programs in order to identify programming gaps. Once these gaps have been identified, it is possible to define your program niche.

The information provided in this section is adapted from *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

Learn About Existing Programs

Learn about what programs are already available for your target audience. There are many possible types of programs, meeting many different kinds of needs. Examples include:

- community-based programs, including library and church-based programs
- programs offered by colleges and private schools
- programs connected to the K-12 educational system, particularly involving young adults
- programs connected to a particular group of learners
- workplace-based programs

Identify the Gaps

After identifying existing programs in your community, approach these programs to find out what they do, who their learners are and where the programming gaps are. Explain to program providers that the purpose of the meeting is to ensure that your program does not duplicate the services offered by existing programs. Understanding the gaps in existing programming will help you define your target audience.

Define your target Audience

Use information gathered through environmental scanning, community needs assessment and learner needs assessment to define your target audience. Which demographic of learners will your program aim to serve? Determining your target audience (e.g. learners with 0 to 3 years of formal education or learners with high oral skills and more than 4 years of formal education, etc), will help your program provide focused, intentional instruction that builds the skills learners need. The process of defining your target audience may involve moving back and forth between needs assessment (outlined in this stage) and determining your program's focus (see *Stage 2: Determine Focus*).

✓ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #9**

The program supports collaboration with other educational organizations, ESL providers, and community stakeholders, thereby raising awareness of the program, avoiding duplication of services, and identifying potential gaps to be filled.



Effective programs are based on an understanding that a single program cannot serve the needs of all learners. When designing a program, it will be necessary to set priorities and focus resources to address the needs of your target audience.

Find your Niche

Once you have identified the programming gaps for your target audience, find the place that the program will fill in the community. Develop the special characteristics that will make your program unique. Having an understanding of existing programming and a clearly defined niche is an important part of setting your program's purpose and goals. Defining a program's niche also helps programs build effective pathways for learners as they exit your program and move on to their next steps, such as further education, training or the workplace. This aspect of curriculum development is discussed further in *Stage 2: Determine Focus*.



For more information about community needs assessment, refer to Chapter 2 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

Conduct a Learners' Needs Assessment

An effective ESL literacy program meets the needs of the learners, helps them thrive in their communities and enables them to achieve their goals. Learners have very diverse sets of needs and goals. A thorough learner needs assessment is necessary for building a curriculum that addresses the specific needs that learners have in common.

This section describes the principles of effective learner needs assessments and the implications for ESL literacy programming.

Principles of Effective Learner Needs Assessments

An effective needs assessment....

Recognizes that needs are diverse

Involves all stakeholders

Implications for ESL literacy programming

Consider:

- the needs of individual learners and groups of learners
- learners' needs in several areas (e.g. language, literacy, learning strategies, intercultural competence)
- learners' barriers (e.g. transportation, childcare, poverty)

Gather information about learner needs from a variety of sources, such as:

- current learners
- potential learners
- past learners
- community agencies and services
- instructors
- program administrators
- representatives from contexts your program prepares learners for (e.g. adult basic education, workplace)



An effective needs assessment....

Examines needs from the perspective of the learners

Is an iterative, or ongoing, process

Implications for ESL literacy programming

The most effective way of gathering information from ESL literacy learners is through a face-to-face interview, with the support of an interpreter when necessary. Instructors and programs may also want to consider having learners:

- choose text types or pictures that relate to possible learning needs or goals
- write in personal or dialogue journals that focus on identifying their learning challenges and goals

When gathering information from other sources about learner needs, consider using the following tools:

- focus groups
- electronic or written surveys
- face-to-face interviews and site visits
- telephone interviews

Needs assessments are not a once-only event. Needs assessments inform the setting of a program's purpose and goals and are part of classroom instruction and planning. An important part of demonstrating accountability to learners' needs is to regularly review and re-identify learners' needs. (See *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability* for more information.)

An effective needs assessment....

Focuses and builds on learners' accomplishments and abilities, rather than deficits

Implications for ESL literacy programming

Identify the strengths learners bring and build upon these in program design and instruction. For example, if learners have strong oral skills, use this as a vehicle for developing literacy or metacognitive skills.

Identify the communities of which learners are already a part. If learners have strong ties to their ethnic or neighbourhood communities, build strong partnerships with these groups.

Consider including an assessment of learners' first (or other) language literacy skills. Observing learners write in another language provides insight into their writing fluency, their approach to writing, their ability to form letters or characters, etc. In some cases, learners have more literacy skills than previously identified, which will influence placement and instruction.

Include pre- and post- assessment information sharing with the stakeholders.

Communicate the information gathered in a way that can be understood by learners and other stakeholders.

A needs assessment informs the development of program purpose and goals. These will need to be presented in language and formats that are appropriate for all stakeholders, including learners.

Adapted from Holmes, Kingwell, Pettis & Pidlaski (2001) and Bow Valley College (2009)



For more information on learner needs assessment, see Chapter 2 (Learner Needs and Program Goals) of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

CLASSROOM CONCEPT: KNOW YOUR LEARNERS

How can I apply these ideas in my classroom?

Effective instructors know the learners they are working with. Take the time to learn about individual learners' needs, challenges and goals. Aim to balance this with your program's purpose and goals (see *Stage 2: Determine Focus*), and ground it in an understanding of theory and research in best practices for instruction. The focus of this section is to provide instructors with two sets of strategies:

- classroom needs assessment strategies
- instructional strategies for meeting the needs of LIFE

The information on classroom needs assessment and instructional strategies has been summarized and adapted from *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

Conduct a Classroom Needs Assessment

There are many ways of assessing the needs of learners in your classroom. Needs assessment can be done formally or informally and both can inform your instruction. Informal needs assessment is an ongoing part of classroom instruction. Examples of informal needs assessments include:

- observing learners' challenges and successes with in-class work. (This is also an important aspect of assessment. See *Stage 3: Integrate Assessment*.)
- designing learning tasks that involve providing information related to background, interests, goals, etc.

Many instructors find it helpful to also conduct a more formal classroom needs assessment. This involves asking learners direct questions and using this information to inform instruction. The considerations and questions outlined here are also appropriate for use at a program level.

What to Ask

Questions will differ depending on the program and the level of the learners. Make questions concrete and easy to understand. Questions to consider in a learner needs assessment can include:

- Does anyone help you with reading and writing? Where do they help you?
- What do you want to read/write?
- Why do you want to improve your reading and writing? Why do you want to go to school?



- Did you go to school in your country? In another country? Tell me about when you went to school. (Try to gather as complete a picture as possible of the learner's educational background)
- Do you have a job right now? Do you like your job?
- Do you want a job in the future? What kind of job do you want?

How to Ask

How to ask questions is as important as what to ask. Recognize the level of the learner when asking the questions. Make the questions meaningful to the learner so the learner can express his/her needs. Avoid hypothetical situations, the conditional, or imagining the future.

A needs assessment can include all kinds of aids, such as:

- **Realia:** Use actual items that learners may see in everyday life and find difficult, such as utility bills, applications or common government forms. Increase complexity by moving from concrete, everyday objects to photographs to illustrations.
- **Photographs** or pictures: Use large, easily understood photographs of situations learners might see, such as doctors' offices, the supermarket, the apartment building, etc.
- **An interpreter or a first language assessment:** An interpreter can be very helpful in a needs assessment. In some situations, it may be possible to conduct a needs assessment in the learner's first language. Ask learners to write their names in their first language and to write a story or description. Even if the assessor cannot read the learner's first language, this will provide information on the learner's writing fluency, the formation of the script and the extent of the writing. This will give the assessor an idea of the learners' first language literacy level.

Some of the information sought in classroom needs assessment can also be gained in the placement tests used for a program. Consider including some of the questions and strategies outlined in the section on placement assessments in *Stage 4: Integrate Assessment*.

Share Results with the Learners

Whether your needs assessments have been formal or informal, it is important to communicate with learners about the needs you will be addressing in the classroom. It can be challenging to communicate these with learners who have limited oral proficiency or a limited understanding of what is required to achieve their goals. Use simplified language, provide pictures and visual diagrams and regularly review the learning needs identified to help learners understand how what they are learning relates to their needs. This is also emphasized in *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*.



Understanding your learners' needs and goals is key to effective instruction. Combine an understanding of who your learners are with a principled approach to instruction that is based on research and experience of the most effective practices for teaching LIFE. This approach will give you the best opportunity to meet your learners' needs effectively.

The following guiding principles for instruction are based on research, theory and experience in the area of meeting the needs of learners with interrupted formal education.

✔ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #66**

The ESL literacy class provides a learning environment that is validating, encouraging, connected to the real world, and supportive of lifetime learning. It provides a print-rich environment, predictable routines, strategy training, and plenty of repetition, recycling and practice.

Guiding Principles for ESL Instruction

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

View learners holistically

View learning as a social activity

Start with oral learning

CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS

Respect learners' life experiences and their roles as adults. Understand the challenges and barriers learners face as well as the strengths they bring.

Learners come to the classroom with a wide variety of educational and life experiences. Create a safe and supportive learning environment in which learners feel comfortable to ask questions, take risks, interact with classmates and express their needs and goals.

Build on learners' past experiences of learning collaboratively and orally. Encourage pair and group work in which learners can share their experience, knowledge and skills with each other. Make as many connections with the wider community as possible.

LIFE have had limited experience with learning through text and many of them have always learned new information orally. Build on learners' strengths by presenting new vocabulary and concepts orally before learners encounter them in print. Help learners recognize words they already use.

Use learners' oral skills to help make them aware of patterns in language.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Teach thematically

Theme teaching provides a context for learning outcomes. Vocabulary, content, language structures and concepts can all be presented, recycled and spiraled in the context of thematic units. An approach to planning for thematic teaching is outlined in *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*.

Create a print-rich environment

Learners need to develop an understanding of the connection between print and meaning. Use meaningful charts, posters, pictures, etc. on classroom walls and encourage learners to refer to them frequently. Use picture and beginner dictionaries as a regular part of instruction and provide opportunities to manipulate text in the form of letter/word/sentence cards, etc. Encourage independent reading by providing level-appropriate reading materials in your classroom.

Create a classroom routine

Establishing a daily routine helps learners focus on learning tasks, and helps them understand classroom expectations. Starting, finishing and taking breaks on time helps learners understand the importance placed on punctuality at work and school in Alberta. Regularly repeating activities (e.g. putting handouts in a binder) helps learners develop skills and appreciate their importance. Within your routine, vary activities according to learners' interest level and concentration span.

Make learning concrete

Learners in ESL literacy programs have limited experience in gaining meaning through print. It is important to make connections for learners between experiences, objects and text. For vocabulary development, begin with tangible objects and build gradually to photographs, then illustrations, and finally, text. When presenting abstract concepts, such as representing places on a map, make a connection with the actual location by visiting the location together or showing photographs.

Make every effort to connect learning to real-life experiences and applications.

CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Respect learners' knowledge while providing them with new understanding

Focus on learning outcomes

Provide explicit strategy instruction

Incorporate technology

CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS

Respect and learn about the backgrounds and world views of your learners. At the same time, provide learners with opportunities to learn alternative ways of understanding their environment. Help learners develop the cognitive skills (e.g. classifying, ordering) they need to deal effectively with print.

Demonstrate the advantages of concepts, skills and strategies for living in a literate, technological society. Balance this with valuing the skills and understanding that learners bring with them.

Learning outcomes provide direction and accountability for programs and instruction. They help learners understand the incremental steps they need to take to develop their skills. Ensure that everything taught and assessed in class is connected to learning outcomes that address learners' needs and the goals of your program. More information and recommended learning outcomes for LIFE are provided in *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*.

Most ESL literacy learners will need strategies for developing and using their literacy skills. They will also need strategies for interacting in the community and transferring their learning to other contexts. Integrating intentional and explicit strategy instruction throughout a program ensures that learners build the strategies they need for success inside and outside of the classroom. A model for explicit strategy instruction is provided in the *Classroom Concept* section of *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*.

Introduce learners to different forms of technology as soon as possible. Learners will need skills for using microwaves, bank machines, ticket dispensers, automated phone systems, etc. as well as computers. Recommendations for integrating technology and computer skills are provided in *Appendix B* of this framework.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Incorporate numeracy

CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS

Learners' numeracy abilities will vary; these do not always correlate with their literacy or language levels. Learners need to develop both the numeracy skills and the English for talking about everyday math (e.g. prices, times, estimating).

Some programs will be able to provide designated time for numeracy instructions. In other cases, integrate learning outcomes for numeracy concepts and skills into your thematic teaching. Take every opportunity to link instruction with the numeracy and the language for talking about math.

For more information on integrating numeracy, see the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* and the *Appendix A* of this framework.

Adapted from Bow Valley College (2009, pgs.79-83)



For more information on effective instruction in the ESL literacy classroom, see Chapter 6 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*. For information on teaching techniques and sample lesson plans, see Chapter 8 and Chapters 13 - 16.

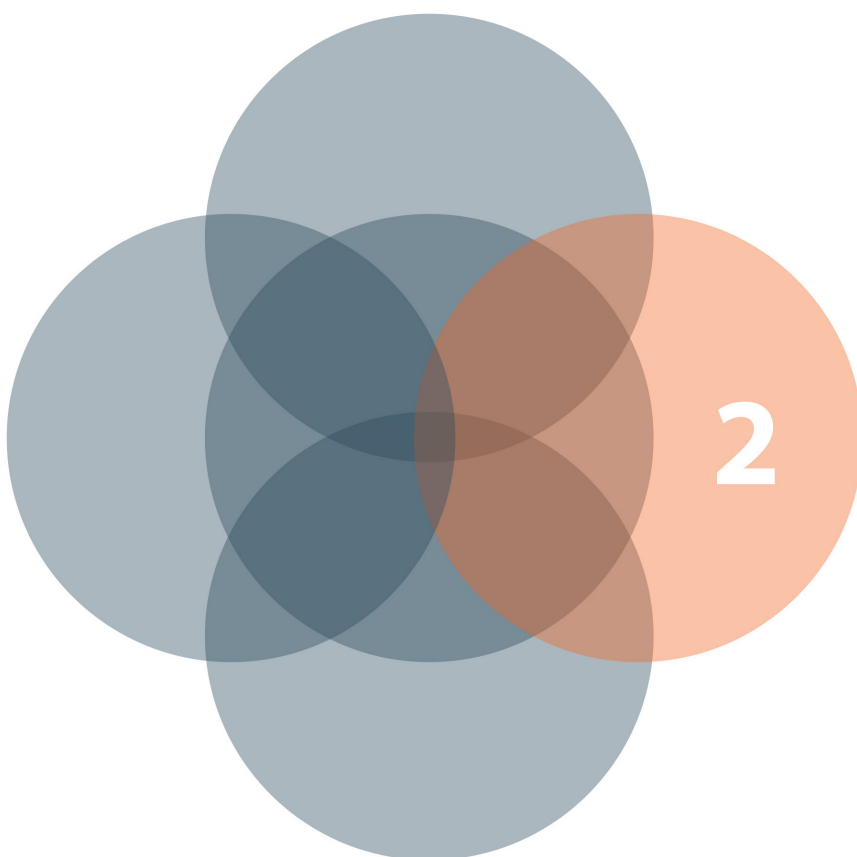
SUMMARY

Effective ESL literacy practitioners understand the needs of the learners they serve, and effective programs are based on this understanding. Learners' needs can be identified through learner and community needs assessments. Effective program administrators identify a programming niche and base the program's purpose and goals on the needs of learners and the community. Understanding learners' needs and strengths allows instructors to provide a positive, focused learning experience. A clear understanding of learner and community needs informs the remaining stages in ESL literacy curriculum development: *Stage 2: Determine Focus*, *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*, *Stage 4: Integrate Assessment* and *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*.



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STAGE **2**

Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework
STAGE 2: DETERMINE FOCUS

STAGE 2 | TABLE OF CONTENTS

DETERMINE FOCUS

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT GUIDE: STAGE 2

Stage 2: Determine Focus

Summary: Determining a focus for your program helps you develop a responsive and effective curriculum that guides instructors in meeting the needs of your target audience and the community. A clearly articulated program focus guides decision-making in the remaining stages of curriculum development. The framework provides guiding principles in four ESL Literacy program contexts: *Community Orientation and Participation, Family, Employment, and Educational Preparation.*

Development tasks	Process and guiding questions
Review the Alberta program contexts	<p>Consider the context of adult ESL Literacy in Alberta.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Will your program address one of the existing program contexts?</i> • <i>Will it bridge two (or more) categories? If so, which aspects of each will our program address?</i> <p>Refer to the guiding principles for your program context as you develop your purpose, goals and approach.</p>
Determine purpose	<p>Seek input from stakeholders to help determine the purpose of your program. Describe the general intent and broad aims of your program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why does the program exist?</i> <p>Refer to the guiding principles for setting program purpose and goals.</p>
Determine goals	<p>Seek input from stakeholders to help determine the goals of your program. Describe the specific aims of your program, related to achieving the purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What will you do in the program to achieve the purpose?</i> <p>Refer to the guiding principles for setting program purpose and goals.</p>
Determine approach	<p>Seek input from stakeholders to help determine the program approach. Describe the path the program will take in order to achieve the purpose and goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What do you know and believe about language and literacy acquisition, supporting and teaching learners and the roles of stakeholders?</i>
Refer to the purpose, goals and approach as you make decisions about curriculum.	<p>Use the statements of purpose, goals and approach to guide the rest of your curriculum development process. These statements will influence decisions in <i>Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes, Stage 4: Integrate Assessment</i> and <i>Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability.</i></p>



STAGE 2: DETERMINE FOCUS

Determining your program's focus is an important second stage in the curriculum development process. It is based on an understanding of ESL literacy, the environment in which your program operates, as well as the needs of your learners and the wider community (outlined in *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). A clearly articulated program focus influences the remaining stages of curriculum development: *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*, *Stage 4: Integrate Assessment* and *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*.

✔ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #1**

The program has a clearly articulated statement of its mission, philosophy, and goals, which is both available to and developed with input from stakeholders.

This section of the curriculum framework aims to help you clarify and determine the overarching focus of your program, curriculum and instruction.

In establishing the focus of your program, it is important to define three components:

- Program purpose: **Why** does the program exist?
- Program goals: **What** will the program do to achieve the purpose?
- Program approach: **How** will the program achieve its goals and purpose?

In effective programs, the purpose, goals and approach are tied directly to the needs of learners and the community (as outlined in *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). This ensures that programs remain accountable to the needs of learners and the community.

When a program has a clearly defined focus:

- learners' needs are kept at the forefront of curriculum design
- learning outcomes are tied to the needs of learners and the community (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*)
- teaching and learning expectations for the program are clearly communicated with stakeholders (learners, instructors, funders, community)
- the program can demonstrate how it achieves its purpose (see *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*)



In this section, you will find:

- descriptions of program purpose, goals and approach
- *Program Principles* for defining your program's focus
- *Classroom Concept: Know your Program*. Guidelines for aligning with a program's focus and establishing a focus for your classroom
- descriptions, guiding principles and helpful resources for four program contexts in Alberta:
 - community orientation and participation ESL literacy
 - family ESL literacy
 - employment ESL literacy
 - educational preparation ESL literacy
- a summary
- helpful resources

Effective ESL literacy programs maintain a strong connection between the purpose, goals and approach of the program and the needs of the target audience (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). There are a variety of terms used to describe purpose, goals and approach in the fields of adult education, adult ESL and adult ESL literacy. The following section clarifies the way the terms purpose, goals and approach are used in this framework. The examples provided are adapted from one adult ESL literacy program at Bow Valley College, in Calgary.

Program Purpose	
Definition	A statement that describes the general intent and broad aims of a program (also referred to as <i>program mandate, mission, rationale or role</i>)
Central question	Why does the program exist?
Example	<p>The purpose of this program is to address the needs of ESL literacy learners with limited education in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improve their English language and literacy skills• help them develop strategies, skills and socio-cultural competence for living and working in Canada

Program Goals	
Definition	Statements of the specific aims of a program, related to achieving the purpose (also referred to as <i>program objectives</i>)
Central question	What will the program do to achieve its purpose?
Example	<p>The program will assist learners to improve their English language and literacy skills by increasing learners':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading and writing proficiency • oral communication proficiency • strategies for language acquisition and use <p>The program will assist learners to develop strategies, skills and socio-cultural competence for living and working in Canada by building skills for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transferring learning to daily life • navigating systems • participating in communities • finding and keeping jobs

Program Approach	
Definition	A description of the path the program will take in order to achieve the purpose and goals; includes a description of the program's <i>philosophy and assumptions about teaching and learning</i>
Central question	How will the program achieve its goals and purpose?
Example	In a highly supported print-rich environment, the program will meet learners' needs and help them achieve learning outcomes by integrating skills through theme-based instruction. Content and materials will be accurate and current, reflecting the needs and interests of learners.

PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

How can we apply these ideas in our program?

Needs assessment (outlined in *Stage 1: Understand Needs*) is an essential starting point in curriculum development. The information from needs assessments gives programs an overall picture of the context for the program, as well as the needs of learners and the community. The nature and range of needs will vary depending on your context. You will need to establish *which* needs your program can realistically address. This involves determining how your program will connect to other a) programs or contexts and b) learners' needs and goals. This is the process of determining your program's focus, and involves establishing your program's purpose, goals and approach.

Set your Program's Purpose and Goals

The same principles apply to developing both a program's purpose and its goals. This chart outlines these guiding principles.

— Guiding Principles for Setting Program Purpose and Goals —

AN EFFECTIVE STATEMENT OF PROGRAM PURPOSE AND GOALS....

is achievable

is concrete

sets parameters

IMPLICATIONS FOR ESL LITERACY PROGRAMS

A program's purpose and goals are most effective when they are based on a realistic assessment of what can be accomplished. Having a clearly defined target audience and an understanding of constraints (e.g. funding, timelines, etc.) can help programs set a purpose and goals that are achievable.

To be effective, a program's purpose and goals need to be measureable and demonstrable. This allows stakeholders to determine whether the purpose and goals have been achieved, and to what degree.

Individual programs cannot effectively address all the needs of all learners. Effective programs identify their target audience and set a purpose and goals that relate to the needs of this target audience. Carefully consider and define what the program prepares learners for.



AN EFFECTIVE STATEMENT OF PROGRAM PURPOSE AND GOALS....

reflects learners' needs

(See Stage 1: Understanding Needs for more information)

is based on input from, and is reviewed by, stakeholders

articulates to external standards

IMPLICATIONS FOR ESL LITERACY PROGRAMS

In order to create a program purpose and goals that reflect learners' needs, consider the following areas:

- the learner and community needs assessments conducted for your program
- the settlement process continuum:
Which settlement needs are most pressing to the learners in the target audience?
- the wider context of ESL literacy in Alberta: *Will the program address one of the four main contexts for adult ESL literacy in Alberta?*
 - community orientation and participation ESL literacy
 - family ESL literacy
 - employment ESL literacy
 - educational preparation ESL literacy

Input from instructors, learners and other stakeholders (e.g. community agencies, educators, employers, funders) ensures that the program purpose and goals reflect learners' needs, classroom realities and the community in which the program operates.

External standards influence a program's purpose and goals. Consider standards such as:

- entrance requirements for further education/training contexts
- workplace expectations and requirements
- the Government of Alberta Adult EAL/ESL Continuum (Government of Alberta, n.d)
- the Citizenship and Immigration Canada logic model (CIC, 2008)
- Canadian Language Benchmarks

Adapted from Caffarella (2002); Holmes, et al (2001); ATESL (2009)



Support Learners' Goal-Setting

When a program has a clearly defined purpose and goals, it is better able to support learners in the process of setting and achieving their own learning goals. In many adult education contexts, it is assumed that learners are driven by their own learning goals. In ESL literacy programs, however, it may not be possible to assume this. Many learners in ESL literacy programs are unfamiliar with the process of setting learning goals and managing their educational steps. Effective ESL literacy programs build in support and structure for this aspect of adult education.

✔ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #67**

ESL literacy learners have access to enhanced support services.

One effective way of building in this support is to provide advisors as part of the program team, in addition to integrating goal-setting into classroom instruction. Advisors can meet regularly with learners throughout the term to help them set short-term and long-term goals. They collaborate with instructors and work with learners to develop individual learning plans that outline the major steps in achieving long-term goals. This helps learners have a realistic understanding of what is involved in achieving their goals. Advisors can help learners understand the academic or training requirements for the goals they want to achieve, as well as the opportunities and challenges learners may face along the way.



See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes for more information on setting and managing goals.

Describe your Program's Approach

Beliefs and assumptions about the teaching and learning process inform curriculum development and instruction whether or not they are formally articulated. Taking the time to think about and describe these underlying assumptions is an important step in curriculum development. It ensures that all stakeholders (instructors, administrators, learners and funders) have a fundamental understanding of **how** the program aims to achieve its purpose and goals.

"Articulate the beliefs about and principles of second language learning and about adult learners that will guide and inform curriculum implementation"
(Holmes, et al, 2001, p. 82)

The following guiding questions are provided to help in describing your program's approach.

Guiding Questions

As a program, what do we know and believe about:

- how adults acquire language and literacy?
- how to best support learners with interrupted formal education? What is the most effective ways to teach learners with interrupted formal education?



- What are the roles of learners, instructors, administrators and community members in the teaching and learning process?

When these beliefs and principles are clearly described and based on input from all stakeholders, they can be used to guide all aspects of curriculum design and implementation: selecting learning outcomes, integrating assessment, the learning experiences provided and the teaching methods used (Holmes, et al, 2001).

Curriculum development is not a once-only event. In order to remain responsive and effective, programs need to have a regular process of curriculum revision and renewal. A program's purpose, goals and approach need to be examined as part of this review process.



See Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability **for a discussion of the curriculum review process.**

CLASSROOM CONCEPT: KNOW YOUR PROGRAM

How can I apply these ideas in my classroom?

Effective instructors understand the program of which they are a part. They learn about and contribute to the development of the program's purpose, goals and approach. Instructors play an important role in informing program goals and ensuring that learners understand what the program offers and prepares them for.

Understand your Program's Focus

If you teach in a program that has a clearly articulated purpose, goals and approach, it is helpful to develop your understanding of the following aspects of the program:

- the target audience
- expectations and levels in the program
- opportunities and supports available to learners

The Target Audience

Effective instruction is based on a solid understanding of the target audience. Understanding the profile of learners in the program can help you provide focused instruction. Taking the time to learn about the barriers learners face and their learning needs, both individually and collectively, will help you design more effective learning experiences.



See Stage 1: Understand Needs for more information on determining a program's target audience.

Expectations and Levels in the Program

Familiarize yourself with your program as a whole. This involves understanding:

- your program's purpose, goals and approach
- entry and exit requirements
- learning expectations for the level you teach
- the learning outcomes for the level before and after yours (this helps you understand where learners are coming from, and what you are preparing them for)
- transition points within the program

Opportunities and Supports Available to Learners

As an instructor, you may be the learners' main contact person with the program, the institution and the wider community. You can support learners by connecting them with people and opportunities that address learners' diverse needs.



Familiarize yourself with:

- support and opportunities within the program and institution, e.g. interpreters, conversation clubs, learning resources, counseling, tutoring, financial assistance, volunteering and work opportunities
- support and opportunities within the community, e.g. subsidized housing and daycare, affordable services, food, clothing, employment assistance, community events

It is important to know your own limitations and focus on **connecting** learners with people or agencies that can provide specialized support.

In programs where advisors and community agencies help learners create individual learning plans, it is important to address these in the classroom (see *support learners' goal-setting*, in *Program Principles* for this stage).

Build upon what the advisors and learners have set as the learning plan by:

- referring to it regularly
- helping learners reflect on their accomplishments and challenges
- helping learners develop the language for talking about their goals and their learning processes

Establish a Classroom Focus

Establish a classroom focus. Programs differ in the emphasis they place on developing goals, purpose and approach. In some cases, you may need to develop these for your own class. Establishing a purpose, goals and approach helps you to plan and teach more intentionally.

Consider:

- Purpose: **Why** does the class exist? What am I preparing learners for?
- Goals: **What** are the goals of the class? What skills will learners need to succeed in the context I am preparing them for? Which learning outcomes relate to these goals?
- Approach: **How** am I going to achieve the goals and purpose? What do I know and believe about effective teaching and learning in ESL literacy?

Involving learners in determining purpose, goals and approach for a class can increase learners' motivation and their chances for success. When involving learners in this process, be sure to help learners gain realistic expectations of what can be accomplished. When you involve learners in this process of setting goals and learning outcomes for the class, we recommend the following:

- Use the proficiency descriptors provided in this framework (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*) for a realistic understanding of the steps involved in achieving learning outcomes.



- See the key text types (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*) for the recommended kinds of texts that learners will face in community orientation, family, employment and educational preparation ESL literacy contexts.
- Use level-appropriate language and provide visual supports. Suggestions for investigating learners' needs are provided in the Classroom Concept of *Stage 1: Understanding Needs*.

Instructors should collaborate with learners to set individual goals.

Supporting learners to set and achieve learning goals:

- helps learners experience success
- helps learners understand their learning pathways
- promotes continuous learning

This support needs to be consistent throughout a program. Integrate regular attention to short, medium, and long-term goal setting as part of classroom instruction. Encourage learners to set realistic goals and provide support for achieving them. Provide regular opportunities in class to set, discuss and reflect on learning goals, helping learners revise those that are too vague or ambitious. See *Habits of Mind: Motivation*, in *Stage 3: Setting Learning Outcomes* for more information.



For more information and resources on supporting learners' goal-setting, see "Goal-Setting and Self-Assessment" in Chapter 11 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

PROGRAM CONTEXTS

The purpose and goals of a program will be defined in relation to the needs that have been identified through the needs assessment process, outlined in *Stage 1: Understand Needs*. In Alberta, there are currently four general **program contexts** for ESL literacy programming:

1. community orientation and participation ESL literacy
2. family ESL literacy
3. employment ESL literacy
4. educational preparation ESL literacy

Each program context addresses needs related to the settlement continuum stages: acclimatization, adaptation and integration (outlined in *Stage 1: Understand Needs*).

Descriptions and guiding principles for each of the program contexts are provided in this section. For each program context, you will find:

- a description of the context
- guiding principles for developing programs and curricula in that context
- suggested themes (except educational preparation)
- helpful resources

Use the information provided in these program contexts to guide you in determining the focus for your program.



See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes for key text types. These are the recommended kinds of texts to focus on in each ESL literacy program context

Programs with a focus on community orientation and participation aim to help learners develop literacy and language skills for everyday life in Alberta. These ESL literacy programs focus on providing information and developing skills related to survival and meeting basic needs. These programs also aim to help learners move beyond survival by building skills for participating in and contributing to the wider community.

Like all ESL literacy programs, community orientation and participation programs address needs related to the settlement continuum, as outlined in *Stage 1: Understand Needs*. In this framework, settlement is understood as a continuum, with newcomers moving through three main stages: *acclimatization*, *adaptation* and *integration*. In community orientation and participation programs, the main focus is on addressing needs related to the **acclimatization** and **adaptation** stages of settlement.

Acclimatization

In this stage of settlement, learners are becoming familiar with the language, culture, people and environment of Alberta. Learners' needs in this stage relate to accessing the **basics** needed for life in Alberta, such as food, shelter, clothing, health services, transportation, survival employment, funding and financial support. Information and skills related to each of these areas are necessary for **community orientation**.

Adaptation

In this stage of settlement, learners are developing skills to manage their lives in Alberta more independently. Learners' needs in this stage relate to accessing **opportunities or assistance** that enables them to increase their independence, such as advanced/specific language instruction, skills upgrading/training, legal assistance, and opportunities to advance their employment. Information and skills in these areas relate to **community participation**.



See Stage 1: Understand Needs for more information on the stages of settlement.

Guiding Principles in ESL Literacy for Community Orientation and Participation

This section outlines guiding principles for developing effective and responsive programs and curricula in ESL literacy for community orientation and participation. The four guiding principles are:

- know your learners' settlement experiences
- maintain a focus on immediate relevance
- build partnerships within the community
- connect learning directly to the community

Know your learners' settlement experience

A key aspect of developing an effective curriculum is understanding learners' needs (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). In a community orientation and participation context, learners' settlement experiences will directly impact their community orientation needs.

Guiding questions:

What is the immigration status (e.g. family class, refugee, permanent resident, Canadian citizen) of our learners?

Immigration status affects the amount and nature of support available to newcomers. For example, some refugees receive a one-year living allowance; some learners are sponsored by family, which impacts their eligibility for assistance; Canadian citizens are not eligible for LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) funding.

What supports do learners already have in place?

For example, are the learners being assisted by other organizations or individuals (e.g. church or community sponsor)? Do they have adequate and affordable housing and/or childcare?

What survival skills have learners already developed?

For example, do the learners know how to use transportation systems, purchase affordable necessities and access health services in your community?

What responsibilities will learners face in the near future?

For example, will the learners be required to repay transportation loans? At what point will their financial assistance end?

Maintain a Focus on Immediate Relevance

Understanding learners' settlement experiences can help programs and instructors determine which acclimatization skills and information are most pressing. For example, some learners may be refugees arriving to a Canadian winter from a country with a hot climate. These learners' most immediate acclimatization needs may be to understand the dangers of extreme cold and to access affordable and suitable winter clothing. Other learners may have been in Alberta for some time but have been socially isolated due to family or survival employment obligations. When these learners enter your program, the skills of most immediate relevance may relate to developing social networks and accessing community programs, services and facilities (e.g. library resources, employment training programs or affordable recreation options).

Build Partnerships within the Community

As the purpose of these programs is to provide community orientation and to encourage community participation, it is critical to engage with the broader community. Consider the types of services, activities and resources that are most relevant to your learners' immediate needs and work to build partnerships with these organizations.

Guiding questions:

- Which organizations, groups or individuals in the community could be resources to our learners?
- Which organizations, groups or individuals might benefit from the skills and experience learners bring?
- How can we work together with these organizations, groups or individuals?

Partnerships can take many forms and can involve formal and informal opportunities for connection. For example, there is a partnership between ESL literacy programs at Bow Valley College and Calgary Police Services. In this partnership, learners are involved in police recruitment training, which builds new recruits' understanding of language, literacy and cultural barriers when interacting with the public. Learners have the opportunity to interact with police in a non-threatening environment, which builds their confidence and trust in the police. For learners who have had negative experiences with law enforcement in their past, this can be a significant shift in the way they view police in Alberta. Many learners report that they feel more comfortable asking police for help or protection as a result of this experience.

✓ Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #16

The program provides opportunity for learner participation in the broader community.

In your community, there will be opportunities for formal and informal partnerships. Emphasizing the benefits to both parties will encourage organizations, groups and individuals to enter into partnerships with your community orientation and participation ESL literacy program.

Connect Learning Directly to the Community

In all ESL literacy programs, it is important to connect learning with real-life applications. Programs with a focus on community orientation and participation will need to offer ample opportunity to learn *in* the community, not just *about* the community. Programs that provide ample opportunities to learn in the community make learning concrete and relevant for learners. Learners can then draw on these real-life experiences and the connected knowledge and skills when living in the community.

For example, when learning about grocery shopping, it is important to take learners to a



grocery store (preferably an affordable one close to where most learners live) so that they can learn about food, prices and interacting with staff in a concrete, experiential way. Most learners in adult ESL literacy programs will have had the experience of purchasing goods, receiving medical attention, taking some kind of transportation, etc. The key in community orientation and participation ESL literacy programs is to provide learners with experiences of **how** these are accomplished in your community, along with the skills and knowledge to do so.

These experiences provide a rich resource for language and literacy development. For example, many instructors use the Language Experience Approach (LEA) as a way of building language and literacy tied to class experiences. In this approach, the learners dictate a text to the instructor about a personal experience. This text is used as the basis for vocabulary development, sight word recognition, writing/copying tasks, choral and individual reading, etc.



For more information on LEA and other methods and techniques for ESL literacy instruction, see Chapter 8 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

Suggested Themes

In ESL literacy for community orientation and participation, the focus is on developing skills and understanding for everyday life in Alberta. Thematic units are at the core of this kind of program; they provide a rich context for providing relevant information, experiences and skills that are important in order to understand and participate in the community. For this reason, an extensive (though not exhaustive) list of suggested themes is provided.

The chart below suggests topics and corresponding themes for use in ESL literacy for community orientation and participation programs. Themes explore the topics in detail, and with a specific focus. In your program, develop these or other thematic units in response to learners' needs and interests, tying them to the community of which you are a part.

— Suggested Themes for Community Orientation and Participation —

TOPIC	SUGGESTED THEMES
<i>Housing</i>	Looking for a place to live Different kinds of housing in your community Taking care of your house/apartment Talking with your landlord Taking care of your yard
<i>Transportation</i>	Riding the bus/train Getting around our community (directions) Getting a driver's license Understanding your car insurance

TOPIC

SUGGESTED THEMES

Employment

Looking for jobs
Applying for jobs
Working safely
Keeping your job

Food

Shopping for food
Growing your own vegetables
Eating healthy food

Family

Spending time together in our community
Communicating with school personnel
Understanding the Albertan school system

Health

Understanding (women's/men's) health issues
Making appointments
Accessing subsidized dental/health services
Understanding prescriptions
Making healthy choices

Banking & Finances

Using Canadian money
Using bank/debit machines
Saving money
Understanding credit cards
Paying bills
Spending wisely

Community Life

Activities and events in our community
Being active in the community
Helping others in the community

Weather

Understanding the seasons in Alberta
Staying warm in cold weather
Driving safely in the winter

Use the **key text types** for community orientation and participation ESL literacy to guide your choices in the types of texts you provide for learners. The key text types outline recommended texts for use in each of the four program contexts.



See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes **for the community orientation and participation key text types.**



Thematic instruction that is recycled and spiraled throughout levels in a program is an effective way to develop content knowledge, oral language and literacy skills. In each thematic unit, instructors are encouraged to integrate content from the following three **content pillars**:

- rights and responsibilities
- cultural expectations
- resources and opportunities



See the Classroom Concept in Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes for information on the content pillars in relation to planning for thematic units.

Helpful Resources

- Bow Valley College. (2002). *The ABCs of practical literacy*. Calgary: Bow Valley College.
- Bow Valley College (2009). *Learning for LIFE: An ESL literacy handbook*. Calgary: Bow Valley College.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2008). *Refugee resettlement in Canada: Information bulletin no.1*. Retrieved November 12, 2010, from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/bhutanese.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (n.d.). *Immigrating to Canada*. Retrieved November 12, 2010, from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/index.asp>
- Croydon, A. (2005). *Making it real: Teaching pre-literate adult refugee students*. Retrieved October 19, 2010, from http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/abepds/making_it_real_teaching_pre-literate_adult_refugee_students.pdf
- *English express: A website for adult learners*. <http://www.englishexpress.ca/>
- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. (2010). *How does Canada's refugee system work?* Retrieved November 12, 2010, from http://www.settlement.org/sys/faqs_detail.asp?faq_id=4000347



Family literacy is a rich and diverse field serving many people across the province. The Centre for Family Literacy provides the following description:

*Family literacy encompasses the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their communities. It is an approach to literacy development that **recognizes and supports the family as a “learning unit”**; it coordinates learning activities among different generations in the same family to build expertise in language development, reading, and writing. Family literacy builds on families’ strengths and connections in the context of the culture and communities in which they live and learn.*

(Centre for Family Literacy, n.d.)

Family literacy programs in Alberta serve a variety of participant groups of parents (including grandparents, guardians and caregivers) and children. These include:

- Canadian-born, **native English-speaking parents** with limited literacy skills and their children. Although these learners may have limited literacy skills, they tend to be more advanced than ESL literacy learners. As native speakers, these learners have a wide range of English vocabulary and can communicate orally with ease. There are also family literacy programs that serve the general population, including parents with higher levels of literacy and education.
- Parents and children with **ESL needs**. These participants may be immigrants, refugees or Canadian-born speakers of other languages (such as francophone Canadians). These parents may have high levels of education in their first language and are likely to have well-developed first-language literacy skills. They need to learn oral and written English, but have skills and strategies that transfer from their previous formal learning experiences. These parents can be encouraged to help children develop literacy skills in both languages.
- Immigrant and refugee parents and children with **ESL literacy needs**. These parents have interrupted (or lack) formal education and may not have developed any literacy skills in their first language. When programs and materials are not specifically designed for this group, learners’ low literacy often inhibits their full participation.

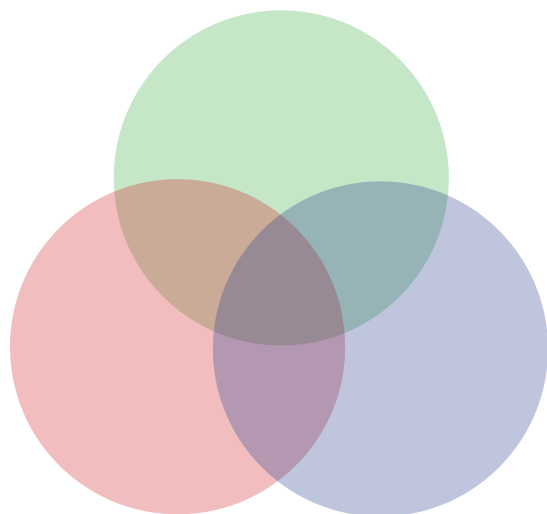
What is Family ESL Literacy?

In this framework, the focus is on learners with **ESL literacy needs**. Family ESL literacy can be understood as the intersection of the fields of family literacy and adult ESL literacy (which incorporates language and literacy development). Family ESL literacy programs are those that target adult ESL literacy learners and their children. These programs build language and literacy skills in a setting that fosters family literacy and provides opportunities to develop literacy awareness and abilities for children **and** adults. Family ESL literacy programs (as in



other family literacy programs) offer activities that celebrate the joy of learning and connect participants (both parents and children) to other learning opportunities.

The diagram below illustrates the intersection of the three purposes addressed in family ESL literacy.



Family Literacy

Supporting children and parents' literacy, emphasizing parents as children's first, and most important teachers.

Literacy Development

Developing literacy skills for the first time, but in a second or other language.

Language Development

Developing language skills and cultural understanding necessary for parenting in Canada.

There are several existing family literacy models currently in place around Alberta. The Centre for Family Literacy website (<http://www.famlit.ca/>) provides descriptions of these programs. The Centre for Family Literacy supports the development of family literacy across Alberta by developing resources, providing training, promoting family literacy awareness and conducting research. Adapting these program models for ESL literacy learners involves including an **explicit** emphasis on the parents' language development.

Guiding Principles for Family ESL Literacy Programs

This section outlines guiding principles for developing effective and responsive programs and curricula in **Family ESL literacy**. The five guiding principles are:

- ensure that the program is designed according to the needs of families
- balance program time between parent-only and parent/child learning
- support first language use and development
- connect to community
- build skills for parenting in Alberta

Ensure that the Program is Designed According to the Needs of Families

Effective programs are scheduled for times that are appropriate for learners with children. Program spaces need to be suitable for children and parents (e.g. providing a place to park strollers). If the program focuses solely on parents learning English for family purposes,

childcare should be provided. If there is a cost associated with the program, it needs to be affordable for the target group of learners.

Many family ESL literacy programs involve fathers, grandparents and other caregivers, as well as mothers and children. In order to encourage participation of all types of family members, programs need to be offered in locations and at times that are also feasible for everyone.

Within a program, it is important that instructors use content that is appropriate to learners' needs and reflects the age/stage developmental needs of the children involved. For example, if all the learners in a class have infants rather than school age children, it may be appropriate to focus more on child development/nutrition, community access and intercultural parenting rather than on reading report cards.

Balance Program Time Between Parent-only and Parent/child Learning

ESL literacy learners need to develop oral language skills, literacy skills and sociocultural competence in addition to learning how to support their children's literacy development. Effective programs may include both time for parent-only and parent/child learning. This ensures that parents' literacy development receives equal emphasis. When parents increase their own literacy and language skills, they are better able to support their children's literacy development.

Specialized early childhood literacy development can be provided at the same time as the parent-only portion of the program. It is also important to provide time for parents and children to learn and interact together as they explore literacy activities. This ensures that parents have the experience of being their children's teachers and builds a repertoire of literacy-based activities for parents and children to engage in at home. Parents need encouragement to apply what they learn in family ESL literacy programs to interactions with their children; for example, in everyday language-rich conversations and literacy-building activities.

Support First Language Use and Development

Learners may believe that it is best for their children if English is the only language spoken at home. This can be effective if the parents speak an advanced level of English themselves, but it will still have the effect of diminishing the children's ability to communicate in their first language. This also reduces the children's exposure to a rich and varied vocabulary, which is the foundation for early literacy skills development. Research (Cummins, 2001; Roessingh, 2009) has focused on the benefits of parents maintaining the first language in the home. When parents and children share a common language, they are able to discuss issues as they arise and as children grow older. If parents' English does not develop as quickly as their children's and if the children do not maintain their first language, parents may find themselves unable to communicate with their teenagers. In your family ESL literacy program, stress the importance of maintaining the family's first language, in addition to developing English skills.



It is helpful when instructors have a general understanding of the cultural representations of learners, as well as their traditions, practices and beliefs. This allows instructors to respect and reflect the cultural traditions and values of the families attending, such as by using pictures, songs, rhymes and stories connected to learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Connect to Community

Family ESL literacy programs that provide community connections are highly effective in providing instruction that is meaningful and relevant. Learners benefit from building relationships with, having exposure to and gaining information from various community agencies and groups. The types of community connections provided will differ based on several factors (e.g. urban/rural, learners' length of time in the community, learners' needs & interests). In order to best connect learners to the community, form meaningful partnerships with refugee/immigrant services, cultural associations and community leaders. This allows programs to recognize and build on the strengths found within the community.

In a family ESL literacy setting, one of the most important connections that can be made is with schools in the community. In some cases, family ESL literacy programs are housed in local elementary schools. This allows parents to have an immediate connection to their children's school and begin to feel comfortable in that environment.

In addition to providing exposure to community agencies, learners will need to develop the skills to access community supports. For example, learners may need to fill out forms for housing applications, daycare subsidies or child health care benefits. The learning outcomes in this framework outline the development of such skills, including filling out forms (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*). It is important to make a tangible connection between the literacy task (e.g. reading labels) and its application in the learner's life within the community (e.g. reading prices in a grocery store).

Build Skills for Parenting in Alberta

Parents, family members and caregivers in ESL literacy classes have many valuable parenting skills. At the same time, however, many people want to learn about how to support their children so that they can succeed in school and life in Alberta. Areas of particular concern for many participants in family ESL literacy programs include:

- supporting their children's education
- nutrition and child development
- managing family finances
- intercultural parenting skills

Supporting children's education

For parents with limited or interrupted formal education, the educational system can be very intimidating. When parents have limited oral English combined with limited literacy, they are faced with many challenges in supporting their children's education.

Family ESL literacy programs can address many different aspects, including understanding the roles and responsibilities of teachers, children and parents in the education system. Building relationships between parents and the school environment is an important aspect of helping parents support their children's education. In addition, ESL literacy learners need to develop their skills for reading and writing the types of texts used in school systems, such as report cards, school newsletters, notes to teachers, etc. (See Key Text Types in Stage 3: *Set Learning Outcomes* for more information).

Communicating orally with their children's teachers, school personnel and other parents is a priority for many learners in family ESL literacy classes. Learners will need to practice their oral communication skills so that they will be able to do this. This will enable parents and teachers to work together in supporting the children in their learning and helps create opportunities for parents to volunteer and be a regular presence in their children's school and education.

One way that parents can support their children's literacy development is to provide a print-rich environment in the home. Parents in family ESL literacy programs may not be aware of the importance of modeling literate behaviour, due to their own interrupted educational experiences. Providing parents with the skills and inclination to read with their children, and to thereby develop their own literacy skills, is an important part of effective family ESL literacy programming.

Children's nutrition, development and well-being

Adult ESL literacy learners may be unaware of how to provide nutritious meals for their children with the foods and products available in Canada. Parents may find it useful to learn about normal child development, providing nutritious meals and age/stage-appropriate learning activities that they can engage in with their children. Many parents will also need to learn about ensuring their children's well-being (e.g. providing appropriate winter clothing) and laws in Alberta that relate to parents' responsibilities (e.g. not leaving young children unattended). Attention to these topics in family ESL literacy programs helps parents support healthy childhood development and lifelong learning success.

Budgeting and supporting a family on a low income

This is an area where many adult ESL literacy learners struggle. Many people with interrupted formal education have gaps in their numeracy skills as well as in their literacy skills. Teaching budgeting and financial literacy to adult ESL literacy learners is complex. Learners in ESL literacy programs may need to learn the basic math concepts and operations before they can engage in budgeting. This is a worthwhile effort and can make a substantial difference in the lives of learners.



*See Appendix A: Recommendations for Integrating Numeracy **for information on numeracy instruction in ESL literacy programs.***

Intercultural parenting skills and strategies

Many parents find it challenging to raise their children in a new and unfamiliar cultural environment. The issues and strategies explored in cross-cultural parenting workshops for mainstream ESL learners can also be explored in ESL literacy programs. In family ESL literacy programs, however, written materials used to promote discussion will need to be adapted to be appropriate for the learners' literacy levels. Oral discussion and review is an integral part of ensuring that participants understand the material presented to them.

Suggested Themes

Every learner is unique and every class is different. However, there are some themes that are generally appropriate for portions of the program that focus on parents' literacy development. The following themes are suggested for family ESL literacy programs:

- understanding my child's school
- talking with teachers, principals and other parents
- learning about child development
- eating healthy food
- saving and spending in our family
- communicating with my child
- keeping our culture and language alive
- reading with my child at home

Use the **key text types** for family ESL literacy to guide your choices in the types of texts you provide for learners. The key text types outline recommended texts for use in each of the four program contexts.



*See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes **for the family ESL literacy key text types.***

Thematic instruction that is recycled and spiraled throughout levels in a program is an effective way to develop content knowledge, oral language and literacy skills. In each thematic unit, instructors are encouraged to integrate content from the following three **content pillars**:

- rights and responsibilities
- cultural expectations
- resources and opportunities



See the Classroom Concept in Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes for information on the content pillars in relation to planning for thematic units.

Helpful Resources

The following resources are suggested for use in Family ESL literacy programs:

- Alberta Education Early Learning Branch. (2009). *Working with young children who are learning English as a new language*. Retrieved November 12, 2010, from <http://education.alberta.ca/media/1093791/earlylearning.pdf>
- Centre for Family Literacy <http://famlit.ca/>
- Cummins, J. (2001). *Bilingual children's mother tongue: Why is it important for education?* Retrieved May 31, 2010, from <http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/mother.htm>
- REEP. (n.d.). *ESL curriculum for adults: Family literacy curriculum*. Retrieved November 12, 2010, from <http://www.apsva.us/15401081182015517/lib/15401081182015517/reepcurriculum/familylithomepg.htm>
- Spruck Wrigley, H. (2004). We are the world: Serving language minority adults in family literacy programs. In B. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook on family literacy: Research and services*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Retrieved September 27, 2010, from http://www.literacywork.com/Literacywork/Resources_files/We%20are%20the%20world%20%20-%20Family%20Literacy.pdf

Employment ESL literacy programs support learners in developing the language, literacy and cultural skills necessary for success in Albertan workplaces. There are two distinct areas within this field: employment preparation ESL literacy and workplace ESL literacy.

Employment preparation ESL literacy: English FOR the workplace

In employment preparation ESL literacy programs, learners develop **general** skills that are applicable to job searches, interviews and employment in Canada. For example, in an employment preparation ESL literacy class, learners develop skills for filling out a variety of employment applications, reading a variety of workplace schedules, and developing a general understanding of Canadian workplace culture expectations. These programs may provide work experience, job shadowing or other connections to workplaces, but focus on developing these skills **prior** to employment. Transferability of skills is essential in these programs.

Workplace ESL literacy: English IN the workplace

In workplace ESL literacy programs, learners develop skills for a **specific** workplace. Workplace ESL literacy programs take place within the context of a particular company or organization. In a Workplace ESL literacy program, learners develop skills related to performing specific job duties (e.g. reading labels on products used in the job) or being an employee of a specific company (e.g. using the workplace computer sign-in system). ESL literacy training in these programs happens **while** learners are employed, although it may occur outside of work hours. Employers themselves are key stakeholders in these programs and need to see results that prove the value of their investment.

Both types of employment programs are of value to ESL literacy learners, but have different purposes and require different considerations. As a result, they are outlined separately in this section.

This section outlines guiding principles for developing effective and responsive programs and curricula in employment preparation ESL literacy. The three guiding principles are:

- focus on language acquisition and transferable employment skills
- focus on Alberta workplace culture and systems
- connect learners to workplaces

Focus on Language Acquisition and Transferable Employment Skills

The outcomes provided in this framework are all transferrable skills. The key text types provided in *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes* outline employment-specific applications of these outcomes.

In addition to the skills outlined in *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*, learners will also need to develop skills specifically related to employment. The skills integrated into an employment preparation ESL literacy program need to be generally applicable to employment in Alberta. Learners need to understand that documents and procedures will vary by organization.

As employment preparation ESL literacy focuses on employment in general, rather than for specific workplaces, it is important to provide learners with opportunities to practice using a wide variety of employment-related documents. For example, not all employment applications, employee handbooks, time cards and schedules are the same, and learners will need strategies for understanding a variety of layouts.

Learners will need to develop skills for **finding and getting jobs**. These include:

- job search skills
- job application skills
- job interview skills

Job search skills

Reading job advertisements (print and online), using employment service agencies, understanding qualification requirements, and networking are all necessary skills in identifying employment opportunities.

Job application skills

Completing employment applications (paper/online), writing resumés and cover letters and establishing positive references should be included.

Job interview skills

Learners will need to understand the cultural expectations in Canadian job interviews. Job interview behaviours such as highlighting one's strengths, asking for clarification, making eye contact may be unfamiliar to ESL literacy learners. Providing learners with ample opportunities for practice and feedback on their interview skills will be extremely valuable.

Learners need to develop skills for **keeping their job**, once hired. These include:

- reading employee handbooks
- understanding workplace signs and symbols
- managing job tasks
- understanding and applying employment standards
- obtaining information
- learning health and safety practices for the workplace

Reading employee handbooks

Learners need to develop skimming and scanning skills in order to find information that is pertinent to their situation. Strategies such as using a table of contents or scanning for headings will be helpful.

Understanding workplace signs and symbols

Learners need to understand the importance of workplace signs and symbols, as they can affect job safety and performance. Although every workplace will have its own unique signs or symbols, learners will benefit from being familiar with some common ones, such as "no entry", "hard hats required" or "out of order". Learners need to understand that it is better to ask for clarification than to ignore a sign/symbol that they can't interpret.

Managing job tasks

Learners will need to manage their tasks on the job. They will need to learn how to prioritize and track tasks accomplished. They may also need to leave information (e.g. tasks accomplished, to-do lists) at shift changes. In addition, learners will need to know that workplaces generally have established expectations regarding workplace tidiness; developing skills for organizing paperwork and maintaining an orderly workplace will assist learners when they find employment.

Understanding and applying Employment Standards

Learners may be unfamiliar with their current rights and responsibilities in the workplace. The information learners receive in employment preparation ESL literacy programs must be current, and learners will need the skills to be able to ask for clarification about their rights and responsibilities.



Obtaining information

Learners will need to develop the literacy and language skills for obtaining and communicating information in the workplace. In order to access the information they need to function effectively in their jobs, learners will need oral, literacy (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*), cultural (see below) and computer skills (see *Appendix B: Recommendations for Integrating Technology*).

Learning health and safety practices for the workplace

Learners need to understand that safety regulations are not optional. They are required by law and are in place to protect workers and patrons. Using PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as hard hats, steel-toed boots and safety goggles is a job requirement in many workplaces and learners need to know that they are expected to comply with these requirements. General WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) training, using level-appropriate materials, will prepare learners for some of the safety expectations of the workplace. In some cases, learners may have taken WHMIS training, but not be aware of the need to follow these safety practices in the workplace. It is important for learners to understand the safety consequences of not following WHMIS procedures. Learners may also have different understandings of what constitutes “safety” due to their experience in working in other contexts with different (or non-existent) workplace health and safety codes.

Focus on Alberta Workplace Culture and Systems

Unspoken cultural expectations are part of workplaces in Alberta and many newcomers are unaware of these. As a result, they may be unaware of how their behaviour is perceived. ESL literacy learners may also be unfamiliar with common workplace roles and hierarchies. When learners have a general awareness of workplace expectations and systems, they have a greater chance of being successful.

Learners will need to know about:

- workplace roles and hierarchies
- workplace systems
- employment orientations
- taking initiative
- fitting in to the new workplace environment

Workplace roles and hierarchies

Most organizations have managers (or several levels of management), supervisors, workers, a payroll and/or a human resources department. Learners will benefit from learning cultural expectations regarding the appropriate person and time to ask questions. If learners understand the general chain-of-command common to workplaces, they will be able to apply this understanding to a specific workplace when hired.



Workplace systems

Most workplaces have certain systems in place, such as time cards, vacation request protocols, dress codes, probationary periods and timing of breaks (eg. a fifteen minute break means you need to be back at your work station in fifteen minutes, not spending fifteen minutes in the break room). Learners who are familiar with these concepts are more likely to successfully meet expectations in their new jobs.

Employment orientations

For many ESL literacy learners, intensive employment orientations can be very overwhelming. Understanding the nature and purpose of orientations as well as developing strategies for accessing or clarifying information at a later date will help learners process the information presented at orientations. When learners are exposed to a variety of workplace systems (see above) in their employment preparation program, they are better able to understand orientation information.

Taking initiative

It is a cultural expectation in most Alberta workplaces that workers take initiative on the job. Workers are expected to ask questions when they need clarification, take responsibility for learning what they need to know in order to complete their job requirements and contribute effectively as team members.

Fitting in to the new workplace environment

Learners may feel uncomfortable or vulnerable when they enter a new workplace. In an employment preparation ESL literacy program, learners will need to develop skills for interacting with other employees (e.g. making small talk), making positive first impressions (e.g. non-verbal messages), and developing positive working relationships. Engaging learners in role-plays and working through real-life scenarios are very effective ways of helping them in this area.

Connect Learners to Workplaces

Learners will benefit from connections with workplaces prior to their employment. There are many ways that an employment preparation ESL literacy program can connect learners with workplace opportunities. These include:

- job-shadowing opportunities
- work experience placements
- networking opportunities
- scenarios and case studies
- simulating a workplace environment in the classroom

Job-shadowing opportunities

When learners have the opportunity to shadow someone in a particular occupation, they gain a real-life perspective on the tasks involved and see how culture influences interactions in the workplace. This experience also provides learners with an opportunity to ask questions about a particular job prior to being employed.

Work experience placements

Whether paid or unpaid, temporary work experience placements can be very useful to learners. Work experience placements allow learners to gain practical on-the-job skills and also help learners identify areas where they need skill development. These placements provide learners with Canadian work experience, which is an advantage when applying for work. Another benefit is the potential for establishing a positive Canadian reference, which is very valuable to building a resumé for work in Canada.

When providing learners with work experience placements, it is important to provide “call-back” opportunities during the work placement period. One effective method is to have learners return to the classroom one day a week to debrief and learn from their experiences in the workplace. Bringing learners together to discuss their real-life workplace experiences provides all of the learners with an additional learning opportunity. Learners’ experiences can be used for the basis of discussions and role-plays, which develop language and cultural skills for facing similar situations in the future. When scenarios and role-plays are derived from learners’ actual experiences, they become more meaningful and learners become even more engaged in the learning process.

Networking opportunities

Employment opportunities are not always advertised through traditional channels. Learners will benefit from making contacts with people in a variety of organizations and workplaces. Many learners will already have established networks within their own ethnic or cultural group. However, they will also benefit from exposure to other networking opportunities. Employment preparation ESL literacy programs need to help learners develop strong oral skills and an awareness of cultural expectations for networking. Programs can host job fairs or take learners to existing job fairs. Providing opportunities to be mentored (or to mentor others) can also provide learners with valuable contacts.

Scenarios and case studies

It may not be feasible in your program to provide extensive job shadowing or work experience opportunities. In any situation, it is worthwhile to provide workplace-related scenarios and case studies as learning tasks. Learners can role-play, engage in problem solving and learn about socio-cultural expectations in the workplace from the experiences presented in scenarios and case studies.

Simulating a workplace environment in the classroom

By providing an environment similar to the workplace, learners develop skills and understanding that will help them retain employment. Ways of accomplishing this include: establishing sign in/sign out procedures, assigning roles and responsibilities to individual learners.

Suggested Themes

Every learner is unique and every class is different. However, there are some themes that are generally appropriate in employment preparation ESL literacy programs. The following themes are suggested for employment preparation ESL literacy programs:

- looking for a job
- getting a job
- starting a new job
- keeping a job / becoming a valued employee
- learning about health and safety on the job

Use the **key text types** for employment ESL literacy to guide your choices in the types of texts you provide for learners. The key text types outline recommended texts for use in each of the four program contexts.



See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes *for the employment ESL literacy key text types.*

Thematic instruction that is recycled and spiraled throughout levels in a program is an effective way to develop content knowledge, oral language and literacy skills. In each thematic unit, instructors are encouraged to integrate content from the following three **content pillars**:

- rights and responsibilities
- cultural expectations
- resources and opportunities



See the Classroom Concept in Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes *for information on the content pillars in relation to planning for thematic units.*

Guiding Principles for Workplace ESL Literacy Programs

Effective workplace ESL literacy programs help learners develop the literacy, language and cultural skills they need to succeed in meeting job requirements in a specific workplace. The focus in these programs is on supporting learners to succeed in their current employment context. Workplace ESL literacy programs are funded by the employer and are specific to that organization.

Teaching within a workplace involves a different set of considerations on the part of instructors and program administrators, as they are serving two populations at once.

This section outlines guiding principles for developing effective and responsive programs and curricula in workplace ESL literacy. The four guiding principles are:

- build positive relationships with employers and learners
- understand employers' expectations
- understand the workplace task requirements
- understand the workplace culture

Build Positive Relationships with Employers and Learners

In workplace ESL literacy programs, program designers and instructors are accountable to both management and the learners in the program.

It is key to the success of the program that the purpose, goals and approach are based on needs of both the employer and the learners. Ensure that the employers and learners understand the value of the program and are committed to its success. Build trust with both stakeholder groups.

Understand Employers' Expectations

Workplace ESL literacy program administrators and instructors need to clearly understand the expectations of the employer and of the competitive labour market. It is important for instructors to be clear on employers' requirements regarding communication, progress reports, etc. This helps instructors communicate accurately with the learners about how the information from the classes will be used.

Employers and managers need to understand what can reasonably be accomplished in a given time frame. They may not fully understand the nature of ESL literacy acquisition and may be surprised to learn how incremental the learning steps are. It is important that employers and learners have realistic expectations for learner achievement. When expectations are realistic, learner success is more attainable.

Learners need to understand what their employers expect. These expectations may include adopting culturally appropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. greeting people when arriving at work) or increased ability to participate in other workplace training opportunities.

Employers and management need to understand what challenges their employees are facing in their jobs, as these challenges will impact their job performance. Using these challenges as the basis for building a workplace-specific curriculum will increase the buy-in of the employees.

Understand the Workplace Task Requirements

Program administrators and instructors need to understand the job requirements of a particular workplace. The following questions provide a starting point for identifying the kinds of skills and information the learners need for that particular workplace.

- What is the organizational structure of the company?
- What are the established procedures for routine job tasks? (e.g. sign in/out, requesting days off, communicating with management & co-workers, safety, etc.)
- What are the duties of the job?
- What are the safety requirements of the job?
- What challenges are the learners experiencing on the job?
- What changes do the employers want to see?

Understand the Workplace Culture

In addition to understanding the specific job requirements, it is essential to develop an understanding of the particular workplace culture that the program will be operating in. Although there are general Alberta workplace cultural norms, each workplace has its own cultural flavour. When learners break the cultural norms of their workplace, this can create tension, even though their actual work skills may be excellent. The following questions provide a starting point for identifying the cultural expectations of the workplace.

- What cultural norms do the learners need to be aware of?
- What behaviours are required for learners' knowledge and skills to be valued by employers?
- What behaviours are required for learners to be valued and accepted by co-workers?
- What behaviours are required for learners' voices to be heard and understood?

When these questions have been explored, instructors and program administrators can identify the particular language, literacy and cultural skills that will form the basis of the curriculum.

Suggested Themes

Every learner is unique and every class is different. Themes in workplace ESL literacy classes will depend on the workplace itself. These may include:

- learning about health and safety at work
- communicating at work
- learning on the job
- managing your job duties
- solving problems at work
- resolving conflicts at work

Use the **key text types** for employment preparation ESL literacy to guide your choices in the types of texts you provide for learners. The key text types outline recommended texts for use in each of the four program contexts.



*See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes **for the employment preparation ESL literacy key text types.***

Thematic instruction that is recycled and spiraled throughout levels in a program is an effective way to develop content knowledge, oral language and literacy skills. In each thematic unit, instructors are encouraged to integrate content from the following three **content pillars**:

- rights and responsibilities
- cultural expectations
- resources and opportunities



*See the Classroom Concept in Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes **for information on the content pillars in relation to planning for thematic units.***

Helpful Resources

The following resources are suggested for use in employment ESL literacy programs:

- Alberta Employment and Immigration. (n.d.). *Employment standards*. Retrieved November 15, 2010, from <http://employment.alberta.ca/SFW/1224.html>
- Alberta Learning Information Service. (n.d.). *Planning your career*. Retrieved December 2, 2010, from <http://alis.alberta.ca/>
- Belfiore, Mary Ellen, and Barbara Burnaby. *Teaching English in the workplace*. Don Mills: Pippin Publishing, 2001.
- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. (2009). *Language for work: CLB and Essential skills for ESL instructors*. Retrieved December 2, 2010, from http://www.itsessential.ca/itsessential/display_page.asp?page_id=410
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. (n.d.). *Essential skills profiles*. Retrieved December 2, 2010, from http://www10.hrsdc.gc.ca/es/english/ES_Profiles.aspx
- Literacywork International. (n.d.). *Scenarios*. Retrieved December 2, 2010, from <http://www.literacywork.com/Literacywork/Resources.html>
- NorQuest College. (2007). *Skills for jobs: A resource tool for tutors of low-level literacy*. Retrieved June 24, 2010, from <http://www.norquest.ca/corporate/edresources/index.htm>

In Alberta, the government has set the goal of increasing the literacy level of adults with the equivalent of high school completion to seventy percent of the population (Alberta Advanced Education & Technology, 2009.). One strategy for achieving this goal is to increase the number of adults participating in foundational adult learning and skills training programs. Educational preparation ESL literacy programs help adult learners with interrupted formal education develop the skills necessary for further education and literacy development.

Educational preparation ESL literacy programs help learners build the literacy, language, and academic skills and strategies for success in adult education contexts. These contexts include, but are not limited to:

- adult basic education (ABE) programs and high school upgrading
- workplace training programs
- training/certification programs
- continuing education programs
- community-based (e.g. library) adult learning programs

Adult education programs such as these are usually based on principles of adult learning, which frame adult learners as self-directed, internally-motivated, autonomous learners who can identify their own knowledge and skill gaps. Adult education principles advocate for problem-based, experiential learning that allows learners to draw on past knowledge and experience and apply it in concrete ways to their immediate roles (Smith, 1999).

Learners in ESL literacy programs have not had the opportunity to develop the skills and characteristics that are assumed in many adult education contexts. The purpose of educational preparation ESL literacy is to help learners develop skills and strategies for success in these contexts.

This section outlines guiding principles for developing effective and responsive programs and curricula in the context of educational preparation ESL literacy. The five guiding principles are:

- identify the context you are preparing learners for
- understand the academic requirements of the contexts learners will transition into
- understand the expectations of adult learning environments
- create bridging outcomes and assessment standards
- maintain a focus on educational transitioning

Identify the Context for which you are Preparing Learners

Educational preparation ESL literacy programs cannot fill in all of learners' knowledge and skill gaps. You will need to make informed decisions about which skills and content to prioritize. This is only possible when it is clear which program you are preparing learners for.

Determine the context for which you will prepare learners for based on information gathered from an environmental scan and community/learner needs assessments. For example, will your program prepare learners for an adult basic education program, a daycare worker certification course or an apprenticeship exam and apprenticeship? Identify the programs learners will transition into and a clear target audience. This enables a program to provide focused, intentional programming and supports learners' success. For more information on setting your program's purpose, goals and approach, see the *Program Principles* section earlier in this stage.



See Stage 1: Understanding Needs for more information on environmental scanning, needs assessment and defining a target audience.

Understand the Academic Requirements

In order for learners to be successful in their next learning steps, it is crucial that the educational preparation ESL literacy program builds the skills necessary for that context. For example, if learners will be transitioning into an adult basic education program, it is necessary to understand the academic requirements of that specific program.

Although each context may have specific requirements, learners will generally need to develop skills in the following areas:

- reading
- vocabulary
- writing
- grammar, mechanics and spelling

- academic content
- academic strategies
- numeracy
- technology

Asking the following questions will provide a starting point for understanding the academic requirements of learners' next educational steps.

- What program will learners transition into? What courses will they need to take?
- At which level of the program should learners enter, in order to make the most of their ESL literacy support and funding?
- What skills are learners expected to have upon entry? Consider listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary development, grammar, numeracy and non-academic skills.
- What knowledge is expected of learners when they enter? Consider content knowledge from Alberta Learning K-9 Programs of Study.
- What strategies will help learners meet expectations when they transition?
- What numeracy requirements do learners face?

Reading

The learning outcomes for reading and reading strategies provided in this framework (see Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes) provide a solid foundation for developing the reading skills needed in adult education programs. In order to be successful in adult education programs, ESL literacy learners need to transition from **learning to read to reading to learn**. In this process, learners develop enough basic reading skills (decoding, sight word recognition and reading strategies) to begin to gain new knowledge through text. This shift generally begins towards the end of Phase II.

In educational preparation ESL literacy programs, it is critical for learners to develop strong skills for *reading to learn*. It is generally assumed in adult education contexts that learners understand it is possible to learn new information through text. This assumption is the basis of using textbooks (or other print materials such as newspapers, websites, etc.) as a way of transmitting and acquiring new information.

When they participate in adult education programs, LIFE are faced with reading materials that are challenging not only because of the reading level, but because of the cultural content, background knowledge assumed, and the range of vocabulary presented. Teaching learners strategies that will help them cope with the nature and quantity of reading materials presented in adult education contexts is critical in an educational preparation ESL literacy program.



The following reading strategies are particularly important in transitioning from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*:

- using context cues
- using word, syntax & punctuation cues
- identifying literary elements
- using supports
- making inferences and drawing conclusions



See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes *for learning outcomes in reading and reading strategies.*

Vocabulary

Supporting learners to build their ability for reading to learn involves incorporating explicit instruction in vocabulary development. It can be very challenging for ESL learners to keep up with the vocabulary acquisition of their native English speaking classmates. This lag in vocabulary acquisition can result in a lag in the development of literacy skills (Roessingh, 2009).

Vocabulary development and strategies for understanding unfamiliar vocabulary are crucial to learners in academic contexts. Academic word lists are one way of helping learners develop vocabulary, but this vocabulary must be taught in context for it to be meaningful to learners. Explicit instruction in reading strategies helps learners understand, name, practice and apply strategies that increase vocabulary recognition and comprehension as they read.

In educational preparation ESL literacy programs, it is important to provide learners with ample opportunities for reading a variety of texts. Learners need exposure to both fiction (including novels, short stories and poetry) and non-fiction (including textbooks, websites and newspapers) in order to build an understanding of differing structures and appropriate strategies for reading and comprehending each.

Writing

The writing, spelling and literacy strategy outcomes provided in this framework are the basis for developing the writing skills needed for success in adult education programs. In educational preparation ESL literacy programs, learners need to develop writing skills that prepare them for the context they will transition into. The requirements of the transition context influence the level of writing learners need to demonstrate. In many adult education contexts, learners need to develop skills in the following areas:

- organizing and planning writing independently
- revising and editing writing independently
- writing in a formal academic tone
- writing about abstract concepts

Instruction in writing strategies is an important part of an educational preparation ESL literacy program. In their next steps in adult education contexts, they will need to be able to move through the writing process independently. Explicit development of writing strategies gives learners a strong writing foundation for their future educational steps.



See Stage3: Set Learning Outcomes *for learning outcomes in writing and writing strategies.*

Grammar, mechanics and spelling

Grammar, mechanics and spelling are integral parts of writing instruction. In order to write the type of complex sentences required in academic contexts, learners will need to understand the building blocks of accurate sentence structures. Grammar instruction needs to be explicit, but not isolated. Learners need contextualized opportunities to practice and use the structures as they are presented.

Academic content

Learners with limited formal education may lack what is considered to be “common knowledge” in the areas of science, geography, history or literature. It is unrealistic to expect to be able to fill in all of these gaps. However, programs can integrate and spiral key concepts and information from the Alberta Learning K-9 Programs of Study. Using this content can provide the context for literacy development. If a program is designed to scaffold and spiral the development of “common” background knowledge throughout, learners will have more success in adult basic education classes (e.g. science, social studies) when they transfer.

Academic strategies

When learners transition into non-ESL, or content-based programs, they often find that the pace of classroom learning is increased substantially. Learners need to be prepared for this faster-paced learning environment. Build in instruction and time to develop the following skills:

- note-taking (when listening or reading)
- timed reading
- test-preparation and test-taking strategies
- summarizing
- quick and accurate copying

Numeracy

Numeracy is particularly important for learners in educational preparation ESL literacy programs. Depending on learners’ educational and career goals, they may need to take math courses. Numeracy instruction can be challenging because learners’ numeracy levels do not always correlate with their literacy and oral communication skills. When learners do have higher numeracy levels, they still often have difficulty with word problems and the

language used to talk about mathematical functions. The focus of a numeracy component in educational preparation ESL literacy programs is on providing learners with the numeracy and the language needed for English math classes.

 **See Appendix A: Recommendations for Integrating Numeracy *for more information.***

Technology

Technology is a part of everyday life and computers are used extensively in adult education contexts. The context you are preparing learners for will dictate the kinds of technology/ computer skills to include in your program. The following skills are assumed in many adult education contexts:

- word processing (e.g. Microsoft word) skills
- email skills (including managing an email account and sending attachments)
- skills for using an online search engine (e.g. Google) to find information
- presentation software (e.g. Powerpoint) skills
- skills for using online learning platforms (e.g. blackboard, discussion boards, etc.)
- skills for using online and phone registration systems

 **See Appendix B: Recommendations for Integrating Technology *for more information.***

Understand the Expectations of Adult Learning Environments

ESL learners with interrupted formal education will be faced with more than just academic challenges when they transition into adult education programs. In addition to academic skills, learners need to understand the expectations of adult learners in formal education contexts. In educational preparation ESL literacy programs, it is essential to provide learners with the skills to meet these expectations. This section highlights the assumptions of adult learners that are often assumed in adult learning contexts.

Asking the following questions will provide a starting point for understanding the expectations of the adult learning environment you are preparing learners for:

- What underlying assumptions about adult learner behavior are infused throughout the program they will transition into?
- What behavioural expectations might learners be unaware of?
- What skills will enhance learners' chances of success when they transition?
- How can the program support learners to develop the non-academic skills necessary for success?

This framework provides information on the non-literacy attributes and skills that contribute to learners' success in a section called *Habits of Mind* (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*). The *Habits of Mind* section provides a model for developing skills and strategies to demonstrate



resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility and engagement in Albertan contexts, such as education, workplace and community.

In addition to the skills and strategies related to *Habits of Mind*, learners often need to develop skills for **independent** and **interdependent** learning. These will help learners to understand and meet expectations in adult education contexts.

Independent learning expectations

Adult learners are generally assumed to be independent learners. Developing skills for independent learning allows learners to meet these expectations and fosters continuous learning. Learners transitioning into adult education will need to develop:

- autonomous study skills: managing time, setting priorities, organizing and managing tasks, and completing assignments
- problem solving skills
- critical thinking
- goal setting



See the section on Habits of Mind in Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes for information on independent learning

Interdependent learning expectations

Although adults are expected to be independent learners, they are also expected to interact with and learn from classmates. Learners will need to develop the following interdependent learning skills:

- participation in group / class discussions
- functioning effectively as a team member in group projects
- reflecting on and talking about their learning goals, strengths and challenges
- seeking support and clarification from others
- respecting other learners' time, opinions and property

Learners need to understand their degree of readiness for adult education contexts. Include outcomes related to classroom behavior, managing learning, group work, etc. Precisely describing expected behaviours (such as arriving on time, or asking for permission to hand in an assignment late) and supporting learners to achieve these increases their chances of success upon transition.

For example, in the Bridge Program, an educational preparation ESL literacy program, at Bow Valley College, a project-based component of the course addresses learners' non-academic needs. Learners' participate in a class called Building Essential Life and Literacy Skills (BELLS). This multi-level class provides learners with an opportunity to complete group projects on topics that are applicable to their lives. The projects involve

group work, problem solving, making presentations and developing computer skills. Learners gain real-life experience and feedback on their skills in these areas, which helps to prepare them for the expectations they will meet when transitioning into their next academic steps.

Create Bridging Outcomes and Assessment Standards

When preparing learners to transition into an Adult Basic Education (ABE) program, it is important that the learning outcomes effectively bridge the gap between learners' current literacy and language skills and those expected in these programs.

In many cases, the academic language and literacy requirements of ABE programs exceed the threshold of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*. The learning outcomes in this framework align with these benchmarks, from Foundation to Phase III. In educational preparation ESL literacy programs, it is often necessary to extend the learning outcomes beyond Phase III of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*.

In order to do this, curriculum developers can follow this process:

- determine transition points.
- determine the skills and knowledge required.
- create bridging outcomes and assessment tools

Determine Transition Points

In some cases, learners will transition to an adult education context that has just one entry point (e.g. a certification course). In other cases, learners will enter into a program that has a series of courses (e.g. adult basic education). The transition point is the point at which the learners enter the new program.

When preparing learners to enter a program with a series of courses, find out whether there are flexible transition points. In adult basic education programs, for example, these are the points where learners should enter to experience the highest chances of success in achieving their goals. In general, the more focused language and literacy support learners receive in ESL literacy classes, the better their ability to cope with the demands of programs such as adult basic education. Consider learners' funding and time limitations when determining transition points.

Determine the Skills and Knowledge Required

Investigate the skills required for the learners to transition into the adult education program at transition point you have identified. It is important to consider all of the following areas:

- language skills
- literacy skills
- Habits of Mind
- academic and learning strategies: independent and interdependent
- academic content
- numeracy
- technology

Prioritize these skills and identify those that are critical for success.

Create bridging outcomes and assessment tools

The learning outcomes provided in this framework extend to Phase III Adequate in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*. Use the skills you have identified and create outcomes that bridge the gap between the requirements of the transition point and the learning outcomes provided in this framework. Ensure that you articulate to the standards of the context for which you are preparing learners (e.g. grade equivalencies, Essential Skills levels, Canadian Language Benchmarks, etc.).

A general principle of developing outcomes is to begin with the end point and build backwards from that point. With the outcomes provided in this framework, the designer's task will be to build a bridge between the two skill levels. Although there are no clear parallels, it may be helpful to use other external standards such as grade equivalencies or the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults*.

Effective assessment is directly linked to the learning outcomes in a program. Ensure that your program measures the outcomes it has set, and that the learning outcomes reflect the expectations of the context to which learners will be transitioning.



See Stage 4: Integrate Assessment *for information on developing assessment tools.*

Maintain a Focus on Educational Transitioning

Educational preparation ESL literacy programs need to have rigorous learning expectations (Leong & Collins, 2007). It is appropriate for programs to have built-in support, but learners also need to be ready to meet these rigorous expectations. In order for learners to transition into and succeed in adult education programs, they will need to focus on their academic and non-academic skill development.

In order to maintain the focus on educational transitioning, it is important to ensure that the purpose, goals and learning expectations of your program are transparent to learners. These need to be provided in a format that is accessible to learners. For example, provide learner versions of the learning outcomes and assessment rubrics.

Depending on their length of residence and the support they already have in place, learners may have needs related to the *acclimatization* stage of the settlement continuum (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). For example, learners may need information and skills for accessing community and health services, finding housing, budgeting, etc. These can be integrated into an educational preparation ESL literacy program, but should not become the purpose. In exploring *acclimatization* topics, use these as a vehicle for developing the skills necessary in academic contexts. Provide opportunities for learners to listen, speak, read and write about these topics, keeping the focus on developing the skills needed for academic success throughout. However, learners whose lives are dominated by *acclimatization* needs may not be ready for the rigorous expectations of academic preparation programs.

Topics related to acclimatization can be used as the basis for thematic instruction in educational preparation contexts. Thematic instruction that is recycled and spiraled throughout levels in a program is an effective way to develop content knowledge, oral language and literacy skills.

Use the **key text types** for educational preparation ESL literacy to guide your choices in the types of texts you provide for learners. The key text types outline recommended texts for use in each of the four program contexts.



See Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes *for the educational preparation ESL literacy* key text types.

In each thematic unit, instructors are encouraged to integrate content from the following three **content pillars**:

- rights and responsibilities
- cultural expectations
- resources and opportunities



See the Classroom Concept in Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes *for information on the content pillars in relation to planning for thematic units.*

Helpful Resources

The following resources are suggested for use in educational preparation ESL literacy programs:

- Alberta Learning. (n.d.). *Programs of study*. Retrieved November 12, 2010, from <http://www.education.alberta.ca/teachers/program.aspx>
- Bow Valley College (2009). *Learning for LIFE: An ESL literacy handbook*. Calgary, Canada: Bow Valley College.
- Leong, M., & Collins, L. (2007). *Bridging the gap: A framework for teaching and transitioning low literacy immigrant youth*. Calgary: Bow Valley College.

SUMMARY

Effective ESL literacy programs identify learner and community needs (*Stage 1: Understand Needs*) and use this information to determine the focus of their program. A program's focus is composed of three main elements: **purpose, goals** and **approach**. This section has outlined considerations for each of these three elements from both programming and instructional points of view. This section has also provided descriptions and guiding principles for each of the four main ESL literacy programming contexts in Alberta:

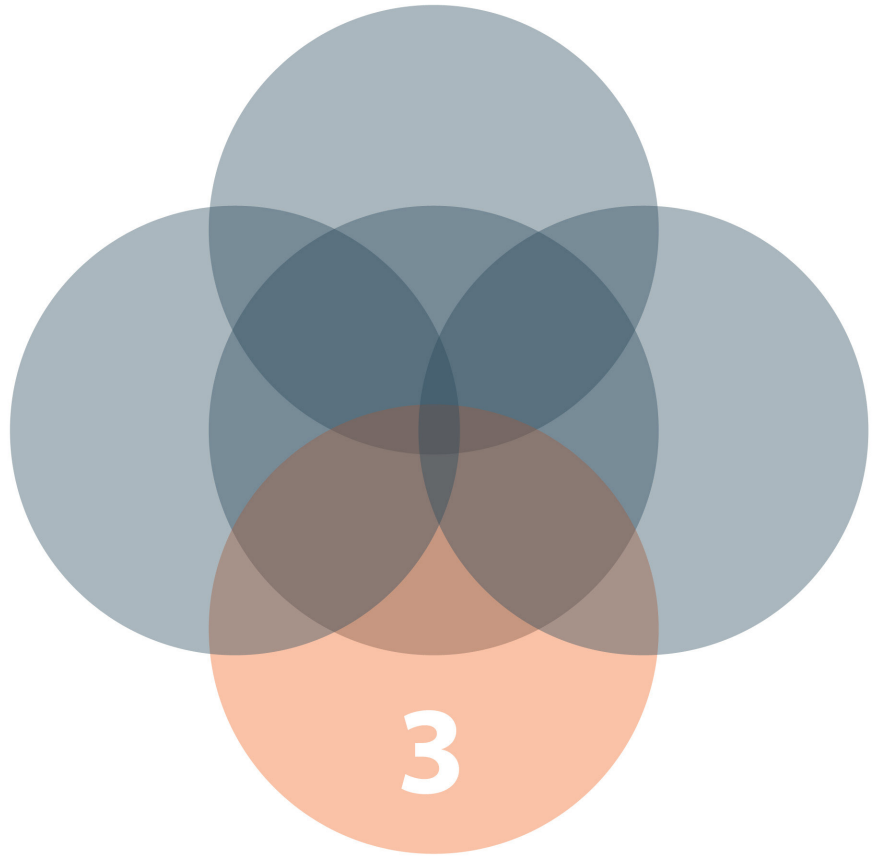
- community orientation and preparation ESL literacy
- family ESL literacy
- employment ESL literacy
- educational preparation ESL literacy

A clear understanding of purpose, goals and approach informs the remaining stages in curriculum development: *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes, Stage 4: Integrate Assessment* and *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Alberta Employment and Immigration (2006). *Government of Alberta Adult EAL/ESL continuum*. Author.
- ATESL. (2009). *Best practices for adult ESL and LINC programming in Alberta*. Edmonton: Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language
- Bow Valley College. (2009). *Learning for LIFE: An ESL literacy handbook*. Calgary: Bow Valley College
- Caffarella, R. S. (2002). *Planning programs for adult learners* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2008). *Settlement program logic model*. Retrieved December 14, 2010, from atwork.settlement.org/downloads/atwork/CIC_Modernization_RFP_2010_Logic%20Model.ppt
- Holmes, T., Kingwell, G., Pettis, J., & Pidlaski, M. (2001). *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: A guide to implementation*. Ottawa: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks.
- Leong, M., & Collins, L. (2007). *Bridging the gap: A framework for teaching and transitioning low literacy immigrant youth*. Calgary: Bow Valley College.





STAGE **3**

Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework
STAGE 3: SET LEARNING OUTCOMES

STAGE 3 | TABLE OF CONTENTS

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT GUIDE: STAGE 3

Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes

Summary: Learning outcomes are at the core of an effective curriculum. Effective learning outcomes are specific, measurable, observable and achievable within a realistic time frame. The framework provides learning outcomes in reading, writing, literacy strategies and Habits of Mind.

Development tasks	Process and guiding questions
Identify the skills learners need	<p>Refer to the information gathered in the learner and community needs assessment (<i>Stage 1: Understand Needs</i>). Also refer to the program context guiding principles (<i>Stage 2: Determine Focus</i>).</p> <p>Refer to relevant external standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What skills will learners need for success upon completion of this program?</i> <p>Review the learning outcomes in this framework: reading, writing, literacy strategies and Habits of Mind.</p>
Set a manageable number of learning outcomes	<p>Prioritize the skills you have identified. Recognize that it may not be possible to address all of your learners' knowledge and skill gaps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Which skills are essential for learners' next steps?</i> <p>Set learning outcomes that build the skills learners need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Which outcomes will be included in the curriculum?</i> <p>Refer to these resources:</p> <p>Listening and speaking - <i>Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults</i></p> <p>Reading and writing, literacy strategies, habits of mind - <i>Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes</i></p> <p>Numeracy and technology - Appendix A (Numeracy) and B (Technology).</p> <p>Tailor the learning outcomes to meet the specific needs and goals of your program (<i>Stage 2: Determine Focus</i>). Consider the key text types for reading and writing in your program context (see <i>Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes</i>). For each outcome, determine the proficiency expected at each level of your program.</p>
Determine how prescriptive your curriculum will be	<p>Consider the expectations learners face upon completion of your program. Determine whether it is necessary to prescribe content, themes, methods, materials, tasks or assessments.</p>

STAGE 3: SET LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes are at the core of an effective curriculum. A learning outcome is a statement of what a learner can do as a result of a learning experience, such as a course or program (Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2002). Effective learning outcomes are specific, measurable, observable and achievable within a realistic time frame.

Below are four examples of learning outcomes presented in this curriculum framework.

- Learners will be able to **interpret signs, notices and labels.** (*reading*)
- Learners will be able to **fill out forms.** (*writing*)
- Learners will be able to **predict before reading.** (*literacy strategies*)
- Learners will be able to **access help and resources.** (*Habits of Mind*)

Setting learning outcomes is the third stage of curriculum development. When learning outcomes are carefully set, this contributes to effectiveness in achieving the program's purpose and goals (see *Stage 2: Determine Focus*) which have been developed in response to learner and community needs (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). Learning outcomes are measurable and observable, which allows them to be assessed throughout the program (see *Stage 4: Integrate Assessment*). By keeping clear and appropriate learning outcomes at the core of the curriculum, programs are better able to demonstrate accountability to all stakeholders: learners, community members, funders, etc. (see *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*).

There are several **advantages** to placing learning outcomes at the centre of a curriculum.

Outcomes allow for transparent communication.

In an outcomes-based program, all stakeholders (instructors, learners, funders and administrators) are aware of what the learning expectations are. Everyone involved is clear on what is being taught, learned and assessed in the program.

Outcomes provide programs with structure and balance.

Many effective instructors in ESL literacy programs use a thematic approach to teaching. Outcomes do not displace thematic teaching; they strengthen it. Learning outcomes help teachers ensure that thematic instruction is focused and intentional. Thematic instruction provides a context for learning outcomes, allowing instructors to incorporate themes and content that are relevant and interesting to the learners, while maintaining a focus on skill development.

Outcomes increase accountability.

Outcomes ensure that programs are accountable to learners. In a program with a clear purpose and goals, and outcomes that support these, learners have clear expectations about what they can accomplish in their learning. Learning outcomes help instructors maintain a focus on the goals and purpose of the learning time, which helps learners feel confident that their time is being spent effectively.



Outcomes are measurable.

Developing a curriculum around learning outcomes enables instructors to describe progress to learners, administrators and funders in measurable terms. Many ESL literacy instructors find it challenging to capture the incremental improvements that learners make over time. Outcomes give instructors specific indicators for learners' improvement. In addition, outcomes clarify which skills instructors are responsible for teaching within a given time frame.

Outcomes allow for recycling and spiraling throughout a program.

Learners need multiple opportunities to develop and practice skills. When learning outcomes are the focus of the curriculum, these skills can be repeated (*recycled*) with increasing complexity and learner independence (*spiraled*) throughout the curriculum. This ensures that learners have ample opportunity to develop and transfer their skills.

Outcomes are appropriate for multi-level instruction.

Many instructors teach in multi-level classrooms. The outcomes provided in this framework are consistent across levels, requiring increased proficiency and independence as learners progress. In a multi-level classroom, instructors can work on one outcome with the entire class (e.g. read advertisements), but differentiate instruction by providing differing levels of support (e.g. in terms of layout, visual support, word banks, etc.).

Outcomes can increase motivation.

When a learning outcome is broken into small, achievable steps, learners can clearly see how they are progressing to a larger goal. With an outcomes-based curriculum, instructors are able to give very specific feedback to learners about how they can improve. When learning is focused and made manageable, learners are likely to experience success. This experience of success often motivates learners to continue.

In Canada, the common resource for understanding language **and** literacy development for ESL learners with interrupted formal education is the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*. These benchmarks describe the progression of literacy and language skills through four main phases: Foundation, Phase I, Phase II and Phase III. Although phrased as outcomes, these descriptors are **not** a curriculum or an assessment tool. However, they inform both (Canadian Centre for Language Benchmarks, 2000). *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* has been used as a key resource in developing the learning outcomes provided in this framework.



In this section, you will find:

- background information on the learning outcomes provided in this framework
- *Program Principles* for developing an outcomes-based curriculum
- *Classroom Concept: Make Learning Meaningful*. Information and guidance for instructors on integrating learning outcomes
- terminology
- learning outcomes for:
 - reading
 - writing
 - literacy strategies
 - Habits of Mind
- a summary
- helpful resources



LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THIS FRAMEWORK

The research for the development of this framework included a provincial needs assessment and consultations with a provincial advisory committee on ESL literacy. In site visits, interviews and consultations, ESL literacy practitioners in Alberta provided insight into the range of skills learners need outside the classroom upon completion of ESL literacy programs.

The following general areas of skill development for ESL learners with interrupted formal education were identified:

- oral communication skills
- reading skills
- writing skills
- reading and writing strategies
- life skills (e.g. managing time, budgeting, accessing resources, computer skills)
- learning strategies (e.g. preparation, revision, setting learning goals)
- sociocultural competence (e.g. understanding cultural expectations in a variety of contexts)

These areas were then used as the basis for developing the learning outcomes provided in this framework. For the purposes of this framework, some of these skill areas have been combined.

Oral communication skills are central to both literacy development and success in Alberta. Learning to read and write depends on understanding the language represented in text (Wren, 2001). Effective ESL literacy programs emphasize and integrate oral skill development throughout their curricula (Condelli, 2002; Indiana Department of Education, n.d.). In the case of oral communication skills, the national standard is *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults*.

Oral skill development is not specific to ESL literacy; this framework **does not** provide outcomes for listening and speaking. There are a variety of resources that address oral skill development. We recommend that programs use the following resources for selecting and creating listening and speaking outcomes for an ESL literacy curriculum:

- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. (2000). *Canadian language benchmarks 2000: English as a second language for adults*. Ottawa: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks.
- ATESL. (2009). *Best practices for adult ESL and LINC programming in Alberta*. Edmonton: Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language.



In this framework, there are four strands of learning outcomes and two appendices, which address the remaining skills identified in the provincial needs assessment.

The four strands of learning outcomes provided are:

- reading
- writing
- literacy strategies
- Habits of Mind

Reading and Writing

ESL literacy practitioners across Alberta indicated that learners need very specific, practical skills in reading and writing. The reading and writing outcomes provided in this framework are skill-specific. Each outcome (e.g. follow instructions) is described at ten levels of proficiency that align with the standards provided in *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*, from Foundation to Phase III Adequate.

Literacy Strategies

Effective readers, writers and spellers use a range of strategies. This section combines strategies for reading, writing and spelling, and expands on many of the strategies outlined in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*. Each strategy is described at three levels (Phase I, II and III) of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*.

Habits of Mind

Habits of Mind are the non-literacy attributes and skills that contribute to success in a variety of Albertan contexts, such as formal education, workplace and community. These attributes and skills address three areas identified in the provincial needs assessment: life skills, learning strategies and sociocultural competence. The focus in the Habits of Mind outcomes is on helping learners develop the skills that enable them to demonstrate resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility and engagement in Alberta.

Appendices

This framework also provides two appendices which address needs identified in the provincial needs assessment:

- Appendix A: Recommendations for integrating numeracy in ESL literacy programs
- Appendix B: Recommendations for integrating technology in ESL literacy programs



Essential Skills and this Framework

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) has identified nine skills that are needed for work, learning and life in Canada. These skills “provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change” (HRSDC, n.d.). The nine Essential Skills identified by HRSDC are:

- reading text
- document use
- numeracy
- writing
- oral communication
- working with others
- continuous learning
- thinking skills
- computer use

HRSDC provides occupational profiles that outline the Essential Skills requirements for different occupations. The Essential Skills provided by HRSDC are described in differing levels of complexity, ranging from 1 (basic tasks) to 4 or 5 (advanced tasks).

Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills: A Comparative Framework (2005) provides a comparison between Essential Skills and the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults*. In this framework, Essential Skills level 1 is roughly equated with the ESL Benchmarks in the following ways:

Comparison Between Essential Skills and Canadian Language Benchmarks	
Essential Skill	Essential Skills Level 1 compares to:
Reading	Benchmarks 3 -5
Writing	Benchmarks 4 – 5
Document Use	Benchmarks 3 – 5

Adapted from *Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills: A Comparative Framework*, Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (2005)

According to the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*, Phase III Adequate reading and writing proficiencies roughly parallel Benchmark 5. From these comparisons, it is evident that a “basic task” in Essential Skills outstrips the proficiency of many learners in ESL literacy programs. The levels of complexity outlined by HRSDC are not detailed enough in the lower range to represent the proficiency levels of ESL literacy learners. For this reason, the Essential Skills descriptors of *levels of complexity* are not used as the basis for the literacy development proficiency descriptors in this framework.



However, the outcomes provided in this framework correspond with the Essential Skills in many ways. This chart outlines the parallels between learning outcomes in this framework and the Essential Skills.

Parallels Between Curriculum Framework Learning Outcomes and Essential Skills	
Essential Skills	Application in ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework
Reading text	Learning outcomes in reading and reading strategies
Document use	Learning outcomes in reading and writing
Numeracy	Appendix A: Recommendations for integrating numeracy
Writing	Learning outcomes in writing, writing strategies and spelling strategies
Continuous learning	Learning outcomes in Habits of Mind - demonstrating responsibility, engagement, resourcefulness and motivation in Albertan contexts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set and manage goals • learn outside the classroom • transfer learning • access help and resources • reflect on learning
Thinking skills	Learning outcomes in Habits of Mind - demonstrating responsibility, engagement, resourcefulness and motivation in Albertan contexts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solve problems • manage information • think critically
Computer skills	Appendix B: Recommendations for integrating technology
Oral communication	Oral communication skills are critical for literacy development, and it is necessary to link oral skill development to reading, writing and strategy development. Learning outcomes are not provided for listening and speaking in this framework. See the following resource to help you set learning outcomes in oral communication skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults</i> (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000)
Working with others	Although this area of Essential Skills is not directly addressed in this framework, the learning outcomes in Habits of Mind demonstrating resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility, and engagement – will enhance learners’ ability to work with others.

PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

How can we apply these ideas in our program?

Whether you are building a new ESL literacy program or revising an existing one, setting learning outcomes for your curriculum requires several considerations from a program perspective. These include:

- setting a manageable number of outcomes
- supporting instructors
- monitoring and revising outcomes

Every program is unique. Effective programs are responsive to the needs of their particular learners and reflect the community of which they are a part. The following guiding principles are provided to aid programs in using outcomes to develop effective and responsive curricula.

Set a Manageable Number of Learning Outcomes

Developing skills takes practice. Learners need opportunities to practice skills in a variety of ways over a significant period of time. Because of this, it is important to limit the number of outcomes included in a curriculum. When a curriculum includes too many outcomes, both instructors and learners can be overwhelmed by the expectations.

ESL literacy program administrators often find that “less is more” when selecting outcomes. Ensuring that there is ample time for recycling and spiraling learning outcomes in a variety of ways depends on selecting a limited number of outcomes.

This framework provides a range of skill-based learning outcomes, based on input from representative ESL literacy programs across the province. Be selective in the outcomes you choose, in order to help the teaching and learning process be manageable and successful.

The outcomes chosen depend on a variety of factors. These factors include:

- program purpose and goals
- amount of teaching and learning time
- the structure of the program

Program Purpose and Goals

Each outcome in a curriculum must support the overall purpose and goals of the program. When the purpose and goals are tied directly to needs assessment, this ensures that the learning outcomes

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The curriculum reflects the mission of the program... and best practices in TESL methodology.



are addressing the learning needs of the target audience. This framework recommends integrating outcomes in each of the following four areas:

- oral skill development : see *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults*
- reading and writing - provided in this framework
- literacy strategies - provided in this framework
- Habits of Mind - provided in this framework

Effective learning outcomes are those that represent the key skills needed for success in your program context, whether it is community orientation, family, employment, educational preparation or something different. When a program has a clearly articulated statement of purpose and goals, it is possible to select those outcomes which are critical for achieving this purpose. Programs may want to consider setting core learning outcomes and optional learning outcomes as a way of indicating instructional priorities.

Amount of Teaching and Learning Time

Consider the number of contact hours per week and the length of the learning term or semester in order to set outcomes that can realistically be addressed in the time frame provided. Also consider learning styles and learners' years of formal education, as these will impact the amount of time learners need in order to develop their skills. It is important to seek instructors' input in this area as they have the most accurate idea of what can realistically be accomplished within the class time, given the unique learning needs addressed in ESL literacy programs.

The Structure of the Program

When adapting an existing program, it may be necessary to consider the program levels and program length. In part-time or multi-level classes, it can be more challenging to address multiple outcomes, and the number of outcomes may need to be further limited.

Determine How Prescriptive Your Curriculum Will Be

When you have set your learning outcomes, determine how prescriptive your curriculum will need to be. Consider whether your curriculum will need to prescribe the following:

- **content** to be covered
- **themes** to be used
- **methodology** to be used
- **materials** to be used
- **tasks** to be carried out
- **assessment** methods and measures



In some program contexts (e.g. educational or employment preparation programs), it may be necessary to articulate exactly the skills, knowledge and experience that learners have gained in your program, and to ensure that the assessment of these is consistent across your program. Providing learning outcomes and outlining content, themes, methodology, materials, tasks and assessments in detail in your curriculum can help instructors in different levels maintain more consistency in how the curriculum is implemented. This can help ensure that the way your curriculum is implemented is consistently tied to learners' long-term needs, as identified in your needs assessment (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). This approach also allows you to demonstrate accountability to the programs that your learners transition into (see *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*).

In other program contexts (e.g. community orientation and participation), it may be possible to provide more flexibility in the way your curriculum is delivered. In these contexts, it may be most appropriate to choose learning outcomes and outline your assessment strategy (see *Stage 4: Integrate Assessment*). Decisions about content, themes methodology, materials and tasks may be best left to the instructors in these contexts, and will be based on the immediate needs and interests of learners in the class (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*).

Both approaches can be beneficial to learners. Base your decisions about how prescriptive your curriculum will be on an understanding of two areas:

- **the focus of your program:** purpose, goals and approach (outlined in *Stage 2: Determine Focus*)
- **the guiding principles for the ESL literacy program contexts in Alberta:** Community Orientation and Participation, Family, Employment, and Educational Preparation (outlined in *Stage 2: Determine Focus*)

Planning for thematic instruction is also addressed in the *Classroom Concept* in this section of the framework.



For information on methodology, materials, tasks and theme teaching see Chapters 8 and 9 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

Some instructors may be unfamiliar with outcomes-based curricula and will benefit from support in the following areas:

- professional development in outcomes-based teaching
- tools for planning
- integrating learning outcomes

Throughout this process, it is important to continually highlight how outcomes benefit learners and contribute to more effective programs.

Professional Development

Outcomes-based teaching requires that instruction be based on an understanding of the skills learners need when they exit your program. Many instructors currently plan and deliver interesting, engaging lessons but may not be clear on how these lessons contribute to an overall goal.

Professional development that builds instructors' skills and awareness in the following areas will be important:

- *the nature, purpose and value of learning outcomes in curriculum development*
It will be important for instructors to understand that a curriculum based on outcomes does not mean that there is no room for "teachable moments" or incidental learning. Rather, outcomes provide instructors with direction and a structure for accountability and assessment.
- *"backwards" planning*
This involves using learning outcomes (rather than themes, topics, phonics, grammar, etc.) to drive instruction. In backwards planning, the instructor begins with the outcome, determines how it will be assessed, and then provides learning experiences and materials that support learners in developing the skills needed to achieve the outcome. Themes are recommended as a way of targeting learning outcomes, with the purpose being to provide opportunities to develop the skills outlined in the program's learning outcomes.
- *assessing and reporting on achievement in learning outcomes*
The assessment section of this curriculum framework provides detailed information and samples on purposes of assessment and implementing portfolio assessment. Instructors will need clarity on the expectations for documenting and reporting progress, and will also be able to provide valuable feedback on the effectiveness and manageability of the assessment measures outlined in your curriculum. Provide

training and opportunities for collaboration that ensure instructors are consistent in their interpretations and applications of the learning outcomes and proficiency descriptors.

- *sociocultural competence*

You can support instructors by providing sociocultural competence training. Developing instructors' awareness of sociocultural expectations will enable them to help learners develop an awareness of and skills for meeting sociocultural expectations in a variety of contexts. An important aspect of this training is to help raise instructors' awareness of their own cultural assumptions, which influence the way they interact with learners and others. Sociocultural competence is also addressed in *Habits of Mind*, later in this stage.

Tools for Planning

Clear expectations about the program's learning outcomes are important for instructors. In order to ensure that they are providing intentional instruction that targets learning outcomes, instructors will need access to tools that support this, or time to develop their own tools.

Integrating Learning Outcomes

In order for instructors to integrate learning outcomes effectively into their classroom practice, they need opportunities to discuss, question and think about learning outcomes and the implications of placing them at the core of a curriculum (Holmes, Kingwell, Pettis & Pidlaski, 2001). Professional development opportunities should include time to reflect on their experiences and explore applications of using learning outcomes to inform instruction.

Monitor and Revise Learning Outcomes

Throughout this framework, we encourage ESL literacy practitioners to aim for balance between the two faces of curriculum (Aoki, 2005). These faces are "curriculum as planned", which is the formalized program-level curriculum developed in response to learner and community needs and "curriculum as lived", which is the way the curriculum is implemented at the classroom level as instructors aim to meet the needs of the individual learners.

In order to balance both the formalized curriculum and to remain responsive to the needs of your target audience, it is important that there be processes in place to monitor and revise the learning outcomes at the core of a program. This is necessary to ensure that the learning outcomes, which fundamentally shape your program, are those that serve learners' best interests. "Monitoring your outcomes, and taking the necessary action to change or adapt themwill help your program to provide learners with the optimum learning experience" (Leong & Collins, 2007, p. 120).



It is important that the revision of learning outcomes is based on input from learners, instructors and community. In effective programs, revisions happen at a program level, rather than on a class by class basis, so that the integrity of the program is not compromised when outcomes are revised. Instructors need to know that their feedback on the learning outcomes is valued and they need to be a part of the monitoring and revision process. When outcomes are revised on a class-by-class basis, rather than at a program level, it is difficult to ensure that learners have the requisite skills to succeed in subsequent levels, and ultimately in the context you are preparing them for. Having a system in place for monitoring and revising learning outcomes enables programs to demonstrate accountability by regularly and consistently referring to the needs of the target audience.



See Stage 1: Understand Needs **for more information on understanding the needs of learners and your community.**

CLASSROOM CONCEPT: MAKE LEARNING MEANINGFUL

How can I apply these ideas in my classroom?

Connecting to learners' lives is essential for effective instruction. Learning outcomes provide focus and structure for instructional planning and become most meaningful when they are tied to learners' needs, goals and interests. LIFE (Learners with Interrupted Formal Education) benefit from explicit instruction that makes clear the purpose of each learning task, tying it to program goals and learner needs (Leong & Collins, 2007).

In some cases, programs may not have clearly defined statements of purpose, goals, approach or learning outcomes. If this is true for you, it is still possible to incorporate learning outcomes in the classes you teach. The guiding principles in this section aim to help you in planning for outcomes-based instruction at the classroom level, and for making outcomes-based learning meaningful. The three guiding principles outlined in this section are:

"Planning for instruction at any level ... requires creativity and expertise."
Holmes, Kingwell, Pettis & Pidlaski (2001, p. 79).

- teach outcomes in context
- teach literacy strategies and Habits of Mind explicitly
- balance instructional approaches

Teach Outcomes in Context

Outcomes are measurable skills: what learners are able to *do* as a result of their learning. Outcomes (e.g. write a message, read advertisements) need to be taught, learned and practiced in a context that provides relevant vocabulary, language functions and purposes for communication. **Themes** (e.g. healthy living, keeping a job, preparing for winter) provide a context for language and literacy development. Thematic content is the "vehicle that supports language acquisition" (Roessingh & Johnson, 2004, p.46).

A distinct advantage of using themes to teach outcomes is that the same outcome (e.g. read advertisements) can be addressed in several different themes (recycled) over time. This allows for multiple opportunities to practice the same skill. It also helps learners understand how the skills they develop can be transferred to a variety of contexts.

Learning takes time, and learners need support in order to achieve learning outcomes. Effective second language curriculum and materials design incorporates three key principles: **recycling**, **spiraling** and **scaffolding** (Roessingh & Johnson, 2004). Theme teaching allows instructors to integrate each of these principles.



Recycling

Frequent, repeated exposure to new vocabulary, structures and skills is necessary in ESL literacy programs. In effective programs, content, skills, vocabulary and concepts are repeated multiple times within levels and throughout the program. Recycling learning outcomes provides learners with the multiple practice opportunities necessary for skill development. In effective theme teaching, vocabulary and learning outcomes are recycled in each theme and between themes.

Scaffolding

This is the support provided so that learners can experience success even at the lowest levels. There are many ways of providing scaffolding to support learners:

- teacher guidance and modeling
- visual supports
- recycling of tasks and formats
- recycling of vocabulary and content
- incorporating explanations of vocabulary or context clues in teacher-modified texts, which helps learners use reading strategies to make meaning
- providing word banks
- large, simplified fonts and increased white space on printed materials

As learners' proficiency in a learning outcome increases, these supports can be scaled back, allowing learners to achieve and demonstrate a greater degree of independence.

Spiraling

When outcomes are spiraled, the degree of skill and task complexity is increased over time within levels and throughout the program. As outcomes are recycled, learners become more independent and the degree of complexity can be increased in incremental stages. "We must continue to challenge our learners by continually raising the bar" (Roessingh & Johnson, 2002, p. 51). In ESL literacy programs, it is important that these increases are incremental so that learners can experience success in their learning. In effective theme teaching, outcomes (e.g. write messages) are recycled within and between themes. A learner's degree of independence and the complexity of tasks increases gradually as outcomes are spiraled.



For more information on recycling, scaffolding and spiraling and examples of how these principles can be applied, see Chapter 10 of Learning for Life: An ESL Literacy Handbook.

Planning for Theme-Based Teaching

Effective thematic teaching requires planning and intentional instruction. It is more than a loosely-connected series of lessons or activities. Planning for effective thematic instruction requires that instructors consider several components as they design thematic units.

As you plan, consider six elements:

1. theme
2. learning outcomes
3. assessment
4. content pillars
5. tasks
6. materials

Developing a thematic unit is not a linear process; each of the components influences the others. You may find that you need to move back and forth between the elements as you plan. It is crucial, however, that everything included in the theme relates to the learning outcomes identified.

1. Theme

An effective theme is more than just a name of a topic (e.g. housing). An effective theme narrows the topic and provides a focus for how the language will be applied in the unit. For example:

Topic	Theme
Food	Eating Healthy Food
Transportation	Getting around Calgary
Employment	Keeping a job
Weather	Preparing for winter

The most effective themes are those that are chosen based on learners' needs and interests, and are also linked to your program goals.

The length of theme and the number of lessons incorporated will depend on your program parameters, and the depth in which you wish to explore in the theme. A useful guideline is to develop the theme over several (e.g. 8-10) lessons and to group these lessons into three stages: introduction, development, and application.



For sample theme units outlining the introduction, development and application stages, see Chapters 10, 13 – 16 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

2. Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are at the core of effective thematic teaching. When preparing a thematic unit, provide a balance between *new* and *recycled* outcomes. Teaching thematically means that you are able to address multiple learning outcomes in an interconnected way.

In each theme, consider including outcomes from each of the following areas:

Listening and Speaking	see <i>Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults</i>
Reading and Writing	provided in this section of the ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework (Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes)
Literacy Strategies	
Habits of Mind	
Numeracy and Technology	see <i>Appendices A & B</i> in the ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework (<i>Recommendations for integrating numeracy and technology</i>)

3. Assessment

Effective assessment is always linked to learning outcomes. Planning for assessment is a critical component of thematic planning. It is critical to determine **how** learners will **demonstrate** their proficiency in the learning outcomes. Many instructors find it helpful to first consider outcomes and determine the assessment measures next. With this in place, it is then possible to plan learning tasks and choose or design learning materials that will help learners build the skills to demonstrate proficiency in the assessment. This principle of “backwards design” makes it possible to keep the learning outcomes and their assessment in sharp focus during planning and instruction.



See Stage 4: Integrate Assessment for detailed information on the purposes of assessment, and sample assessment tasks linked to outcomes in this framework.

4. Content Pillars

Learners need information that will help them understand, participate and contribute at school, work and in the community. Themes provide a context for you to convey information that will be useful to the learners. As an instructor, you will need to make decisions about the information you include as part of thematic units. This framework does not outline the content required in ESL literacy programs. The most meaningful content is determined based on the needs of learners **in your context**, and this may differ based on your program’s purpose, geographical location, learners’ age and interests, existing community supports, etc. It is, however, important to make principled decisions about the content included.

This framework outlines three main content areas to help you make principled decisions about the information presented in class. You can improve the effectiveness of your teaching by aiming to provide information that is **balanced** between the following three areas:

- rights and responsibilities
- cultural expectations
- resources and opportunities

By focusing on these three content pillars, you can ensure that learners are receiving information that helps them in their settlement process, whether it is in the acclimatization, adaptation or integration stage. The information provided is used as a way of developing language and literacy skills in order to achieve learning outcomes.



See Stage 1: Understand Needs for a description of the settlement process stages.

Rights and Responsibilities

Learners may be unaware of their legal rights and responsibilities in Alberta and Canada. It is possible to include information on rights and responsibility at every level, but the complexity of information will depend on learners' oral and literacy proficiency and their real life needs. For example, when teaching a thematic unit on housing, you can include information about tenants' rights and responsibilities. For Phase I learners this information may relate to the need to pay rent on time. For Phase III learners, it may be appropriate to discuss learners' rental experiences and provide information on eviction regulations. You can demonstrate accountability to your learners by ensuring that the information you provide is up-to-date and accurate.

Cultural Expectations

Cultural differences can be exciting and stimulating, but they can also cause great stress and confusion for learners. In order to move beyond *adjustment* into the *adaptation* and *integration* stages of settlement, it is critical that learners develop their understanding of Canadian cultural expectations in a variety of contexts, such as educational, employment and community settings.

A focus on culture can help learners to develop strategies for negotiating cultural differences and maintaining their own cultural identity. In addition, focusing on culture can help learners understand:

- the behavioural expectations for various situations, including workplace and educational contexts
- the meaning of common Canadian behaviours
- the implications or consequences of not meeting cultural expectations
- how their behavior may be perceived in various situations

The complexity of information provided about cultural expectations will depend on learners' oral and literacy language proficiency. It is important to relate information on cultural expectations to learners' real-life needs. When learners are aware of cultural expectations and have skills for meeting this expectations (see *Habits of Mind* in this section), they understand how their behaviour may be perceived in various contexts. This helps learners make informed decisions about which cultural expectations they will aim to meet.

Resources and Opportunities

It is a cultural expectation in Alberta that adults are able to manage their lives independently, which involves knowing how to access resources and take advantage of opportunities. Learners will need to develop skills and strategies for accessing resources and opportunities.

Examples of resources and opportunities that learners may benefit from include:

- subsidized housing, transit, child care or health care benefits
- health care professionals
- counseling
- legal aid
- recreation and leisure opportunities in the community
- community programs (e.g. community cooking programs, drop-in computer classes, drop-in play programs for children, library programs)

5. Learning Tasks

Learning tasks are the means by which learners develop the skills necessary to achieve a learning outcome. To be effective, learning tasks need to be purposeful, connected to learning outcomes, with appropriate scaffolding, in order for learners to experience success while building their skills. Consider which vocabulary and language structures learners will need in order to achieve the outcomes and provide learning tasks that are tailored to these. Planning learning tasks in advance helps you to spiral learning outcomes effectively. Design a progression of tasks that gradually increases in complexity and/or independence.



For sample learning tasks see Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners and Chapter 8 of Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook.

6. Materials

Because learners are developing language and literacy skills at the same time, it is important to choose materials carefully. Most instructors use a combination of types of materials:

- authentic text
- commercially available materials
- teacher-adapted materials
- teacher-created materials
- learner-created materials

Providing learners with a range of meaningful, level-appropriate materials can be a challenge in ESL literacy classes.



For more information on choosing, adapting and designing materials, see Chapter 9 of Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook.

Teach Literacy Strategies and Habits of Mind Explicitly

In this framework, we recommend integrating learning outcomes in literacy strategies and Habits of Mind. The purpose of including these is to make the strategies, skills and behaviours of successful readers, writers, spellers and learners clear for people who have not had to opportunity to develop these in the past. You can make the practices of effective reading, writing, spelling and learning clear to your learners by providing explicit instruction in literacy strategies and Habits of Mind.

Make learning meaningful in these areas by tying instruction to learners' needs. Provide ample opportunities to practice and develop literacy strategies and skills and strategies for demonstrating Habits of Mind. It is important to emphasize the transferability of the literacy strategies and Habits of Mind, and to provide opportunities for learners to transfer what they've learned.

How Can I Teach Literacy Strategies?

Your task is to make clear to learners what happens in the minds of effective readers, writers and spellers. Strategy instruction is about uncovering the "secrets" of reading, writing, spelling and learning.

Learners will need to develop an awareness of what strategies are, how they can help and when to use them. Reflecting on strategy use helps learners consciously choose the most helpful strategies for future situations. Throughout all levels (and with increasing complexity), learners will need encouragement to articulate and reflect on the effectiveness of their strategy use.

This model guides you through a process of strategy instruction.

Name the Strategy

- Give the strategy a name. Use level-appropriate wording.
- Naming it helps learners remember it.

Explain It

- Give learners details of what the strategy involves.
- Ensure that learners understand why it is useful.

Demonstrate It

- Give a demonstration of the strategy in action.

Practice It

- Allow learners to practice using the strategy a variety of ways in the classroom.

Cue It

- Regularly encourage learners to use it in a variety of situations.
- Help them recognize the strategy in action.

Watch for Transfer

- Document it when learners use the strategy independently in or out of class. Recognize and celebrate their strategy use.

Adapted from Leong & Collins (2007, p. 166)





For more information on strategy instruction, see Chapter 8 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.



See Stage 4: Integrate Assessment for information on assessing literacy strategies

How Can I Teach Habits of Mind?

Learners' familiarity with the skills outlined in the *Habits of Mind* section may not correlate with their literacy and language levels. For example, some Phase I learners may be adept at managing time and learning outside the classroom, but there may be Phase III learners for whom these are very unfamiliar. For this reason, it is important to address Habits of Mind at every level, focusing on growth for *individual* learners.

When teaching Habits of Mind, adapt instruction to the learners' level. Teach the skill development process explicitly, scaffolding, recycling and spiraling throughout. In order to create learning environments that foster and support the development of Habits of Mind, you will need to plan carefully for instruction. This planning happens before and throughout the semester. Consider and plan for Habits of Mind at regular intervals.

Long-Term Planning

Creating semester and unit plans:

- How can I embed Habits of Mind throughout the semester? Which skills will I focus on?

Short-Term Planning

Creating lesson plans:

- Have I provided ample opportunities to develop and practice the individual steps in the skill development process for the Habits of Mind I am focusing on?

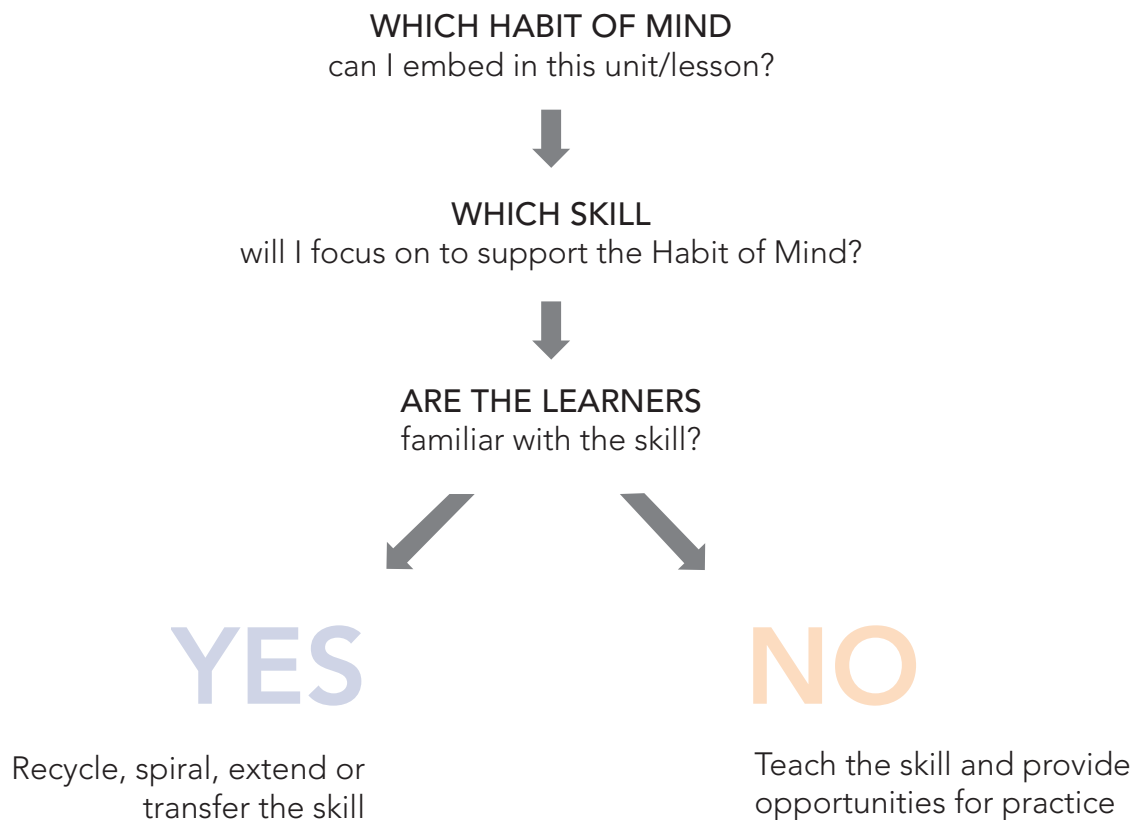
While Teaching

Making the most of unplanned classroom opportunities:

- What connections can I help my learners make between the lesson focus, Habits of Mind and the skill development process?

You can use a process approach when planning for habits of mind by posing a series of questions.

Planning for **HABITS OF MIND**



Adapted from The Art Costa Centre for Thinking (nd.)

Habits of Mind will be most meaningful and applicable to learners when presented in a context related to their real-life needs. Teaching individual thematic units on Habits of Mind is not recommended. You are encouraged to embed Habits of Mind and their related skills into thematic instruction.

For example, in a unit on going to the doctor, it is possible to integrate each of the Habits of Mind.

Sample: Integrating Habits of Mind in a Thematic Unit		
Thematic Unit: Going to the Doctor		Phase II
Habit of Mind	Skill	Skill Development
Resourcefulness	Access help and resources	<i>Recognize when assistance is needed.</i> Make an appointment with doctor/health practitioner.
Motivation	Prepare	<i>Consider context and anticipate obstacles.</i> Practice explaining health concern and prepare questions.
Responsibility	Manage information	<i>Organize information.</i> Take simple notes on answers to questions or ask doctor to write down key information.
Engagement	Ask questions	<i>Monitor understanding.</i> Ask for clarification and ensure all information is understood or recorded.

When teaching the skills for demonstrating Habits of Mind, it is important that learners have a clear understanding of:

- *what* they are learning
- *why* it is useful
- *how* to do it
- *how* and *where* they can transfer it

In the learning outcomes for Habits of Mind provided in this framework, you will find specific suggestions for fostering and developing each of the skills for demonstrating resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility and engagement.



Balance Instructional Approaches

Effective instructors draw on a variety of methods, techniques and approaches in their ESL literacy classroom. They make decisions about which approach to use based on learners' needs, the outcomes being addressed and the content or material being used.



For more information on instructional approaches, see Chapter 7 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

Two key areas in which effective instructors strive for balance are:

- Bringing the outside in/bringing the inside out
- Providing balanced reading instruction

Bringing the Outside In and Bringing the Inside Out

Bringing the Outside In

One of the most effective ways to improve literacy skills is by connecting instruction to the reading and writing materials found in everyday life (Condelli & Wrigley, 2002). Using everyday materials that contain information related to the program purpose and learners' needs can help learners build vocabulary skills and background knowledge about their new context. Another way of bringing the outside in is to bring representatives from community organizations (e.g. immigrant serving agencies) into the classroom and the program to build relationships between learners and community groups and agencies. In addition to building relationships, learners can access useful information about services and opportunities in the community.

Bringing the Inside Out

For LIFE (Learners with Interrupted Formal Education), it is important for learning to be concrete and relevant to learners' lives. Building in opportunities for field trips (e.g. to grocery stores, health centres, libraries, community centres, parks) in the wider community helps learners connect to the world outside their homes and classrooms. Connecting language and literacy development to field trips helps make learning concrete and provides learners with real-life experiences of accessing resources, using services and interacting with the wider community.

Providing Balanced Reading Instruction

Reading is the process of identifying and understanding the meaning of words, characters or symbols in printed material. A balanced approach to reading instruction incorporates both "top-down" and "bottom-up" methods.



Bottom-Up Theories of Reading Instruction

In bottom-up theories of reading instruction, reading is seen as process in which the reader understands the text by moving from part to whole (Campbell, 2003). In a bottom-up approach, learners master skills individually, beginning with letters and sounds (phonics) and gradually moving to words and sentences. In this approach, reading for meaning does not occur until learners are able to use phonics to decode words automatically.

Top-Down Methods of Reading Instruction

In top-down theories of reading instruction, reading is seen as a process in which the reader understands the text by moving from whole to part (Campbell, 2003). In this approach, readers use what they know about language and the world to come to an understanding of a text. Readers make predictions or hypothesize about the meaning of the text, and use the text to confirm or dis-confirm their predictions or hypotheses. In top-down methods of reading instruction, a heavy emphasis is placed on providing a text-rich environment, and the use of phonics or “sounding out” words is not part of instruction.

A Balanced Approach

Research into what effective readers do shows us that both bottom-up and top-down methods are beneficial to learners, and that language comprehension and decoding are the cognitive foundations of learning to read (Wren, 2001). Without a balance between language comprehension and decoding, learners are unable to comprehend what they read. Skilled readers use a variety of reading strategies and combine knowledge of phonics and decoding with the ability to use skills such as drawing on prior knowledge, previewing, predicting, re-reading and making inferences to gain meaning from text. In effective ESL literacy programs, instruction encompasses all of these reading skills and emphasizes the development of reading strategies.



TERMINOLOGY

In this framework, several terms are used to describe learning outcomes and their related components. The following terms are used to describe learning outcomes in **reading, writing, literacy strategies** and **Habits of Mind**:

General Learning Outcome (GLO): A broad description of what a learner will be able to do upon completion of a program. In this framework, each general learning outcome includes several specific learning outcomes. Each GLO is designed to apply to all levels and all program types.

Specific Learning Outcome (SLO): A detailed description of skills that learners develop in order to achieve General Learning Outcomes. (e.g. interpret messages). In this framework, there are several Specific Learning Outcomes for each General Learning Outcome.

Proficiency Descriptor: A description of the developmental steps to achieving a Specific Learning Outcome. Each SLO is described in stages along a continuum that aligns with the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*, from Foundations through Phase III. The proficiency descriptors help instructors understand learners' degree of independence for each SLO and also provide guidance for the next learning steps. Increasing from one proficiency level to another (e.g. Phase I Developing to Phase I Adequate) requires instruction that builds skills incrementally.

The following terms are used in the **reading** and **writing** learning outcomes only:

Underlying concepts: The ideas that support the achievement of specific learning outcomes for each phase. The underlying concepts assist instructors in supporting learners to understand the connection between print and meaning. Instruction that includes a focus on underlying concepts helps learners understand *why* they are learning something.

Pre-literacy concepts: The ideas that support literacy development in general. In order to achieve the specific learning outcomes in Phase I – Phase III, learners must have a basic grasp of the pre-literacy concepts. The pre-literacy concepts in this framework are:

- print conveys meaning
- oral language is connected to text
- print is organized in predictable ways



Pre-literacy skills: The abilities that support literacy development in general. Pre-literacy skills are new to learners in Foundation Phase, but are used regularly in ESL literacy classes as a way to learn new content and develop other skills. In order to achieve the specific learning outcomes in Phase I – Phase III, learners will need to begin to develop these skills. The pre-literacy skills in this framework are:

- visual discrimination
- fine motor skills / letter formation
- visual tracking
- basic copying

Key text types: The recommended kinds of texts that learners become proficient with in different ESL literacy program contexts:

- community orientation and participation ESL literacy
- family ESL literacy
- employment ESL literacy
- educational preparation ESL literacy

Key text types are provided for each SLO (specific learning outcome) and for each program context. They are provided after the Reading and Writing outcomes, and are grouped by program context.

This diagram highlights how several of these key terms are presented in the **learning outcomes charts** for reading and writing.

General Learning Outcome

Specific Learning Outcome

General Learning Outcome:

Interpret formatted text

Specific Learning Outcome:

Interpret lists, tables, charts and graphs

	Underlying Concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Print is organized in predictable ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a visual and/or oral prompt, arrange concrete, familiar pictures in a given order, indicating left-right directionality. Identify same/different shapes, pseudo-letters and letters, e.g. on a worksheet, cross out the one that is different. 	
Phase I	Words, pictures and information can be sorted and organized.	Initial	Arrange letter and number cards in sequential order.
		Developing	Arrange familiar, personally relevant word cards horizontally and vertically in sequential order.
		Adequate	Categorize and sequence word cards of familiar, personally relevant vocabulary into teacher-made lists or tables (columns or rows) with pictures and words in the headings.
Phase II	Information can be grouped and presented in different formats.	Initial	Locate familiar, personally relevant information in teacher made lists, tables and simple charts (columns and rows).
		Developing	Extract personally relevant information from simple teacher-made tables and charts that use familiar, relevant vocabulary.
		Adequate	Interpret information in teacher-adapted tables and charts that use familiar, relevant vocabulary.
Phase III	The manner in which information is organized assists readers in understanding the information.	Initial	Interpret information in teacher-adapted tables/ charts and simple teacher-made bar graphs.
		Developing	Interpret information in simple authentic lists/ tables/ charts and simple teacher-made line graphs in personally relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Draw conclusions based on information found in short authentic tables and charts or teacher-adapted bar / line graphs in personally relevant contexts.

Proficiency Descriptors

Underlying Concepts



READING AND WRITING

Literacy development can be understood in terms of a continuum. It is possible for people to increase their literacy skills over their lifetime, as they “continue to encounter text, enrich their vocabulary (and) write in a variety of genres” (Bow Valley College, 2009). Reading and writing are at the core of literacy development, and are supported by the development of literacy strategies and Habits of Mind.

✔ Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #34

Language outcomes are referenced to the Canadian Language Benchmarks, providing a standard frame of reference for all users and facilitating movement within the program, from program to program, and from program to workplace, within Alberta and Canada.

The reading and writing outcomes in this framework align with the developmental continuum described in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*. These benchmarks provide descriptions of literacy development from Foundation to Phase III. The outcomes in this framework target the specific skills identified in the provincial needs assessment conducted for the development of this framework, rather than a general description of literacy development, such as is provided in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*.

In the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*, the highest level is Phase III. Phase III Adequate roughly corresponds with Benchmark 5 in *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults*. It is possible for a dedicated learner with interrupted education to progress from Foundation to Phase III, given enough time, support and focused instruction.

When a learner has progressed to a Phase III Adequate, however, this does not equate to being highly educated. It is important to remember that learners with interrupted education **continue** to have learning needs that are distinct from those of learners with high levels of formal education. Learners with interrupted formal education usually need continued support with reading and writing development, strategy acquisition and use, and extra information or background concepts (e.g. science, geography, historical facts or concepts) due to the inconsistent nature of their formal schooling.

Programs and practitioners across Alberta identified the types of reading and writing skills learners need in order to succeed in a variety of contexts, such as formal education, employment, supporting one’s children, accessing services and contributing to community. The general and specific learning outcomes provided here outline the development of the skills learners need for success in Alberta.



The following section includes:

- **pre-literacy concepts and skills** for learners in Foundation Phase
- **an overview** of general and specific learning outcomes in reading and writing
- **reading and writing outcomes:** Proficiency descriptors and underlying concepts for each specific learning outcome (SLO). Every SLO (e.g. fill out forms) is described in a progression of proficiency levels, from Foundation to Phase III Adequate.

Foundation Phase Pre-Literacy Concepts and Skills

Learners with 0-3 years of education are usually placed in a class at Foundation Phase. This phase describes the language and literacy development of learners with the most minimal experiences of text. In Foundation Phase, learners “develop and practice the specific visual and motor/mechanical skills that are needed in the pre-reading and pre-writing literacy processes” (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000, p. 2).

Pre-literacy concepts and skills are critical for literacy development. The concepts and skills outlined in this framework draw on the pre-reading and pre-writing descriptors from *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*, the experience of Bow Valley College ESL literacy instructors, and current research and theory in the field of ESL literacy.

Pre-Literacy Concepts

Pre-literacy concepts are the ideas that support literacy development in general. In order to achieve the specific learning outcomes provided in this framework for Phase I – Phase III, learners will need to have a basic grasp of the pre-literacy concepts. The pre-literacy concepts in this framework are:

- oral language is connected to text
- print conveys meaning
- print is organized in predictable ways

These pre-literacy concepts have been integrated as the underlying concepts in Foundation Phase reading and writing outcomes in this framework. This section describes these pre-literacy concepts in more detail.

Oral language is connected to text

In order to be able to read, a learner must understand that printed text corresponds to spoken words, and that there is a systematic relationship between the individual letters and the spoken word. In an effective Foundation Phase class, learners engage in activities to help them comprehend the relationship between the sounds of words and the printed symbols (Achren & Williams, 2006).



Print conveys meaning

Learners in Foundation Phase have had very limited exposure to print materials, and some learners may be from non-literate contexts. In Foundation Phase, learners will begin to develop an understanding of the connection between print and meaning. It is important that the vocabulary used (both oral and written) in this phase is highly personal and relevant, in order to reinforce the connection between print and meaning.

In Foundation Phase, learners may have no experience with picture books and may be unaware that pictures represent objects. In this case, learners will need exposure to “reading” pictures before moving on to reading words and sentences. You can achieve this over time by designing activities that build upon one another.

The following sequence, provided over several weeks, provides an example of building learners’ understanding of the connection between print and meaning:

- build oral vocabulary for everyday objects by bringing realia into the classroom
- match realia with photos of the same objects
- match realia to illustrations of the same objects
- match realia to simple line drawings of the same objects

Print is organized in predictable ways

Learners in Foundation Phase need to begin to understand that print follows organizational patterns, and that these patterns contribute to the meaning of the text. For learners in Foundation Phase, it is important to learn about directionality and tracking text from left to right and top to bottom. Learners will need many opportunities to practice tracking text throughout Foundation Phase, as this reinforces the predictable organizational patterns of text.

Pre-Literacy Skills

Pre-literacy skills are the abilities that support continued literacy development. Pre-literacy skills are new to learners in Foundation Phase, but are used regularly in subsequent ESL literacy classes as a way to learn new information and develop other skills. In order to achieve the specific learning outcomes outlined in this framework for Phase I through Phase III, learners will need to begin to develop pre-literacy skills.

The pre-literacy skills in this framework are:

- visual discrimination
- fine motor skills / letter formation
- visual tracking
- basic copying



Visual discrimination

Learners who are unfamiliar with text will need to develop skills for discriminating between letters and words. Learners may need explicit instruction and practice in recognizing the minute differences between similar letters. For example, distinguishing between the letters “c” and “e” requires attention to details that learners may not have previously noticed.

In the classroom, a teacher can help learners develop visual discrimination by providing activities in which learners identify objects that are the same and different. After working with realia extensively, the learners may be ready to move on to a worksheet. This may involve the learner circling photographs of objects that are the same as a model and crossing out ones that are different. This can progress from using shapes to pseudo letters to letters to words. In addition to developing their visual discrimination skills, these exercises give learners practice in tracking text.

Fine motor skills

Learners with no experience using pencils may need to develop their fine motor skills in order to be able to form letters accurately. Beading, cutting, colouring and drawing strokes (moving from large to small) are ways to develop these skills. Learners in Foundation Phase may need to be shown how to properly hold a pencil and may begin with drawing in the air or using large markers on the board. As they gain confidence, they can move to a pencil and paper. Once they become comfortable with using a pencil and paper, they can practice copying their names, and eventually other letters and words.

Visual tracking

Visual tracking involves following text in the correct direction with one’s eyes. This is a skill that begins at Foundation Phase, but is developed in later Phases, for example, in learning to read brochures and formatted text. Learners with little or no experience of text may find visual tracking very challenging and will need opportunities to train their eyes to track text. This can begin with following a line or a line of pictures with their fingers. Using a marker such as the edge of a paper, learners can then begin to track words. When this skill is established, learners can begin following a line of text with their eyes alone in order to follow a simple, familiar story or complete a worksheet.

Basic copying

Copying is a skill that begins in Foundation Phase and that continues to be developed in the learning outcomes for Phases I and II in this framework. At first, learners may need the model to be immediately above the place where they copy. As they become more proficient, the model can gradually be moved further away until, at last, the model can be on the board.

Understanding where to write on a page requires explicit instruction. Learners can begin with unlined paper and progress to lined worksheets where copying is done directly below or beside pictures. Because copying is a skill that improves with practice, many learners and



teachers like to spend extended amounts of time on copying activities. It is important to maintain a balance in the classroom, as copying can easily become a meaningless activity. Copying words that are personally relevant and moving on to other learning tasks (e.g. matching, oral practice, etc.) are ways of ensuring this balance.

Pre-Literacy Concept and Skill Development

It is important to begin developing pre-literacy concepts and skills at Foundation Phase, but mastery is not expected at this level. Learners will continue to refine these pre-literacy concepts and skills as they progress through the Phases. These concepts are further developed in the reading and writing outcomes for Phases I-III.

You may find it helpful to watch for indicators that learners have begun to develop pre-literacy concepts and skills. These abilities will enhance the learners' ability to achieve Foundation Phase learning outcomes for reading and writing.

Indicators of Pre-literacy Concept and Skill Development

The learner can:

- follow a short, simple, familiar text, tracking with eyes
- refer to a personal information sheet when asked personal information questions
- spell own name aloud using a model, or from memory
- form recognizable letters on lined paper
- "read" an illustration (e.g. recognize the teacher's stick drawing to be a person)
- find same/different on a teacher-made handout
- orally identify a limited number of familiar pictures

Foundation Phase is focused on the development of pre-literacy skills and as a result, the number of proficiency descriptors in Foundation Phase varies depending on the specific learning outcome (SLO). Beyond Foundation, each SLO is broken into steps that align with the initial, developing and adequate stages of each Phase.

Overview of Reading and Writing Outcomes

This chart provides an overview of the reading and writing outcomes provided in this framework.

READING	
General Learning Outcome Interpret informational text	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Learners will be able to....</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interpret articles and brochures ▪ interpret signs, notices and labels ▪ interpret advertisements and consumer contracts ▪ interpret messages ▪ follow instructions ▪ engage in personal reading
General Learning Outcome Interpret formatted text	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Learners will be able to....</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interpret lists, tables, charts and graphs ▪ interpret maps ▪ interpret receipts and bills
WRITING	
General Learning Outcome Convey information and opinions	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Learners will be able to....</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ describe and explain ▪ write messages ▪ write instructions ▪ fill out forms ▪ organize information in lists, tables and charts
General Learning Outcome Record information	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Learners will be able to....</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ copy accurately ▪ take notes
General Learning Outcome Write for personal expression	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Learners will be able to....</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ write a narrative ▪ engage in free writing



Reading Outcomes

In the following section you will find the general and specific learning outcomes for reading from Foundation through Phase III. An overview of the outcomes is provided, which is followed by charts that provide proficiency descriptors for each specific learning outcome across the Canadian Language Benchmark ESL Literacy Phases, from Foundation through Phase III.

Overview of Reading Outcomes	
General Learning Outcome: Interpret informational text	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Learners will be able to....</i>	interpret articles and brochures
	interpret signs, notices and labels
	interpret advertisements and consumer contracts
	interpret messages
	follow instructions
	engage in personal reading
General Learning Outcome: Interpret formatted text	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Learners will be able to....</i>	interpret lists, tables, charts and graphs
	interpret maps
	interpret receipts and bills

Strand: Reading

General Learning Outcome: Interpret informational text

Specific Learning Outcome: Interpret articles and brochures

	Underlying Concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Print is organized in predictable ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following oral prompts, track letters or familiar, concrete illustrations left to right and/or top down. Position paper right side up in correct position on the desk. 	
Phase I	Information can be conveyed in written form and in differing formats.	Initial	Build a bank of key sight words connected to visuals in familiar, personally relevant texts.
		Developing	Identify key words in short, familiar, personally relevant instructor-made texts with visual supports.
		Adequate	Track visuals sequentially from top to bottom on a page with a 2 column format similar to a brochure. Locate key information in instructor-made texts/articles of up to five lines in familiar, personally relevant contexts.
Phase II	Information found in brochures and articles can be useful.	Initial	In instructor-made brochures, identify first panel and track visuals sequentially. Using visual and textual cues, locate key information in instructor-adapted texts/articles on familiar, relevant topics.
		Developing	In instructor-adapted brochures, identify first panel and track text sequentially. Using textual cues, extract main idea and specific details from instructor-adapted texts/articles in familiar, relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Extract main idea and differentiate between fact and opinion in instructor-adapted texts/articles and brochures of up to 15 lines in a variety of familiar, relevant contexts.
Phase III	Information included in texts should be evaluated based on the reader's purpose.	Initial	Infer purpose and extract main idea and key information from short, authentic/authentic-like articles and brochures on familiar, relevant topics.
		Developing	Infer purpose and differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information in authentic/authentic-like articles and brochures in familiar, relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Differentiate between fact and opinion and relevant/irrelevant information in authentic/authentic-like articles and brochures of up to one page in a variety of relevant contexts.



Strand:

Reading

General Learning Outcome:

Interpret informational text

Specific Learning Outcome:

Interpret signs, notices and labels

	Underlying Concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Print conveys meaning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a bank of oral vocabulary connected to visuals of common, familiar, community symbols.• In response to an oral prompt, orally identify common signs or symbols in context (e.g. On a walk, identify women, men or exit sign symbols).• Given an illustration and a single word on an instructor-prepared worksheet, copy a word on a line directly below (e.g. stop, exit, men).	
Phase I	Symbols convey meaning.	Initial	Build a bank of sight words connected to visuals of common community symbols (e.g. push, pull, exit, stop).
		Developing	Using visual cues, associate symbols with function in familiar surroundings (e.g. no parking symbol = do not park here).
		Adequate	Using visual cues, infer purpose or main idea of simple instructor-made signs and labels in familiar, relevant contexts.
Phase II	Signs and labels convey important information.	Initial	Locate key information on instructor-adapted signs with text and labels in basic table format.
		Developing	Identify relevant information including dates and deadlines on instructor-adapted text-based signs and labels.
		Adequate	Identify purpose, relevant information and related safety conditions and warnings (e.g. do not exceed 8 tablets in 24 hours) on instructor-adapted notices and labels for common products.
Phase III	It is the reader's responsibility to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information.	Initial	Identify purpose and relevant information on short, authentic/authentic-like, familiar, personally relevant labels and notices of events.
		Developing	Interpret information in short, personally relevant authentic/authentic-like notices or labels in familiar contexts.
		Adequate	Interpret information in personally relevant, authentic/authentic-like moderately complex notices or labels in a variety of relevant contexts.

Strand:

Reading

General Learning Outcome:

Interpret informational text

Specific Learning Outcome:

Interpret advertisements and consumer contracts

	Underlying Concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Print is organized in predictable ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make oral connections between advertising and community life in personally relevant, concrete contexts (e.g. "What food is on sale?").• Make connections between a limited number of words for consumer items and their representations (e.g. match banana with a picture of a banana using flash cards).	
Phase I	Advertisements provide useful information.	Initial	Using visual cues, locate key items in instructor-made familiar advertisements that include pictures and prices in familiar, personally relevant contexts.
		Developing	Using visual and textual cues, identify key items in instructor-made advertisements that include pictures, words and prices in familiar, personally relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Scan for important details and locate fine print on instructor-made advertisements that include pictures, words and prices in familiar, personally relevant contexts.
Phase II	Ads and contracts must be read carefully in order to obtain the necessary information.	Initial	Identify key information and meanings of common abbreviations in instructor-adapted advertisements and consumer contracts in familiar, relevant contexts.
		Developing	Identify purpose and specific details and locate fine print in instructor-adapted advertisements and consumer contracts in familiar, relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Scan for details to compare instructor-adapted advertisements that include abbreviations and fine print in a variety of familiar, relevant contexts.
Phase III	Comparing advertisements and contracts can help readers save money or purchase a better product.	Initial	Locate specific terms and conditions and highlight fine print on instructor-adapted advertisements and consumer contracts in personally relevant contexts.
		Developing	Compare and contrast key points of two simple authentic or instructor-adapted advertisements or consumer contracts in personally relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Summarize important conditions and details in simple authentic/authentic-like advertisements and consumer contracts of up to one page and highlight key items in fine print, in personally relevant contexts.

Strand:

Reading

General Learning Outcome:

Interpret informational text

Specific Learning Outcome:

Interpret messages

	Underlying Concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Oral language can be connected with print.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a small bank of oral vocabulary common to messages (e.g. thank you, to, from) in familiar, personally relevant contexts.• Responding to oral prompts, identify familiar, personally relevant, concrete words in print.	
Phase I	Messages can be conveyed in print.	Initial	Build a bank of sight words common to messages and letters in familiar, personally relevant contexts.
		Developing	Use visual cues and identify key words in short, familiar instructor-made messages in familiar, personally relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Identify key information (sender, recipient, etc.) in short instructor-made messages of up to five lines in familiar, personally relevant contexts.
Phase II	Context clues assist in understanding the relevance, gist and purpose of messages.	Initial	Use visual and textual cues to identify purpose and key information in instructor-adapted messages and letters in sentence format in familiar, relevant contexts.
		Developing	Use textual cues to identify purpose and specific details in instructor-adapted messages and letters in familiar, relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Scan for purpose and relevant details in instructor-adapted messages and letters of up to ten lines in a variety of familiar, relevant contexts.
Phase III	Messages have a definite purpose and often require action.	Initial	Identify purpose and key information in simple authentic/authentic-like messages and letters (paragraph format) in relevant contexts.
		Developing	Scan for purpose and action required in simple authentic/authentic-like messages and letters in relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Identify purpose and relevant details (including required action) in authentic/authentic-like formal and informal messages and letters of up to one page in a variety of relevant contexts.

Strand:

Reading

General Learning Outcome:

Interpret informational text

Specific Learning Outcome:

Follow instructions

	Underlying Concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Oral language can be connected with print.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Follow one-word oral instructions.Following an instructor demonstration, locate one word instructions on an instructor-generated worksheet.	
Phase I	Certain words imply action.	Initial	Match basic instruction words to corresponding picture cards (e.g. write, look, listen).
		Developing	Follow familiar one-word written classroom instructions with visual support (e.g. circle, check, write).
		Adequate	Follow short, one-step single phrase instructions with visual cues in a familiar setting.
Phase II	Instructions can describe a process or a task.	Initial	Follow a short sequence of numbered instructions to accomplish a familiar, personally relevant task.
		Developing	Using instructor-made sentence strips, sequence steps for familiar, personally relevant tasks.
		Adequate	Follow a short sequence of instructions in connected text format to accomplish a task in a familiar, personally relevant context.
Phase III	Following instructions is a useful strategy in completing unfamiliar tasks or procedures.	Initial	Sequence multiple-step instructor-adapted instructions for familiar tasks by numbering the steps.
		Developing	Follow a short authentic/authentic-like sequence or non-sequential set of instructions related to unfamiliar tasks and procedures in familiar, relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Follow an authentic/authentic-like sequence or non-sequential set of instructions related to unfamiliar tasks or procedures in relevant contexts.

Strand:	Reading
General Learning Outcome:	Interpret informational text
Specific Learning Outcome:	Engage in personal reading

The purpose of this specific learning outcome is to provide learners with an opportunity to experience reading for non-functional purposes. Learners may have had limited experience with reading for interest or pleasure. In this regard, personal reading can be a stimulating and personally meaningful aspect of literacy development. The aim of this outcome is to build learners' reading fluency and confidence in their ability to read beyond the classroom. Reading is a way of building vocabulary, cultural awareness and language skills. Engaging in personal reading helps learners to develop habits for lifelong literacy development.

Strand: Reading

General Learning Outcome: Interpret informational text

Specific Learning Outcome: Engage in personal reading

	Underlying Concepts	Proficiency Descriptors
Foundation	Print is organized in predictable ways.	Following oral prompts, track words (supported by familiar, concrete illustrations) left to right and top to bottom.
	Oral language can be connected with print.	<p>Learners begin the process of engaging in reading through listening to simple, personal-made stories while following along. This process allows learners to become familiar with books and written stories in general.</p> <p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • track picture/text • connect visuals and text • answer oral questions by pointing or providing one word responses
Phase I	Reading can be enjoyable and interesting.	<p>Learners begin the process of engaging in personal reading through shared/group reading. This process allows learners to experience success in reading.</p> <p>Learners will be able to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read class-made stories based on familiar experiences with support • use visual supports to read simple, level appropriate texts • connect visuals and text • share response to texts with classmates and instructor
Phase II	Readers can select texts based on interest.	<p>In addition to shared reading, learners begin to select their own reading materials from a variety of appropriate reading materials in class. By the end of Phase II, they will begin to select reading materials outside of class – newspapers, magazines, books, etc.</p> <p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select texts that interest them based on visuals or key words • share their opinions about different texts
Phase III	Reading for enjoyment or interest builds language skills.	<p>Learners select their own reading materials from a variety of sources both in and out of class, based on interest and level.</p> <p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify their favorite types of text • discuss various types of text • connect their own experiences to that of the text • share their opinions about the text they read

Strand:

Reading

General Learning Outcome:

Interpret formatted text

Specific Learning Outcome:

Interpret lists, tables, charts and graphs

	Underlying Concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Print is organized in predictable ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Following a visual and/or oral prompt, arrange concrete, familiar pictures in a given order, indicating left-right directionality.Identify same/different shapes, pseudo-letters and letters of the alphabet.	
Phase I	Words, pictures and information can be sorted and organized.	Initial	Arrange letter and number cards in sequential order (e.g. numerical or alphabetical order).
		Developing	Arrange familiar, personally relevant word cards horizontally and vertically in sequential order.
		Adequate	Categorize and sequence word cards of familiar, personally relevant vocabulary into instructor-made lists or tables (columns or rows) with pictures and words in the headings.
Phase II	Information can be grouped and presented in different formats.	Initial	Locate familiar, personally relevant information in instructor made lists, tables and simple charts (columns and rows).
		Developing	Extract personally relevant information from simple instructor-made tables and charts that use familiar, relevant vocabulary.
		Adequate	Interpret information in instructor-adapted tables/ charts that use familiar, relevant vocabulary.
Phase III	The manner in which information is organized assists readers in understanding the information.	Initial	Interpret information in instructor-adapted tables/ charts and simple instructor-made bar graphs.
		Developing	Interpret information in simple authentic/authentic-like lists/tables/charts and simple instructor-made line graphs in personally relevant contexts.
		Adequate	Draw conclusions based on information found in short authentic/authentic-like tables and charts or instructor-adapted bar/line graphs in personally relevant contexts.

Strand: Reading

General Learning Outcome: Interpret formatted text

Specific Learning Outcome: Interpret maps

	Underlying Concepts	Pre-reading concept development	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Oral language is connected to text.		Build a bank of oral vocabulary connected to prepositions (e.g. up, down, left, right).	
Phase I	Concrete things can be represented on two-dimensional diagrams or maps.		Initial	Move realia (3-D) in relation to each other to demonstrate the meaning of different prepositions (e.g. next to, between, across from).
			Developing	Match prepositions of place (e.g. next to, between, across from) with pictures of familiar items in different spatial arrangements.
		Adequate	Respond to oral prompts by manipulating pictures (2-D) of familiar places on an instructor-made map of a single street.	
Phase II	Maps represent the locations of real life places on a smaller scale.	Initial	Respond to oral prompts by manipulating abstract representations (e.g. bank) of familiar places on an instructor-made map with two intersections.	
		Developing	Describe the location of specific places in the community on simple instructor-made maps with a limited number of streets and intersections.	
		Adequate	Use a simple instructor-made or adapted map to reach a familiar destination in the building or community.	
Phase III	Maps can be used for directions to find places.	Initial	Extract information from instructor-adapted or simple authentic/authentic-like stylized maps (e.g. route maps).	
		Developing	Use a simple legend to locate features and places on an instructor-adapted map.	
		Adequate	Use a simple authentic/authentic-like map to locate an item or reach a destination.	
		Map - reading		

Strand: Reading

General Learning Outcome: Interpret formatted text

Specific Learning Outcome: Interpret receipts and bills

	Underlying Concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Oral language is connected to text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a bank of oral vocabulary connected to finances (e.g. money, bill, cheque, bank). Connect common expressions to personally relevant amounts (e.g. "How much is a cup of coffee?" "How much is your rent?"). 	
Phase I	Receipts and bills provide a record of financial transactions.	Initial	Build a bank of sight words related to financial vocabulary. e.g. debit cards, bills, coins, credit cards, cheques, total, amount due, date
		Developing	Locate financial vocabulary on instructor-made receipts and bills. e.g. due date, total, amount due
		Adequate	Identify key information on instructor-made receipts and bills. e.g. How much is the amount due? \$120.00
Phase II	Readers must identify relevant information on bills and receipts.	Initial	Highlight key fields on instructor-adapted bills and receipts.
		Developing	Locate specific details, action required and fine print on instructor-adapted receipts and bills. e.g. return policy, interest rate increase if not paid on time
		Adequate	Compare key information on two instructor-adapted bills and receipts. e.g. amount paid, interest charged
Phase III	It is the reader's responsibility to check bills and receipts for accuracy and complete required action.	Initial	Extract key information and action required on simple authentic/authentic-like bills.
		Developing	Review and assess simple authentic/authentic-like bills and receipts for accuracy. e.g. amount charged, previously paid amounts, number of items purchased, change given
		Adequate	Compare information and action required in authentic/authentic-like receipts and bills.



Writing Outcomes

In the following section you will find the general and specific learning outcomes for writing from Foundation through Phase III. An overview of the outcomes is provided, which is then followed by charts that provide proficiency descriptors for each specific learning outcome across the phases.

Overview of Writing Outcomes	
General Learning Outcome: Convey information and opinions	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Learners will be able to....</i>	describe and explain
	write messages
	write instructions
	fill out forms
	organize information in lists, tables and charts
General Learning Outcome: Record information	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Learners will be able to....</i>	copy accurately
	take notes
General Learning Outcome: Write for personal expression	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Learners will be able to....</i>	write a narrative
	engage in free writing

Strand:

Writing

General learning Outcome:

Convey information and opinions

Specific Learning Outcome:

Describe and explain

	Underlying concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Oral language can be connected with print.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Match concrete, familiar words to corresponding picture cards.With instructor assistance, circle the correct word below familiar, concrete pictures on an instructor-made worksheet.	
Phase I	Information and opinions can be communicated through writing.	Initial	Using a word bank of concrete, familiar vocabulary, write words beside pictures.
		Developing	Using a word bank and visual cues, complete short, familiar sentence stems to describe a familiar, relevant topic, using one word for each sentence stem (e.g. <i>It is <u>sunny</u>.</i>
		Adequate	Using a word bank, complete up to ten familiar sentence stems that describe or provide opinions on familiar topics, using one or more words to finish the sentence (e.g. <i>I like _____. I don't like _____</i>).
Phase II	Information and opinions can be expanded upon in writing.	Initial	Using a model and a word bank, write formulaic sentences to provide an opinion or describe a familiar, relevant topic.
		Developing	Using a model and a word bank, write sentences describing a familiar, relevant topic or to give an opinion, using wrap-around text.
		Adequate	Using a model, write up to six sentences providing an opinion on or describing a familiar, relevant topic or experience.
Phase III	Effective paragraph writing involves organization and connecting ideas.	Initial	Write a topic sentence and list supporting details about a familiar, relevant topic, using an instructor-provided organizational model.
		Developing	Write one paragraph with a topic sentence and supporting details to explain, describe or provide an opinion on a familiar, relevant topic, with assistance in structuring the text.
		Adequate	Write three paragraphs that connect ideas in order to explain describe or provide an opinion on a relevant topic, with assistance in structuring the text.



Strand:

Writing

General learning Outcome:

Convey information and opinions

Specific Learning Outcome:

Write messages

	Underlying concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Oral language can be connected with print.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a bank of oral vocabulary connected to messages (e.g. thank you, to, from). Contribute to a short, class-made message scribed by the instructor on a familiar personally relevant topic (e.g. <i>Go to computer lab.</i> or <i>Thank you for the free tickets.</i>). 	
Phase I	Communication between people can be achieved through written messages.	Initial	Using a word bank and visual cues, fill in blanks on short, familiar instructor-made messages with concrete, familiar vocabulary.
		Developing	Using a word bank and visual cues, complete familiar, sentence stems in instructor-made messages with concrete, familiar vocabulary.
		Adequate	Using picture cues and a reference sheet, complete sentence stems with personal information in familiar, instructor-made messages.
Phase II	Messages follow a standard format.	Initial	Using a word bank, write formulaic sentences to complete an instructor-made message template on a familiar, relevant topic.
		Developing	Using a model and a word or phrase bank, write a note to provide information on a familiar, relevant topic.
		Adequate	Using a model, write a note of up to six sentences in wrap-around text to provide or request information on a familiar, relevant topic.
Phase III	Effective messages are written according to audience and purpose.	Initial	With assistance in structuring the text, write a short message that includes a salutation, clearly stated purpose and closing.
		Developing	With assistance in structuring the text, write a message with appropriate salutation and closing, clearly stated purpose and relevant information.
		Adequate	Write a message of up to one page with appropriate salutation, closing and formatting that provides or requests information.

Strand:

Writing

General learning Outcome:

Convey information and opinions

Specific Learning Outcome:

Write instructions

	Underlying Concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Oral language can be connected with print.	Copy familiar, personally relevant one word instructions directly below their corresponding picture and model.	
Phase I	Written instructions provide useful information.	Initial	Using a word bank, copy familiar, personally relevant one-word instructions beside corresponding pictures (e.g. push / pull, stop / go).
		Developing	Using a word bank and visual cues, complete short sentence stems for familiar single-phrase instructions to convey concrete, personally relevant instructions.
		Adequate	Using a word bank and visual cues, write a variety of familiar, personally relevant single-phrase instructions.
Phase II	Instructions can be used to describe a process.	Initial	Using visual cues, a phrase bank and a model, write a short numbered sequence of instructions for a familiar, personally relevant task.
		Developing	Using a word bank and a model, write a numbered sequence of instructions for a familiar, personally relevant task.
		Adequate	Using a model and familiar vocabulary, write a point form sequence of instructions using connecting vocabulary (e.g. first, next) for a familiar, personally relevant task.
Phase III	The formatting and tone used are influenced by the writer's purpose and audience.	Initial	With assistance in structuring the text, write a short sequence of instructions for a familiar, relevant task using an appropriate heading, connecting vocabulary and wrap-around text.
		Developing	With pre-writing assistance, write a personally relevant non-sequential set of instructions, using both positive and negative statements.
		Adequate	With pre-writing assistance, select a personally relevant task or topic and write a sequence or set of instructions appropriate to the audience, conveying necessary information in an appropriate format.

Strand:

Writing

General learning Outcome:

Convey information and opinions

Specific Learning Outcome:

Fill out forms

	Underlying concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Print conveys meaning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate or provide ID when prompted orally. • Respond orally to prompts for personal information (e.g. name). • Using a small bank of instructor-made personal information cards, identify own name and phone number. • Match three personal information flashcards with own information flashcards. e.g. name Fatma . 	
Phase I	Forms require truthful, accurate information.	Initial	Using a reference, write first name, last name and phone number in familiar instructor-made forms, where order of fields is consistent.
		Developing	Using a reference, fill in familiar instructor-made forms with date and frequently used personal information, where order of fields is consistent.
		Adequate	Using a reference, fill in familiar instructor-made forms of up to five fields with date and frequently used personal information, where order of fields is not consistent.
Phase II	Signing a form indicates that the information is truthful and the terms are agreed to.	Initial	Using a reference if necessary, fill in frequently used personal information and provide a signature on instructor-adapted forms with fields of various types (e.g. lines/boxes) in consistent order.
		Developing	Using a reference if necessary, fill in frequently used personal information and provide a signature on instructor-adapted forms where order of fields is not consistent.
		Adequate	Using a reference for infrequently used personal information, complete and sign instructor-adapted forms of up to twelve fields and one short answer prompt where order of fields is not consistent.
Phase III	The purpose of a form determines the nature of responses provided. It is important to recognize and comply with conditions on forms.	Initial	Using a reference for infrequently used personal information, complete short authentic/authentic-like forms that contain fields and short answer prompts.
		Developing	Using a reference for infrequently used personal information, complete authentic/authentic-like forms with fields and short answer prompts, meeting conditions on forms (e.g. deadline, use block letters, write in black ink, do not write in this space).
		Adequate	Using a reference for infrequently used personal information, complete one-page authentic/authentic-like forms by filling in required fields and providing relevant information appropriately in extended response prompts.



Strand:

Writing

General learning Outcome:

Convey information and opinions

Specific Learning Outcome:

Organize information into lists, tables and charts

	Underlying concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Print is organized in predictable ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify same/different shapes, pseudo letters and letters.Group familiar, concrete illustrations into two categories as a class/group activity.	
Phase I	Information can be grouped into categories.	Initial	Using a word bank, copy familiar, concrete words beside corresponding pictures in numbered, instructor-made lists.
		Developing	Using a word bank, categorize familiar, concrete words into instructor-made two-column tables with pictures and words in the headings.
		Adequate	Using a word bank, categorize familiar concrete words into instructor-made tables with up to three horizontal rows and words in the headings.
Phase II	Information can be grouped and presented in different formats.	Initial	Fill in fields with personally relevant yes/no responses in instructor-made charts of columns and rows with words in the headings.
		Developing	Given groups of familiar words, name the categories.
		Adequate	Using an instructor-made table template, create headings and categorize familiar words from a word bank.
Phase III	Organizing information makes accessing and using the information easier.	Initial	Present familiar information in instructor-adapted charts of rows and columns with words in the headings.
		Developing	Create a table with headings related to a familiar theme or concept and list words or phrases in each category.
		Adequate	Create simple charts and tables to present personally relevant information.



Strand:

Writing

General learning Outcome:

Record information

Specific Learning Outcome:

Copy accurately

	Underlying concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation	Print is organized in predictable ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Form recognizable letters by copying individual letters from a model.Copy missing initial letter directly under familiar personal information words (e.g. __ame).Given an illustration and a single word on an instructor-made worksheet, copy word on a line directly below.	
Phase I	Accuracy is important when copying.	Initial	Copy a limited number of single-digit numbers and personal information words.
		Developing	Copy personally relevant sight words, times and double-digit numbers.
		Adequate	Copy personally relevant sight words, times and simple familiar sentences, using correct word order and spacing.
Phase II	Information is copied so that it can be used later.	Initial	Copy sight words, abbreviations, addresses, dates and familiar sentences, using correct word order and spacing.
		Developing	Copy unfamiliar words, money amounts and sentences with familiar vocabulary.
		Adequate	Copy unfamiliar words and sentences, using wrap-around text.
Phase III	Copying accurately is a strategy that can be used to assist in completing other tasks.	Initial	Use accurately copied information and short texts to accomplish another task.
		Developing	<i>Copying speed and amount of text to be copied may increase over time, but this skill can now be used to support the development of other skills.</i>
		Adequate	

Strand:

Writing

General learning Outcome:

Record information

Specific Learning Outcome:

Take notes

	Underlying concepts	Proficiency Descriptors	
Foundation			<i>Taking notes involves selecting relevant information from aural or print texts and writing this information down for future use. Taking notes is a skill that becomes a strategy for accomplishing other tasks.</i>
Phase I		Initial	<i>The ability to take notes is dependent upon learners':</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>familiarity with a breadth of vocabulary</i> <i>proficiency in copying prescribed information</i> <i>ability to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information</i>
		Developing	
		Adequate	
Phase II		Initial	<i>Learners can be expected to begin demonstrating initial proficiency in taking notes in Phase II Adequate.</i>
		Developing	
	Taking notes is a strategy for remembering information at a later date.	Adequate	Using an instructor-made template that prompts learners to look for specific details in a short familiar print text, list information sequentially.
Phase III	When taking notes, it is only necessary to write down relevant information.	Initial	With support in identifying key information, note relevant items from print texts on relevant topics in simple instructor-made tables or charts.
		Developing	With support in identifying key information, note relevant items from short aural texts on familiar, relevant topics in simple instructor-made tables or charts.
		Adequate	In personally relevant contexts, determine purpose for listening and reading short print/aural texts and note key information accurately and according to purpose.



Strand: Writing

General Learning Outcome: Write for Personal Expression

A balanced ESL literacy program involves literacy development for both functional and non-functional purposes. The purpose of this general learning outcome (write for personal expression) is to provide learners with an opportunity to experience writing for non-functional purposes. As many learners have little experience with writing for personal expression, this can be a very stimulating and personally meaningful aspect of literacy development. Writing for personal expression helps learners to develop habits for lifelong literacy development. Programs with a purpose of developing learners' general literacy skills may choose to include these outcomes.

There are two specific learning outcomes in this section: a) write a narrative and b) engage in free writing. The other writing outcomes in this framework are highly detailed to provide a specific progression of skill development, with a focus on accuracy. The skills developed in other outcomes transfer to the context of writing for personal expression. **Writing for personal expression** allows learners to experiment more freely with the writing process; the focus is on developing writing fluency. As a result, the personal expression outcomes are described in more holistic terms.

Write a Narrative

Writing a narrative provides learners with an opportunity to record their experiences in print. Many learners in ESL literacy programs have not had this opportunity and find this to be highly satisfying and personally meaningful. Writing about one's own experiences ensures that the writing vocabulary and content are highly relevant. Engaging in narrative writing in an ESL literacy class provides a context for developing a range of literacy skills: spelling, sentence construction, punctuation, pre-writing organization and editing strategies.

Engage in Free Writing

Free writing provides learners with an opportunity to experiment with their writing. Supported free writing builds writing fluency, provides learners with experiences of writing for non-functional purposes and builds a habit of writing frequently.

Throughout the Phases, free writing is highly supported and highly contextualized. The writing environment should be one in which learners are not inhibited by the possibility of making mistakes and where risk-taking is encouraged and supported. The focus in free writing is to encourage learners to express ideas on paper. A journal approach, with regular dedicated time, can be used in all Phases and in this approach, learners can see their own progress over time.



Strand: Writing

General learning Outcome: Write for personal expression

Specific Learning Outcome: Write a narrative

	Underlying concepts	Proficiency Descriptors
Foundation	Oral language can be connected with print.	<p>In Foundation Phase, learners usually experience creating narrative through the process of writing an instructor-led and scribed group text.</p> <p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond orally to instructor prompts about personal information • identify key words from the learner's personal story with instructor prompting (e.g. How many children does Li have?) • copy instructor-identified single key words from the learner's personal story
Phase I	Personal experiences and stories can be recorded in written form.	<p>In Phase I, learners will usually experience creating narrative through the process of writing an instructor-led group text.</p> <p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute ideas for instructor-led group writing • copy instructor-identified key vocabulary or short sentences from group texts • dictate a short narrative of a personal experience to a writer • copy instructor-identified key words or sentences from the learner's personal story
Phase II	Personal experiences can be shared with others in written form.	<p>In Phase II, learners will continue to gain experience in writing group texts and begin to write short narratives (approx 5 - 6 sentences) based on personal experience. Support can be provided with pre-writing discussion and brainstorming, word or phrase banks and familiar sentence stems or writing models.</p> <p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write sentences about a personally relevant experience • add descriptive words to elaborate on ideas and create effects • share their writing with other people
Phase III	A writer can craft a narrative to achieve a desired response from the reader.	<p>Learners in Phase III are beginning to write more independently, but still need a great deal of support in the form of pre-writing brainstorming / discussion and assistance in structuring the text.</p> <p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create narratives in paragraph form based on personal experiences that have a story arc with beginning, middle and conclusion • receive feedback and incorporate in a final draft

Strand: Writing

General learning Outcome: Write for personal expression

Specific Learning Outcome: Engage in free writing

	Underlying concepts	Proficiency Descriptors
Foundation	Print conveys meaning.	Using provided visuals, select and cut out pictures to complete a familiar sentence stem or prompt. (e.g. <i>A kitchen has...</i> learner glues cut out magazine pictures to indicate what is found in a kitchen.)
Phase I	Personal ideas, thoughts and opinions can be recorded in written form.	<p>In Phase I, free writing is highly supported and contextualized.</p> <p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond orally to prompts on familiar, personally relevant topics • cut pictures and paste into journal or poster to respond to a prompt (e.g. <i>I like....., I have....., Today / yesterday.....,)</i> • indicate likes / dislikes by circling pictures, marking pictures or words with circles, underlines, check marks, etc. • finish simple sentence stems on personally relevant, familiar topics, using word banks <p>Support can be provided in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-writing oral skills development (e.g. talk, practice, discuss everything orally first) • provide familiar, personally relevant topics • word banks of familiar, concrete personally relevant vocabulary • visuals in writing prompts • simple, familiar sentence stems • a safe, encouraging writing environment
Phase II	Writing can be a way of responding to experiences, events and questions.	<p>In Phase II, free writing continues to be supported and contextualized.</p> <p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to a class brainstorm on topics or vocabulary • write sentences on a familiar, personally relevant topics <p>Support can be provided in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-writing discussion and brainstorming • word or phrase banks • familiar sentence stems • familiar, personally relevant topics • short writing models • a safe, encouraging writing environment

Strand: Writing

General learning Outcome: Write for personal expression

Specific Learning Outcome: Engage in free writing

	Underlying concepts	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase III	Free writing improves writing and language skills.	<p>In Phase III, learners are beginning to engage more independently in free writing.</p> <p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write connected text to respond to questions, events and experiences • explore and record thoughts, ideas and impressions in writing <p>Support is still required and can be provided in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-writing discussion and brainstorming • clear direction as to whether writers are expected to share their free-writing • a safe, encouraging writing environment

Key Text Types

The learning outcomes for reading and writing outline a developmental progression of skills from Foundations to Phase III.

Key text types are the recommended kinds of texts that learners develop familiarity with in different program contexts. This section provides key text types for all reading and writing outcomes, and are grouped according to the four Alberta program contexts:

- community orientation and participation ESL literacy
- family ESL literacy
- employment ESL literacy
- educational preparation ESL literacy

The key text types are intended to be addressed at all levels, with appropriate degrees of support. We encourage you to focus on the key text types through thematic teaching. In Foundations and Phase I, instructors will need to adapt or create texts, provide extensive support and expect a limited amount of independence with the tasks. As learners progress, their independence will increase and the amount of support needed will decrease.



The types of texts learners need practice with will depend on learner needs and program goals. See Stage 1: Understand Needs for information on learners' needs.



See Stage 2: Determine Focus for descriptions and guiding principles in each of the four ESL literacy program contexts.

Key Text Types

Strand: Reading

Program Context: Community orientation and participation ESL literacy

Specific Learning Outcomes	General Learning Outcome: Interpret informational text	
	interpret articles and brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> articles / brochures re: health, services/resources, banking information and other community-related topics
	interpret signs, notices and labels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> street signs building signs public notices (e.g. "out of order", "please take a number") medicine labels food labels clothing labels
	interpret advertisements and consumer contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> flyers cell phone contracts "buy now, pay later" contracts
	interpret messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> messages from landlord re: repairs formal notices from service agencies re: deadlines, procedures, requirements, etc.
	follow instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on medicine labels on consumer products to assemble household products
	engage in personal reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simplified novels, graphic novels or cartoons newspapers, magazine articles, websites & blogs
	General Learning Outcome: Interpret formatted text	
	interpret lists, tables, charts and graphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> transit schedules work schedules
	interpret maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community maps stylized transit/route maps
	interpret receipts and bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bills for goods/services shopping receipts

Key Text Types

Strand: Writing

Program Context: Community orientation and participation ESL literacy

Specific Learning Outcomes	General Learning Outcome: Write to convey information and opinions	
	describe and explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> housing problems in writing for landlord health problems on patient intake forms financial need or extenuating circumstances on funding applications
	write messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> message to landlord lodging complaint or requesting service request information or respond to request for information from service agencies
	write instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> directions to reach a location
	fill out forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new patient forms benefits/low-income assistance forms rental application forms
	organize information in lists, tables and charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sign up sheets shopping lists lists of tasks and priorities personal calendar
	General Learning Outcome: Record information	
	copy accurately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> important information gathered in various contexts (e.g. bus #, addresses)
	take notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> class notes key information when accessing services/support phone messages
	General Learning Outcome: Write for personal expression	
	write a narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> about a personal experience or a class event
	engage in free writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in-class writing journal

Key Text Types

Strand: Reading

Program Context: Family ESL literacy

General Learning Outcome: Interpret informational text		
Specific Learning Outcomes	interpret articles and brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school newsletters • health, child development, community resources
	interpret signs, notices and labels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medicine labels • community signs • food/clothing labels • safety labels
	interpret advertisements and consumer contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flyers • "buy now, pay later" contracts
	interpret messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes/emails from child's teacher or school personnel • permission waivers
	follow instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on medicine/food products • to assemble a household product
	engage in personal reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • books for infants and children • material for own interest (books, magazines, online, etc. – provides print-rich environment for children)
	General Learning Outcome: Interpret formatted text	
	interpret lists, tables, charts and graphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report cards • Individual Program Plans (IPP) for children
	interpret maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transit maps • community maps • building floor plans
	interpret receipts and bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • household bills • shopping receipts • school fees

Key Text Types

Strand: Writing

Program Context: Family ESL literacy

Specific Learning Outcomes	General Learning Outcome: Write to convey information and opinions	
	describe and explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housing problems in writing for landlord • health problems on patient intake forms • financial need or extenuating circumstances on funding applications
	write messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes (or emails) to school explaining child's previous or upcoming absence
	write instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes for child(ren)'s caregiver/babysitter • for children or family members
	fill out forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new patient forms • benefits/low-income assistance forms • rental application forms
	organize information in lists, tables and charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sign up sheets • shopping lists • lists of tasks and priorities • personal calendar
	General Learning Outcome: Record information	
	copy accurately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • copy personal information (e.g. health care or social insurance numbers) onto forms • copy addresses and contact information
	take notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes on conversations with school personnel or service providers
	General Learning Outcome: Write for personal expression	
	write a narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write stories about a personal/family experience • create story books for children based on family experiences or stories
	engage in free writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-class writing journal

Key Text Types

Strand: Reading

Program Context: Employment ESL literacy

General Learning Outcome: Interpret informational text		
Specific Learning Outcomes	interpret articles and brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> employee handbooks and Human Resources policies collective agreements WHMIS, food safety, first aid training manuals Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manuals
	interpret signs, notices and labels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> workplace signage WHMIS labels
	interpret advertisements and consumer contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> job advertisements (print and online) employment contracts job descriptions
	interpret messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> messages from employer re: procedures and job duties (email and print)
	follow instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> instructions on workplace materials and equipment in workplace notices instructions from employer re: job duties on application forms
	engage in personal reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> workplace newsletters articles related to job duties or field of employment
	General Learning Outcome: Interpret formatted text	
	interpret lists, tables, charts and graphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work / holiday schedules task lists inventory lists invoices work orders Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) performance appraisals
	interpret maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> floor plan of workplace
	interpret receipts and bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pay slips T-4 slips

Key Text Types

Strand: Writing

Program Context: Employment ESL literacy

Specific Learning Outcomes	General Learning Outcome: Write to convey information and opinions	
	describe and explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explanations for incident reports • simple resumés using a template
	write messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • messages (note or by email) to supervisor / co-workers • simple cover letters using a template
	write instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • instructions for co-workers at shift transfer
	fill out forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employment application forms • benefit plan forms • order/delivery forms • request for leave forms • Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) forms • grievance forms
	organize information in lists, tables and charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work availability on scheduling template • sign up sheets for workplace events/duties • time sheets • list of necessary/completed tasks at beginning/end of shifts
	General Learning Outcome: Record information	
	copy accurately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal work schedules
	take notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shift duties • logbooks • phone messages
	General Learning Outcome: Write for personal expression	
	write a narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contributions to workplace newsletters
	engage in free writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe work-related skills

Key Text Types

Strand: Reading

Program Context: Educational preparation ESL literacy

Specific Learning Outcomes	General Learning Outcome: Interpret informational text	
	interpret articles and brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> academic texts (articles, textbooks) with timed reading exercises
	interpret signs, notices and labels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> room signs room numbering systems student-related bulletin board notices (e.g. funding deadlines, notices for study groups)
	interpret advertisements and consumer contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in-school advertising re: courses, services (e.g. course calendars)
	interpret messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emails from instructor and classmates re: assignments, deadlines, etc. instructor comments on assignments
	follow instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on tests on assignments on application forms
	engage in personal reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> novels (move from simplified to authentic) non-fiction books or articles of interest (e.g. newspaper, magazine) websites/blogs graphic novels or comics
	General Learning Outcome: Interpret formatted text	
	interpret lists, tables, charts and graphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> class timetables subject-area (e.g. science) related lists, tables, charts in textbooks
	interpret maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> campus/building maps
	interpret receipts and bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tuition receipts

Key Text Types

Strand: Writing

Program Context: Educational preparation ESL literacy

Specific Learning Outcomes	General Learning Outcome: Write to convey information and opinions	
	describe and explain	3-paragraph essays: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compare/contrast • descriptive • persuasive (opinion)
	write messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emails to instructors re: submission of assignments, reporting absences • emails to classmates re: group work communication
	write instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to classmates, in the context of group work • to describe a process, on a written exam
	fill out forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • program registration form • funding application form • program application form • standardized test forms
	organize information in lists, tables and charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sign up sheets for presentations, group work, etc • record information from textbooks into comparative tables (e.g. pro vs. con arguments) • list and prioritize assignments and out-of-class tasks
	General Learning Outcome: Record information	
	copy accurately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-class information and notes
	take notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take notes in class
	General Learning Outcome: Write for personal expression	
	write a narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about a class or personal experience
	engage in free writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning reflection journals • literature responses • responses to events

LITERACY STRATEGIES

Literacy strategies are the methods that learners use to help them read, write and spell effectively. Learners with low first language literacy skills are learning these strategies for the first time. In effective ESL literacy programs, literacy strategies are taught and practiced explicitly.

There is a growing body of research and theory that points to the importance of strategy instruction in adult basic education (Kruidenier, 2002; Campbell, 2003) and adult ESL literacy education (Spiegel & Sunderland, 2006; Leong & Collins, 2007). The development of reading, writing and spelling strategies allows learners to draw upon a range of resources when they face difficulty in these areas. Strategy instruction also lays the groundwork for lifelong literacy development. A learner who has developed strategies for reading, writing and spelling is better equipped to face literacy-related challenges and to continue developing their skills beyond the classroom environment.

Integrating literacy strategy outcomes reinforces the importance of strategy development for both instructors and learners, and helps ensure strategy instruction is not seen as incidental or optional.

Approach to Strategy Development

The purpose of strategy instruction is to provide learners with a range of methods for succeeding in reading, writing and spelling. It is not essential that each learner develop every strategy to mastery level, but it is important that programs provide repeated opportunities for learners to practice and develop the strategies. The goal is for individual learners to be able to choose the strategies that work most effectively for them.

Literacy Strategy Learning Outcomes in this Framework

The following sections provide learning outcomes for reading, writing and spelling strategy development. These strategies were developed based on the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* document, current research and theory in ESL literacy, and input from experienced ESL literacy instructors.

In this section, you will find:

- pre-literacy strategies recommended for Foundation Phase
- an overview of the literacy strategies for Phases I – III
- individual sections for reading, writing and spelling strategies. Each section includes:
 - an introduction
 - an overview of the general learning outcomes
 - proficiency descriptors for each strategy at Phase I, II and III



The outcomes outline a general progression of strategy development. They are meant to guide instruction, by providing information on the conditions and supports necessary for learners to develop and apply the strategies in each phase.

Foundation Phase Pre-Literacy Strategies

The following pre-literacy strategies for reading and writing in Foundation Phase are outlined in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*.

Pre-literacy Strategies	
	Learners in Foundation Phase are beginning to:
Use pre- reading strategies	rely on memory to identify letters and numerals
	use pictures and symbols as clues to meaning
	use background knowledge or prior experience to guess meaning
Use pre-writing strategies	look back at a model when copying
	note letter, word or numeral placement on the page or lines
	write slowly, carefully and clearly, following a model
	practice letter formation by moving from big (e.g. whiteboard) to small (e.g. lines on a page) formats
	use finger to help with word spacing

Adapted from Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000)

Foundation Phase instructors may wish to draw on the literacy strategy outcomes provided for Phases I – III, once learners have begun to use the strategies above. More focused literacy strategy instruction can be integrated in Phase I and beyond.



Overview of Phase I - III Literacy Strategies

The following chart provides an overview of the strategies included in this framework for reading, writing and spelling from Phase I to Phase III.

Phase I – III Literacy Strategies	
General Learning Outcomes	Specific Learning Outcomes
Apply reading strategies	use prior knowledge to aid comprehension
	predict and check predictions
	use context clues
	use word, syntax and punctuation cues
	identify literary elements
	use supports
	re-read and self-monitor
	make connections and ask questions
	visualize content
	re-tell to consolidate understanding
	make inferences and draw conclusions
	use phonics
Apply writing strategies	use copying strategies
	use pre-writing strategies
	use models and supports
	use revision strategies
	use editing strategies
Apply spelling strategies	use visual spelling strategies
	use aural spelling strategies
	use physical spelling strategies
	use logical spelling strategies
	use verbal spelling strategies

Strand: Literacy Strategies
General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies
Specific Learning Outcome: Use prior knowledge

Proficiency Descriptors	
Phase I	This strategy involves drawing upon background knowledge, experiences and understanding of the world to construct and confirm meaning.
Phase II	Using prior knowledge can and should be employed across all Phases, but the complexity of the text will increase as the learners move into Phases II and III.
Phase III	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prior to reading a text about grocery shopping, consider own context: where do they shop for groceries? • prior to reading a text on housing, discuss personal experience of a housing search

Strand: Literacy Strategies

General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies

Specific Learning Outcome: Predict and check predictions

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Using simple texts on familiar, personally relevant topics, learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preview pictures and title and contribute to class predictions prior to reading • check for accuracy of class predictions after reading
Phase II	<p>Using texts on familiar, personally relevant topics, learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preview pictures and title to predict key vocabulary and main idea of texts • use layout to predict the nature/purpose of text: e.g. schedule, narrative, message, advertisement. • check predictions independently at the end of the text
Phase III	<p>Using texts on personally relevant topics, learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • independently use pictures, title, layout, headings and, bold words to predict key vocabulary, main idea and purpose of text • predict subsequent events in longer texts or stories • check predictions independently throughout the reading process

Strand: Literacy Strategies
General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies
Specific Learning Outcome: Use context clues

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use visual cues and title to aid in the comprehension of words
Phase II	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use visual cues to aid in comprehending text • refer to the layout of a text to assist in understanding, noting headings, bold type and key words
Phase III	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use textual cues (descriptive words, verbs and location phrases) to assist with understanding of text. • employ self-questioning techniques to determine meaning of words/text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part of speech • function in sentence • importance of unknown word



Strand: Literacy Strategies

General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies

Specific Learning Outcome: Use word/syntax/punctuation cues

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use knowledge of simple spelling patterns in regular word families to decode • differentiate between commas, periods and question marks when reading
Phase II	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • move beyond reading word by word to gain meaning from phrases or sentences • use knowledge of word parts, contractions and compound words to read familiar words in context • use punctuation to assist in flow of reading
Phase III	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • segment words into parts or syllables when reading unfamiliar words in context • apply knowledge of compound words, contractions and word families to read unfamiliar words in context • pay attention to punctuation for phrasing, fluency and meaning

Strand: Literacy Strategies
General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies
Specific Learning Outcome: Identify literary elements

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify subjects or characters in text
Phase II	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the beginning, middle and end of a text identify purpose or main idea
Phase III	<p>Learners develop the ability to identify and describe the different parts of both informational and narrative texts:</p> <p>Informational texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify topic sentence and supporting details identify purpose identify conjunctive adverbs (however, in addition to) <p>Narrative texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify parts of the story: characters, elements of plot, conflict, etc.



Strand: Literacy Strategies
General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies
Specific Learning Outcome: Use supports

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Learners begin to use the following to aid in comprehension in an instructor-directed environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visuals • class discussion • instructor-provided word banks with pictures • self made dictionaries and word lists • picture dictionaries
Phase II	<p>Learners begin to use the following to aid in comprehension in an instructor-supported environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visuals • headings • simple footnotes • organizational patterns of different types of texts • picture dictionary • class materials
Phase III	<p>Learners begin to use the following to aid in comprehension in an instructor-facilitated, more independent environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visuals • tables of contents • simple end notes • simple glossary • topic sentences • headings • learner dictionary • class materials

Strand: Literacy Strategies
General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies
Specific Learning Outcome: Re-read and self-monitor

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Learners develop the ability to gain meaning by re-reading when encountering problems at the word level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check word shapes and number of letters • refer to number of letters in word • look for common letter combinations
Phase II	<p>Learners develop the ability to gain meaning by re-reading beyond the word level when encountering problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use self-questioning techniques to determine if re-reading is necessary • go back and re-read to determine meaning of words in sentences • read on to look for more information and then re-read with more understanding
Phase III	<p>Learners develop the ability to gain meaning by re-reading more complex texts when encountering problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scan for specific details (<i>Did I find what I was reading for?</i>) • confirm the meaning of unknown words in phrases • correct misinterpreted punctuation when reading • use “wh” questions as a guide and re-read

Strand: Literacy Strategies

General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies

Specific Learning Outcome: Make connections and ask questions

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connect vocabulary to own word lists • relate familiar relevant texts to own experience with instructor guidance
Phase II	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connect vocabulary in text to previously learned vocabulary • follow guided questions to connect events in simple texts to own experience
Phase III	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connect text to own life experience • use self-questioning techniques to assist in understanding • highlight important information

Strand: Literacy Strategies

General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies

Specific Learning Outcome: Visualize content

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	This strategy requires the learners to form pictures in their minds about what is happening in the text to assist in understanding.
Phase II	Visualization can be taught across all phases, but the complexity of the text will increase as the learners' reading abilities increase.
Phase III	Encourage learners to visualize characters and settings in their mind to make movies in their heads of what is happening in the text. Encourage learners to ask themselves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What can I see?" • "What is happening?"



Strand: Literacy Strategies

General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies

Specific Learning Outcome: Re-tell to consolidate understanding

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use visuals to re-tell a simple, familiar, personally relevant story with repetitive text
Phase II	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with instructor support in the form of prompts or clues, re-tell a personally relevant story without visuals • identify what happened at the beginning, middle and end of a text
Phase III	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify key points and events in a text and summarize



Strand: Literacy Strategies

General Learning Outcome: Apply reading strategies

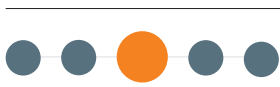
Specific Learning Outcome: Make inferences & draw conclusions

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • look at a simple picture and make inferences • (e.g. picture of boy putting on boots, mitts = it's winter) • make inferences about series of pictures or realia following guided oral questions from the instructor
Phase II	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • look at pictures and/or short texts and make inferences • make inferences about pictures or text following guided questions from the instructor • draw conclusions about the main idea or purpose of texts with instructor guidance and prompts
Phase III	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make inferences from extended text • use self-questioning techniques to make inferences • draw conclusions about key aspects of text



A Note on Phonics:


















































































The chart outlining phonics strategies is based on the progression of phonics development outlined in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*. You will notice that phonics can be used for both reading and spelling. For the purposes of simplicity, this chart combines both applications and is found in the reading section. This chart includes two additions to the ESL Literacy Benchmarks information:

- A statement of **learning emphasis** for each phase. The process of phonics development is often overwhelming for learners and instructors. The learning emphasis helps instructors keep in mind the overall purpose of phonics instruction at each phase.
- Shading indicates the **instructional focus** for each stage. Learners need to be exposed to phonics gradually and need time to practice and develop their skills. We recommend an approach in which phonics is introduced, supported and recycled over time.



Specific Learning Outcome: Use phonics

Key:  instructional focus is on **introducing** and supporting strategy use
 instructional focus is on **recycling** and supporting strategy use

Concept	Outcome	Phase								
		I			II			III		
		I	D	A	I	D	A	I	D	A
Phase I Emphasis: Develop awareness of letter/sound correspondence to aid in decoding and invented spelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sound out and write initial consonants and short vowel sounds in sight words and simple, phonetically regular words fill in the missing initial consonant or short vowel sound in rhyming words such as: _as, _as, _ad, _ad 									
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sound out, discriminate between and write medial and final consonant sounds in sight words and simple, phonetically regular words fill in the missing final consonant sound in word groups of 3-letter words such as: ba_, ba_, ba_ 									
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sound out and discriminate between and write short medial vowels in three letter words write word groups with varying initial and final consonants and varying medial short vowels such as: sat, cup, ten, big 									
Phase II Emphasis: Develop awareness of phonics rules and common letter combinations to aid in reading for meaning and writing familiar words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sound out initial and final consonant blends (br, fl, ng), combinations (ck, ss, ff) and digraphs (ch, sh, th) write words with short vowels in initial and medial positions 									
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sound out and write words that contain long vowels with silent e ending connect common final suffixes (-tion, -sion, -station) with appropriate sound sound out 2-syllable words with short vowels 									
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compare, contrast and write words with long & short vowels compare words with diphthongs (oi, oy, ow, ou, au, all) sound out multisyllabic words write words with vowel blends, eg: ee, ea 									
Phase III Emphasis: Develop increased awareness of phonic rules, vowel combinations and suffixes/prefixes to read for meaning and to aid in writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compare words with different pronunciation of "ed" suffixes compare words with the suffixes: er,s, ies, less, ly, ful 									
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compare words with vowel digraphs and iphthongs (ai, ay, ei, eigh, ee, ea, ey, ie) 									
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compare words with prefixes (re-, un-, dis-, anti-) compare words with diphthongs (oi, oy, ow, ou, au, all) compare words with consonant digraphs (wr, kn) 									

Adapted from Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners
 (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000)



Strand: Literacy Strategies

General Learning Outcome: Apply writing strategies

Specific Learning Outcome: Use copying strategies

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • count letters of words to be copied • look at word shapes • count number of words to be copied • copy from a word bank and cross out choices used • include spaces between words when copying sentences
Phase II	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan space needed for copying • re-read content to check for accuracy • pay attention to details when copying (e.g. format, legibility)
Phase III	<p><i>Learners have developed copying proficiency and use the strategies previously developed, as needed.</i></p>

Strand: Literacy Strategies
General Learning Outcome: Apply writing strategies
Specific Learning Outcome: Use pre-writing strategies

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Pre-writing strategies are highly contextualized and supported. In class discussions on familiar, personally relevant topics, learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> orally contribute familiar vocabulary to class brainstorms in preparation for whole-class writing activities
Phase II	<p>Pre-writing strategies are highly contextualized and supported. In class discussions on familiar, personally relevant topics, learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> orally contribute ideas and content to class brainstorms in preparation for whole-class writing activities brainstorm and list familiar vocabulary in small groups in preparation for individual and class writing tasks
Phase III	<p>Pre-writing strategies are contextualized and supported. In class discussions on familiar, relevant topics, learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute ideas on content and structure to class brainstorms in preparation for individual writing tasks determine audience and purpose for individual writing tasks organize and plan for writing, with models provided (e.g. mind maps, simple outlines)

Strand: Literacy Strategies
General Learning Outcome: Apply writing strategies
Specific Learning Outcome: Use models and supports

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use finger to help with word spacing • use visual cues to aid in completing worksheets • write in pencil so that errors can be corrected • use word and phrase banks • use a picture dictionary or class resources to write familiar, personally relevant words • use page markings (e.g. numbers, lines, holes/margins) to determine starting point
Phase II	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use simple models of good writing for vocabulary, sentence structure or format • read their writing out loud to check writing accuracy • use familiar phrases or word banks from class material
Phase III	<p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use models of good writing for content and format • use simplified learner dictionaries to assist in choosing vocabulary • use topic sentences and organizational plans when writing

Strand: Literacy Strategies
General Learning Outcome: Apply writing strategies
Specific Learning Outcome: Use editing strategies

	Proficiency Descriptors
Phase I	<p>Editing strategies are highly contextualized and supported.</p> <p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check writing for capital letters at the beginning of sentences • check writing for end punctuation (periods/question marks) • check writing for proper spacing between words • correct instructor-identified errors in spelling of familiar vocabulary
Phase II	<p>Editing strategies are highly contextualized and supported.</p> <p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check for capitals on proper nouns • check and correct spelling of familiar vocabulary, using simple learner-made word lists and dictionaries
Phase III	<p>Editing strategies are supported.</p> <p>Learners develop the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use tools (e.g. class materials, basic student dictionaries, spell-check) to check and correct spelling and punctuation • edit for appearance, format and grammar, requesting assistance when necessary

Spelling Strategies

English spelling can be challenging for ESL learners with interrupted formal education. While there are a number of rules that influence English spelling, there are many exceptions to these rules. Learners with interrupted formal education often have difficulty remembering abstract spelling rules and their exceptions. The spelling strategy outcomes provided in this section reflect a varied approach to learning and practicing English spelling.

The spelling strategies in this section are grouped into five specific learning outcomes. These are:

- use **visual** spelling strategies:
 - Learn and practice spelling through pictures, images and spatial understanding.
- use **aural** spelling strategies:
 - Learn and practice spelling through sound, music and rhythm.
- use **physical** spelling strategies:
 - Learn and practice spelling through body movement and sense of touch.
- use **logical** spelling strategies:
 - Learn and practice spelling through logic, reasoning and systems.
- use **verbal** spelling strategies:
 - Learn and practice spelling through spoken and written words.

In spelling strategy instruction, it is important to remember that there will be individual differences among learners in the class. Some learners may find visual spelling strategies to be effective, while others may prefer logical or physical strategies. It is important for instructors to provide a range of strategy options. The emphasis in spelling strategy instruction is on encouraging learners to try a variety of ways to spell new words and remember the spelling of familiar words. The grouping of the spelling strategies into visual, aural, physical, logical and verbal strategies also reminds instructors to use a variety of instructional methods which target different learning styles.

Spelling Strategy Outcomes

The following chart contains the spelling strategy outcomes from Phase I – III. The shading in the chart indicates the recommended Phase for introducing the strategy. Learners will need to be exposed to spelling strategies gradually and will need time to practice and develop their skills. In this framework, we recommend an approach in which spelling strategies are introduced, supported and recycled over time. See the *Classroom Concept* in this section for information on how to teach literacy strategies.



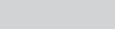

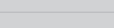
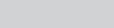
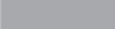
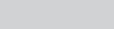
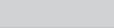
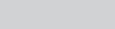
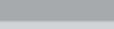
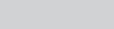
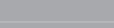

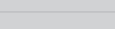
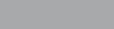
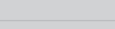
See Stage 4: Integrate Assessment *for considerations in assessing literacy strategies.*



For more information on strategy instruction, refer to chapter 8 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*

General Learning Outcome: Apply spelling strategies

Key:  instructional focus is on **introducing** and supporting strategy use
 instructional focus is on **recycling** and supporting strategy use

Specific Learning Outcomes	Learn by using...	Learners develop the ability to....	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Use visual spelling strategies.	pictures, images and spatial understanding	"see" words in the mind			
		use word shape to recall spelling			
		use a picture dictionary to find spelling			
		draw boxes for each syllable and fill in letters			
		write syllables in different colours			
Use aural spelling strategies.	sound, music and rhythm	sing or chant spelling of words			
		spell the word out loud repeatedly			
		"sound it out" using knowledge of phonics (complexity increases over Phases)			
		use rhyming to help with spelling words in the same word family			
Use physical spelling strategies.	body, hands and sense of touch	clap/tap to count syllables			
		write the word repeatedly (promotes automatic motor patterns)			
		use finger and "write" the word in the air, on table, on arm/body			
		manipulate letter magnets/tiles to form words			
		cut words cards into syllables and rearrange to form words			
Use logical spelling strategies.	logic, reasoning and systems	refer to thematic lists of sight words			
		organize words into and refer to simple learner-made dictionaries			
		refer to basic student dictionaries (published)			
		check that words and syllables include vowels			
		use familiar "word chunks" and letter sequences to build words			
		use spelling rules/guidelines			
		use root words, prefixes, suffixes to build words			
		look for tricky parts and remember as discrete pieces			
Use verbal spelling strategies.	words, both in speech and writing	create or use "memory tricks" (mnemonics) to memorize spelling			
		ask someone for the correct spelling of a word			
		combined method: look/say/cover/write/check			

Adapted from Overview of Learning Styles (n.d.)

HABITS OF MIND

ESL literacy programs do more than help learners develop language and literacy skills. ESL literacy instructors and program administrators across Alberta identified the following non-literacy skills as important for learners' success:

- strategies for learning in and beyond the classroom
(e.g. preparing, self-monitoring, setting learning goals, organizational strategies, etc.)
- life skills for Alberta
(e.g. managing time and information, navigating systems, accessing resources, problem-solving, etc.)
- socio-cultural competence
(e.g. understanding cultural expectations in a variety of Albertan contexts)

When learners do not have the opportunity to develop these skills, it is more difficult for them to succeed inside and outside of the classroom. ESL literacy practitioners in Alberta emphasize the importance of providing learners with the non-literacy skills demonstrated by successful learners.

These non-literacy skills are highlighted in research and theory on instruction for learners with interrupted formal education (Jackson, 1994; Yates & Devi, 2006; Leong & Collins, 2007). Extensive research on the strategies used by successful language learners (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), the importance of metacognition, or "thinking about thinking" (Costa & Kallick, 2008) and mindful learning (Langer, 2000) points to the importance of helping learners in adult ESL literacy programs develop non-literacy skills. In some cases, mainstream adult ESL programs have integrated a focus on "sociocultural competence" in which learners develop knowledge and skills for negotiating common social situations in the new country (Westood, Mak, Barker & Ishiyama, 2000), while maintaining their original cultural identity. In these programs, the emphasis is on helping learners develop both the language and sociocultural skills associated with success in the learners' new context.

✔ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #51**

Instruction fosters independence and autonomous learning as learners take responsibility for and manage their own learning.

In this framework, **Habits of Mind** is the term used to describe the non-literacy skills that demonstrate the characteristics of successful learners in North American contexts. Demonstrating these characteristics in ways valued and recognized in North America contributes to success in many Albertan contexts, such as formal education, workplace and community. In using this term, we draw on the research and theory of Costa and Kallick (2008), in which they identified sixteen Habits of Mind that contribute to success in learning and life. Costa and Kallick define a habit as a behavior that "requires a discipline of the mind that is practiced so it becomes a habitual way of working toward more thoughtful... action" (2008, p. xvii). In addition to informing curricula in children's education, Habits of Mind have been used



in curriculum development for adult ESL learners (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2005) and are an integral part of the learning outcomes presented in this framework.

Habits of Mind contribute to learners' success in the following areas:

- language and literacy development
- continuous learning
- understanding and meeting expectations in a variety of Albertan contexts, such as formal education, workplace and community

Adult Learners and Habits of Mind

Learners in adult ESL literacy programs have had rich and varied life experiences. They have developed resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility and engagement and demonstrate these in many aspects of their lives. Incorporating Habits of Mind into your curriculum will be most effective when members of your program team recognize, honour and build upon the strengths that learners bring as a result of their life experiences.

However, it is equally important to provide learners with the opportunity to develop the skills that are expected of adults in a variety of Albertan contexts. Due to the interrupted nature of their formal education, many learners in ESL literacy programs have not had the opportunity to develop the skills associated with resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility and engagement in learning, work and life situations in Alberta. Explicit instruction that develops skills for demonstrating Habits of Mind helps to make expectations clear and supports learners' success. The skills for demonstrating Habits of Mind are provided as a guide to "learning how to learn" in the context of formal education. These skills foster continuous learning and can be applied in a variety of contexts beyond the classroom.

Culture and Habits of Mind

Resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility and engagement can be demonstrated in many ways. Culture influences expectations of how these characteristics are demonstrated. The Habits of Mind in this framework are based on common cultural expectations regarding behaviour that is valued in Alberta. There are a range of cultural expectations within Canadian-born, native English-speaking communities; however, the intention of including Habits of Mind here is to provide learners with an opportunity to develop skills that are *generally* associated with resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility and engagement in Alberta.

For learners in ESL literacy programs, an inability to demonstrate these Habits of Mind can impede their success in education, workplace and community. In developing these skills, learners will be better able to demonstrate resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility, and

engagement in ways that are recognized, appreciated and valued in a variety of Albertan contexts.

For example, one of the ways responsibility is demonstrated in Alberta is by arriving for class, work and appointments on time. For these engagements, Albertans share a general conception of what “on time” means. This concept may be very different from learners’ previous experience. However, when learners are late (by Albertan standards) for class, work or appointments, they may be viewed as irresponsible. This impression can impact learners negatively in educational, workplace and community contexts. Learners are often unaware of how this behavior is interpreted. Effective ESL literacy instruction both develops learners’ awareness of cultural expectations and provides skills for meeting these expectations.

The topic of culture and its implications for language instruction is a broad one. Habits of Mind are integrated into this framework as a way of helping ESL literacy practitioners support learners in developing socio-cultural competence: the ability to understand and meet cultural expectations in a variety of Albertan contexts.

Many mainstream ESL programs have now integrated a focus on intercultural communicative competence, which involves developing “the abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini, 2005). For more information on integrating intercultural communicative competence in adult ESL programs, please refer to the *ATESL Curriculum Framework for Adult ESL* (Chambers, et al, 2011).

Overview of Habits of Mind

This section outlines four Habits of Mind for ESL literacy programs.

Habits of Mind

Resourcefulness	The ability to act effectively or proactively when faced with challenges in learning and life in Canada
Motivation	The commitment and ability to direct and sustain one’s learning process
Responsibility	The ability to meet commitments and learn effectively by reliably managing time and information
Engagement	Being involved in and enhancing one’s own learning process

Habits of Mind are only made visible by a person's behaviour or action. In this framework, we outline skills for demonstrating resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility and engagement in Albertan contexts, such as formal education, workplace and community. When Habits of Mind and their corresponding skills are fostered in ESL literacy programs, learners can **transfer** these to contexts beyond the program, such as workplace, community and further education.

This chart provides an overview of Habits of Mind and their supporting skills. These skills are developed in order to *demonstrate* Habits of Mind in Alberta.

Overview: Habits of Mind	
General Learning Outcome: Demonstrate resourcefulness	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Successful learners.....</i>	access help and resources
	solve problems
	transfer learning
General Learning Outcome: Demonstrate motivation	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Successful learners.....</i>	set and manage goals
	prepare
	persevere
	learn outside the classroom
General Learning Outcome: Demonstrate responsibility	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Successful learners.....</i>	manage time
	manage information
General Learning Outcome: Demonstrate engagement	
Specific Learning Outcomes <i>Successful learners.....</i>	ask questions
	think critically
	focus
	take risks
	reflect on learning

Habits of Mind: A Learning Process

Integrating Habits of Mind into your ESL literacy curriculum provides a learning opportunity for both instructors and learners. We encourage you to resist assumptions about learners' characteristics, such as their level of responsibility, motivation, resourcefulness or engagement in learning. Using Habits of Mind as a way of understanding the key non-language skills which contribute to success provides an opportunity for learners and instructors to discuss cultural and individual differences. In many ways, learners have much to teach instructors about other ways of learning, interacting, thinking and being. You may better understand your learners' strengths when you learn from them about how the Habits of Mind are demonstrated in other cultures.

The skills for demonstrating the Habits of Mind (resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility and engagement) in this framework are based on cultural expectations in Alberta. It is important to note that culture is not fixed and unchanging. For example, when learners enter the workforce, they often find that there is a culture particular to the organization for which they work. Another example can be seen in the way cultural beliefs about gender roles in North America have shifted over time. You can foster learners' ability to question and analyze cultural expectations by reflecting on these throughout your own teaching practice.

Below are some questions to guide your reflective practice in this area:

- *In what ways have the learners demonstrated Habits of Mind in the past?*
- *In what ways are the learners demonstrating Habits of Mind in the class?*
- *What strengths do the learners bring that will help them develop the skills and strategies for demonstrating Habits of Mind in ways that are appreciated and valued in Alberta?*
- *What other ways of thinking about time (or learning, goals, motivation, preparation, etc.) might influence learners' behaviour?*
- *As an instructor, what can I learn from these other ways of thinking?*

Habits of Mind are developed over time and in different ways. Aim for a **balance** between:

- recognizing and celebrating Habits of Mind as learners demonstrate them
- and
- explicitly teaching and practicing skills that enable learners to demonstrate Habits of Mind in Albertan contexts

Habits of Mind can be developed through purposeful, intentional skill development and practice. A safe, supportive classroom and program environment that encourages reflection, risk-taking and empowerment will be most effective in developing the skills and strategies to support these Habits of Mind.



For **each** of the four Habits of Mind outlined in this section, you will find:

- a description of the **Habit of Mind**
- a description of **skills** that support learners in demonstrating the Habit of Mind
- considerations for **understanding learners' challenges**
- considerations for **building on learners' strengths**
- **A process of skill development** for building each skill that demonstrates Habits of Mind. Each step in the process is accompanied by a self-questioning technique, which aims to increase learners' awareness of their learning processes. Each skill incorporates an element of learner reflection, which contributes to learners' metacognitive awareness (*ability to think about thinking*).



See Stage 4: Integrate Assessment *for considerations in assessing Habits of Mind.*

RESOURCEFULNESS

The ability to act effectively or proactively when faced with challenges in learning and life in Alberta

Learners demonstrate resourcefulness in many ways. For example, learners have raised families under difficult circumstances, survived traumatic events and drawn on skills and connections that enabled them to arrive in Canada. The skills for demonstrating resourcefulness in this framework provide learners with additional tools for success in Alberta.

This chart outlines three skills for demonstrating resourcefulness.

Habit of Mind: Resourcefulness	
Skills	Description
Transfer learning	This skill involves applying the skills and knowledge gained in class in other life situations. Understanding that in-class learning has a purpose outside of class fosters lifelong learning, enhances motivation and reinforces what is learned in class.
Solve problems	This skill involves identifying an issue which needs a solution and considering, evaluating and selecting options for follow-through. Problem solving is a transferrable skill and is valued in many contexts.
Access help and resources	<p>This skill involves seeking out and accessing assistance from a variety of sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• at school: instructor, classmates, learning services, library, etc.• in community: service agencies, neighbours, community associations, etc• at work: co-workers, employee handbooks, supervisors, etc. <p>Learners will need to access help and resources beyond the classroom. Developing strategies to support this skill increases learners' independence and can decrease their isolation.</p>

Understanding Learners' Challenges

Learners often face considerable challenges in transferring learning, solving problems and accessing help and resources in Alberta.

Transferring Learning

Because of their limited formal education, learners may be unaware that the skills developed in class can be applied elsewhere. Learners may have a narrow understanding of the purpose of literacy and of education.



Solving Problems

Learners' personal beliefs about individual roles and personal effectiveness may impact their interest and ability to solve problems independently. Learners may be inexperienced in cultures which assume a highly individualistic approach to problem solving. When ways of problem-solving in Alberta conflict with other ways of problem-solving, the learner may be unaware of the consequences (to him/herself and to others) of any given course of action.

Accessing Help and Resources

Learners may be unaware of the range of supports available to them in Alberta and often need to develop their understanding of when and how to approach people or service agencies for help. Social systems can be difficult to understand and navigate, particularly during times of crisis. In some cases, learners feel a sense of shame when asking for help.

Building on Learners' Strengths

In developing strategies for transferring learning, solving problems and accessing help and resources in Alberta, learners can be encouraged to draw on their prior knowledge and experience. Learners may be able to see options and think creatively about solutions and may have pre-existing connections and resource networks that they can turn to for support. Understanding and building upon learners' individual and collective strengths will help you provide instruction in the skills for demonstrating resourcefulness in Albertan contexts.



HABIT OF MIND: Resourcefulness

SKILL: Transfer learning

Process for **SKILL** development

SKILL: Transfer learning

SKILL: Transfer learning

Identify skill learned

What have I learned?

Recognize opportunities to use and practice skill

How can I use what I'm learning?

Use skill or information in another context

What skill did I just use?

Reflect on skill transfer experience

What did I learn from using the skill outside the classroom?

Set goals related to skill

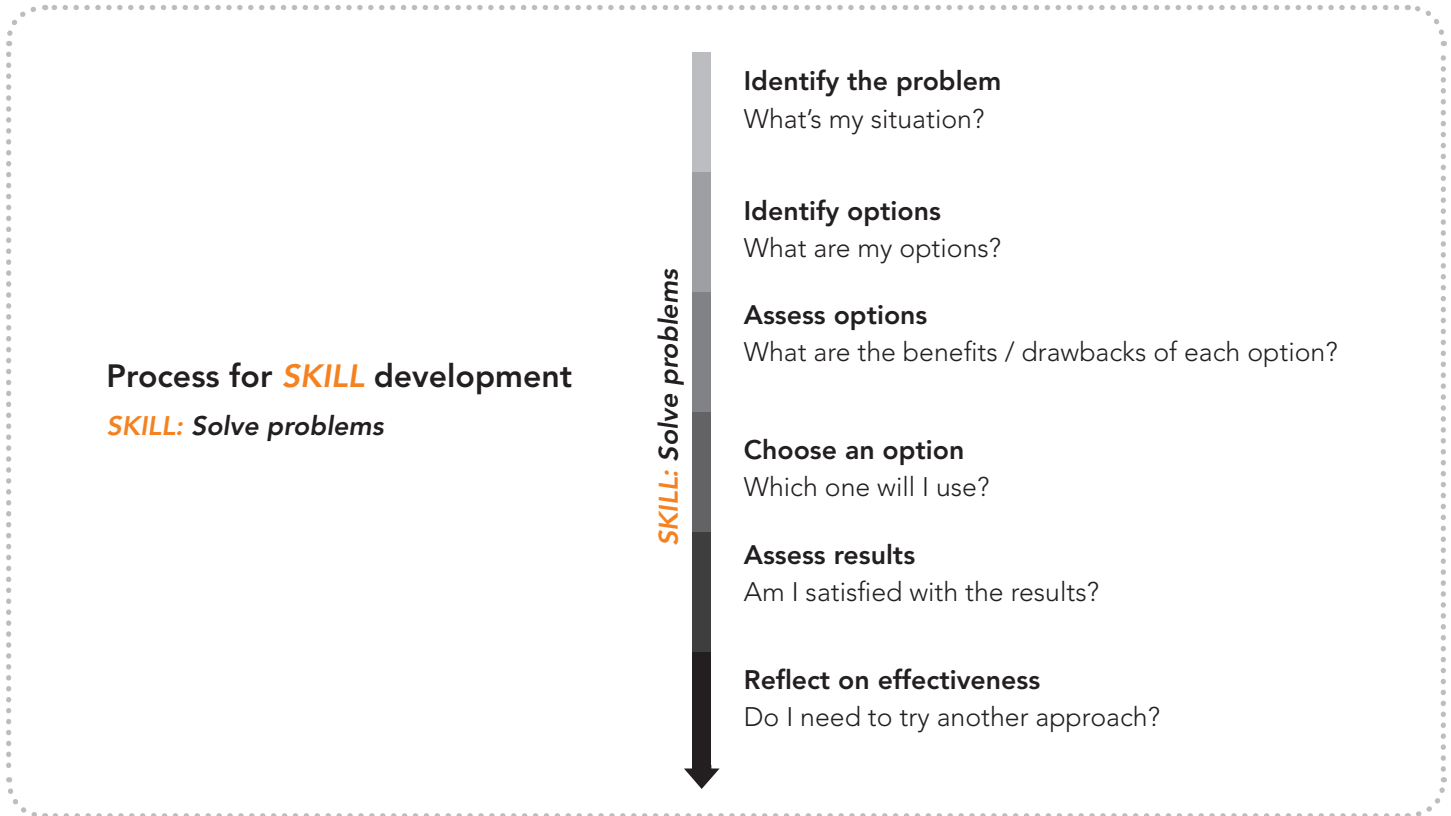
How can I use this in the future?
What do I want to try next?

How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to transfer learning?

- recognize and celebrate success in transferring skills
- make explicit connections between classroom learning and real-life applications
- create opportunities for the class to learn in other contexts (e.g. field trips)
- use realia and authentic materials when appropriate
- reflect on your assumptions and beliefs about how and where learning can be transferred

HABIT OF MIND: Resourcefulness

SKILL: Solve problems



How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to solve problems?

- use think-aloud instruction techniques (explain the thought process you go through as you solve a particular problem)
- provide tasks that include elements of problem solving
- model problem solving behaviour in class
- create a safe and supportive learning environment
- encourage learners to ask for help before a problem becomes a crisis
- reflect on your culturally-based beliefs about problem solving and consider other approaches

HABIT OF MIND: Resourcefulness

SKILL: Access help and resources

Process for **SKILL** development

SKILL: Access help and resources

SKILL: Access help and resources

Identify situation

What is my situation?

Recognize when assistance is needed

Do I need help with this?

Identify resources/sources of assistance

Where can I get help?

Develop a plan

What steps will I take?

Implement plan & approach resource

Will you help me?

Reflect and revise

Did I get what I needed? What are my next steps?

How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to access help and resources?

- create a safe, respectful learning environment where learners are comfortable expressing needs
- provide explicit instruction in language functions needed for accessing help
- assist learners in determining when help is needed
- encourage learners' attempts at independence
- provide instruction to build strategies for navigating systems effectively (e.g. documenting processes, taking notes in meetings)
- reflect on your experiences and beliefs about accessing help and resources

MOTIVATION

The commitment and ability to direct and sustain one's learning process

Learners in ESL literacy programs are generally enthusiastic and interested in having the opportunity to go to school. However, even the most engaging and varied class can be overwhelming at times for learners with limited experiences of classroom learning. Sometimes, learners appear to “shut down” or be passive in their learning. Often, learners are unaware of how their behaviour is being perceived and may lack skills for demonstrating and enhancing their own motivation.

In many areas of their lives, learners have set goals, prepared for the future, persevered in the face of hardship and developed their knowledge and skills. The **skills** for demonstrating motivation in this framework provide learners with additional tools for success in formal education, workplace and community contexts in Alberta.



This chart outlines skills for demonstrating motivation.

Habit of Mind: Motivation	
Skills	Description
Set and manage goals	<p>This is a process of identifying goals, monitoring progress, reflecting on achievements and adapting/revising goals as necessary. Goal setting helps learners recognize their own progress, enhances motivation and helps learners develop a realistic picture of what is required to reach their goals. It is a transferable skill that enables independence and continuous learning in many contexts.</p>
Prepare	<p>This involves anticipating the upcoming context in order to organize, arrange or practice for the requirements of that context. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bringing learning materials (e.g. pencil, glasses, notebook) to school • bringing Alberta Health Care card to doctors' appointments • completing required tasks prior to the activity (e.g. complete homework before class) • formulating ideas, questions or contributions prior to task or context (e.g. preparing questions before a job interview) • keeping track of tasks, materials and contributions required for different contexts <p>Preparation looks different in different cultures and contexts. These forms of preparation enhance classroom learning experiences, enable continuous learning and contribute to success in various contexts in Alberta.</p>
Persevere	<p>For the purposes of this framework, we focus on perseverance in achieving learning goals. It involves a commitment to completing a task/achieving a goal and knowing when to revise or adjust one's strategies or goals. Perseverance strategies help learners cope with learning setbacks and enable continuous learning.</p>
Learn outside the classroom	<p>Applying learning strategies beyond the classroom helps learners acquire knowledge and skills, while reinforcing prior learning. Taking advantage of non-classroom learning opportunities enables independence, increases language proficiency and enables continuous learning.</p>

Understanding Learners' Challenges

Learners often face considerable challenges in setting and managing goals, preparing, persevering and learning outside the classroom.

Setting and Managing Goals

The goal-setting process outlined in this framework is culturally-based and reflects the context of education and employment in Alberta. Learners typically need to develop an understanding of the value placed upon independence and educational and employment systems in Alberta. Learners may not understand the prerequisites and skills involved in achieving their goals and may have unrealistic expectations regarding the steps and timelines involved. Effective programs help learners understand the steps and timelines involved in achieving their goals.

Preparing

Learners may be unaware of how they are expected to be prepared for different situations (e.g. class time, job interviews, medical appointments, parent-teacher conferences). As a result, they may not know what kind of positive results they could expect by being prepared for these contexts. Some learners may feel overwhelmed by these expectations, have difficulty keeping track of preparatory tasks/materials or be unable to meet the expectations, due to circumstances they cannot control.

Persevering

Many learners feel overwhelmed by the expectations they face in Alberta. For learners who have had negative schooling experiences, they may have negative images of themselves as learners. Learners may face several learning barriers (e.g. family and work responsibilities, poverty, mental and physical health issues) that make learning difficult.

Learning Outside The Classroom

Learners may be unaware that they can develop their language and literacy skills in places other than the classroom, and need strategies and information for doing this. They may be hesitant to use their language or literacy skills in unfamiliar environments due to a fear of failure or embarrassment.

Building on Learners' Strengths

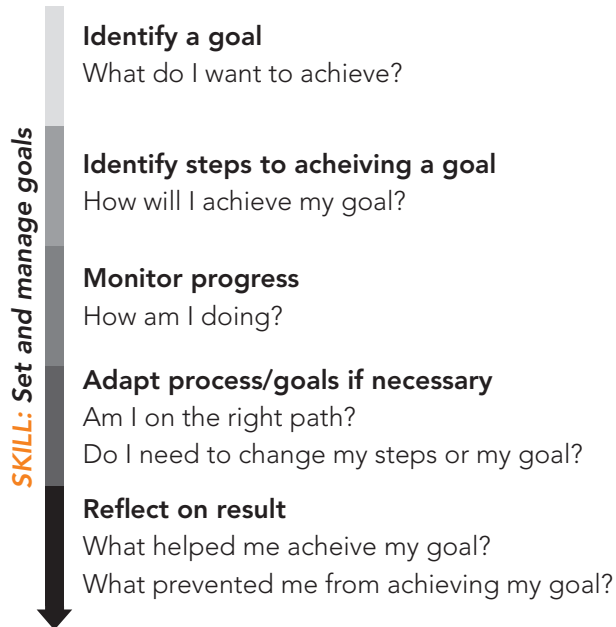
Learners' prior experiences of achieving goals, preparing for the future, persevering in hard times and learning in many contexts are a strong foundation for building the skills for demonstrating motivation in Alberta. Most adult learners will have developed these concepts but need support to understand how these can be applied in a new environment. Learners may have strong personal beliefs about the value of hard work, patience and persistence that can help them in their learning and life in Alberta. In addition, they may be aware of non-formal learning opportunities (e.g. talking with neighbours, joining community groups) that they can share with other learners. Recognize and build upon the resources that learners have previously developed, while giving them tools for a new context.



HABIT OF MIND: Motivation

SKILL: Set and manage goals

Process for **SKILL** development
SKILL: Set and manage goals



How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to set and manage goals?

- include short, medium and long-term goals
- begin with class goal-setting and move on to individual goal setting
- set SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and appropriate for the Time frame
- provide visual or tangible ways of understanding the steps to achieving a goal
- recognize and celebrate success in achieving goals
- tap into learners' interests, goals and experiences
- be sensitive to learners' beliefs and personal situations
- reflect on your culturally-based beliefs about goal setting and consider other approaches



HABIT OF MIND: Motivation

SKILL: Prepare

Process for **SKILL** development

SKILL: Prepare

SKILL: Prepare

Consider context and anticipate obstacles

What am I preparing for?

What might happen?

Identify resources needed

What do I need to succeed?

Manage and organize preparation tasks

How can I remember what I need to do?

(e.g. use a homework journal)

Complete preparation tasks

Am I ready?

(e.g. do homework, review information, practice)

Bring resources and tools to context

Do I have everything I need?

Reflect

Was I prepared enough?

What can I do better next time?

How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to prepare?

- model the behaviour of being prepared
- be specific about expectations
- involve learners in setting expectations
- reinforce the transferability of the skill and make connections to other contexts
- discuss what preparedness means in learners' first cultures
- develop learners' awareness of cultural expectations of preparing for different contexts
- move from concrete to abstract preparation (e.g. from bringing a pencil to class to thinking about a topic before class)
- recognize and celebrate learners' success and development

HABIT OF MIND: Motivation

SKILL: Persevere

Process for **SKILL** development

SKILL: Persevere

SKILL: Persevere

Identify strengths and challenges

What am I good at?

What do I have problems with?

Learn from mistakes

What can I learn from this?

Identify options

What can I do differently?

Redirect when facing a setback

Do I need to change or adjust my goal?

Recognize and celebrate success

How have I improved?

How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to persevere?

- tie instruction to learners' interests, goals and needs
- focus on continual growth
- celebrate success and praise perseverance
- start with high levels of support and gradually decrease them
- use materials that convey a message of perseverance
- encourage learners to reflect and determine whether to revise approach or goals when they are facing challenges
- remain sensitive to the challenges and barriers learners face



HABIT OF MIND: Motivation

SKILL: Learn outside the classroom

Process for **SKILL** development

SKILL: Learn outside the classroom

SKILL: Learn outside the classroom

Recognize that learning can take place in a variety of contexts

Where does learning happen?

Connect practice with learning

How have I improved my skills?

Access learning opportunities

Where can I learn more?

How can I learn more?

Reflect on learning beyond the classroom

What did I learn?

How will it help me?

How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to learn outside the classroom?

- make connections to prior learning experiences
- connect learners with opportunities for learning outside the classroom (e.g. community groups, events, library resources)
- create opportunities for learning outside the classroom (e.g. field trips)
- encourage learners to share strategies for learning outside the classroom

RESPONSIBILITY

The ability to meet commitments and learn effectively by reliably managing time and information

Learners demonstrate responsibility in many ways. They take care of themselves and their families in Alberta and many support family members in other parts of the world. Some learners work full or part time in addition to going to school. They contribute to community and religious groups. They have managed time and information in ways appropriate for other cultural contexts. The focus in this framework is on developing *additional skills* for success in Alberta.

This chart outlines two skills for demonstrating responsibility:

Habit of Mind: Responsibility	
Skills	Description
Manage time	<p>This involves using skills and knowledge of time, cultural expectations and personal responsibilities to schedule tasks and balance commitments effectively. The numeracy skills for managing time (e.g. understanding hours in a day, minutes in an hour, telling time and using clocks and calendars) are critical for being able to manage time effectively.</p> <p>Effective time management is highly valued in Alberta and skills for time management are essential for success in this culture. Time management strategies increase effectiveness in daily life, work and school contexts. Developing time management strategies helps learners be proactive and cope with the demands of daily life.</p>
Manage information	<p>This involves determining the relevance of and prioritizing printed communication/materials gathered or received. It includes developing strategies for sorting, organizing and retrieving information. Managing information also involves responding to and taking appropriate action for information received.</p> <p>Text is a part of everyday life in Alberta. People are faced with new information and communication daily and need a management strategy to deal with it all. Learners face real-life consequences if they miss critical information by mismanaging information related to personal, school, family or work life.</p>

Understanding Learners' Challenges

Learners often face considerable challenges in learning how to manage time and information.

Managing Time

Expectations regarding time, commitments and priorities can differ by culture. Learners will need to develop an understanding of cultural expectations for time management in Alberta. For example, the concept of what "on time" is in different situations (job interview, social engagements, class, etc.) and the consequences of being late may be different than what learners are accustomed to. Learners may lack the skills for telling time or planning in advance and this will impact their ability to meet time management expectations in Alberta.

Managing Information

Learners who come from non-literate environments or have very low levels of education may be overwhelmed by the volume of paper communication and information that is part of everyday life in Alberta. In addition, they may not understand which documents are important and which are irrelevant. Many learners have not been trained to categorize objects or ideas and will need to develop these skills as part of learning to manage information. In addition, learners may have cultural or personal beliefs about whose responsibility it is to manage information and communication (e.g. they may defer to a spouse or a counselor) and this can impact how they learn to manage information.

Building on Learners' Strengths

Learners will be able to draw on their prior experiences of time-based commitments and managing responsibilities. Some learners will already be able to tell time and use watches, clocks or calendars; these skills will help them in developing time management skills for life in Alberta.

Learners' life experiences can help them in understanding how to manage information. They may have already developed strategies for managing information in Alberta and may be aware of the consequences of mis-managing communication and information (e.g. losing government documents, missing application deadlines). Many learners have been responsible for organizing and managing themselves, their families and their belongings. This experience is valuable for building learners' understanding of the importance of managing time and information in Alberta.



HABIT OF MIND: Responsibility

SKILL: Manage time

Process for **SKILL** development

SKILL: Manage time

SKILL: Manage time

Identify routines, activities and commitments

What do I do in my life?

Connect routines, activities and commitments to time frames

When do I do things?

Determine amount of time spent on different activities

How much time do I spend on these things?

Consider expectations

What do I expect of myself?

What do people expect of me?

Reflect

Am I satisfied with the way I spend my time?

What do I want to change?

Plan for change

How can I balance my activities and commitments?

Use appropriate tools

What can I use to manage my time?

(e.g. watch, calendar, schedules)

Reflect and re-evaluate

Are the changes I made working?

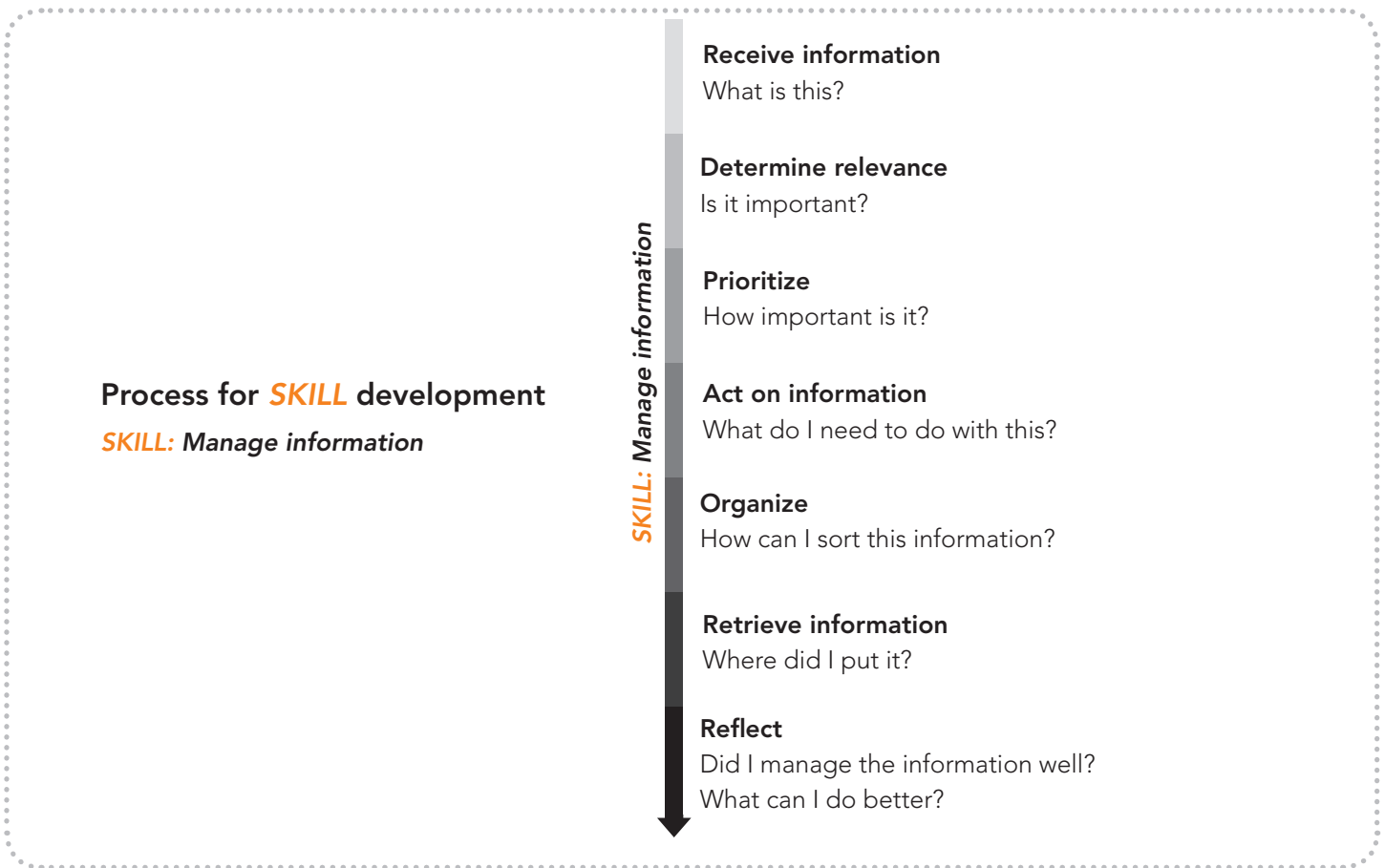
How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to manage time?

- model effective time management
- recognize the extent of learners' responsibilities
- provide instruction and practice in time management strategies (e.g. backward planning: *I need to be at work by 8:00 and my bus comes every 30 minutes. What time do I need to leave?*)
- encourage problem solving and brainstorming based on time and responsibilities
- provide regular opportunities to discuss, reflect on and re-evaluate strategies
- include instruction on using time management tools
- develop learners' numeracy skills related to time management (e.g. numbers, hours, minutes, estimating, etc.)
- reflect on your own culturally-based assumptions about time and time management



HABIT OF MIND: Responsibility

SKILL: Manage information



How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to manage information?

- model information strategies in the classroom
- practice strategies in class and connect them to household, work and school contexts
- build time into the classroom routine for managing information (e.g. papers, schedules)
- develop different methods of organizing information for learners to experiment with
- provide frequent opportunities to manage authentic information from school and life settings (e.g. sorting mail into junk mail and personal mail)
- recognize and celebrate learners' own strategies and successes

ENGAGEMENT

Being involved in and enhancing one's own learning process

Learners engage in many aspects of their life. Learners have asked questions, used critical thinking skills, focused, and taken risks in other life experiences.

For LIFE (Learners with Interrupted Formal Education), learning in a classroom environment can be a very unfamiliar situation. Learners in ESL literacy programs often do not know how to be effective learners in a classroom environment as they have not yet had the opportunity to develop these skills. It is important to make the classroom learning process transparent and achievable for learners in ESL literacy programs. The emphasis on reflecting on learning may be new for many learners, and has been included here because research points to the importance of metacognitive (thinking about thinking) skills as a learning strategy (Oxford, 1990; Costa & Kallick, 2008). The skills for demonstrating engagement presented here focus on classroom learning.

This chart outlines five skills for demonstrating engagement.

Habit of Mind: Engagement	
Skills	Description
Ask questions	<p>Asking questions is a cultural expectation in many contexts (e.g. education, employment) and is an important aspect of classroom learning. It enables continuous learning and independence as learners develop skills for obtaining and clarifying information.</p> <p>Asking questions involves formulating questions clearly and asking for information, clarification and permission. It also involves developing a cultural understanding of the appropriate time, manner or person to ask questions of.</p>
Think critically	<p>Critical thinking is expected and valued in many Albertan contexts, including formal education. It supports effective reading and listening, enables consumer awareness and fosters independent thought and action.</p> <p>Critical thinking involves determining the meaning and significance of what is observed or expressed. It can include using reasoning and experience to guide decisions, actions and beliefs. Critical thinking is important in literacy development as learners begin to analyze and question the texts they encounter.</p>
Focus	<p>Being able to focus in class assists learners' comprehension and enables their participation. It is a cultural expectation in many contexts (e.g. school, work, meetings). Being able to focus provides a foundation for successful learning. It involves concentrating and actively directing one's attention to his/her learning. Effective learners use a variety of strategies to help maintain focus on their learning.</p>
Take risks	<p>In this framework, taking risks refers to trying new things with language, behaviour and attitudes. Trying new things with language and learning from mistakes are important aspects of language and literacy development.</p>
Reflect on learning	<p>Reflecting on learning involves being aware of one's learning process though considering strengths, challenges, goals and successes in learning. Successful learners are aware of what they learned and how they learned it. Knowing how they learned helps learners in continuous, independent learning. Reflecting on learning helps to consolidate learning and guide next steps.</p>

Understanding Learners' Challenges

Learners often face considerable challenges in developing skills that help them make the most of their formal learning opportunities.

Asking Questions

Learners may hold cultural, religious or personal beliefs that prevent them from feeling comfortable asking questions in a classroom environment. Some learners believe that asking questions for clarification indicates personal weakness or is a critique of the teacher's competence, and avoid asking questions for these reasons. Some learners need more thinking time to formulate their questions and process the responses than others.

Thinking Critically

Learners may hold cultural, religious or personal beliefs regarding the roles of individuals and the appropriateness of questioning and critical thinking (e.g. some people believe that it is inappropriate to question religious texts or people in positions of authority). In addition, learners may not have been exposed to models or examples of critical thinking in the past.

Focusing

Learners may have difficulty sitting for extended periods of time. Varying the instructional approach and providing ample opportunities for movement and kinesthetic learning may help these learners. Some learners have experienced trauma in the past or may have current health problems and medications that impede their ability to focus in class. Other learners may feel overwhelmed by the amount of information to process in class. Many learners are unfamiliar with behavioural expectations in a formal classroom environment (e.g. the appropriate time to use the pencil sharpener, ask questions or go to the washroom). You can help your learners focus by having realistic expectations and balancing class time between a variety of learning tasks and instructional methods.

Taking risks

Learners' prior experiences of formal schooling may have been negative and this can create a fear of making mistakes or of failure. Learners may not believe they have the ability to learn. Creating a positive learning environment where supported risk-taking is encouraged helps learners develop their ability to take learning risks.

Reflecting on Learning

Learners may lack experience in personal reflection and may not see the value of reflecting on learning. In some cases, this is based on a belief that it is the instructor's responsibility to evaluate and comment on the learners' progress. Low language and literacy skills can make reflecting on learning challenging, but it can be achieved when support is provided.



See Stage 4: Integrate Assessment *for examples of reflecting on learning.*



Building on Learners' Strengths

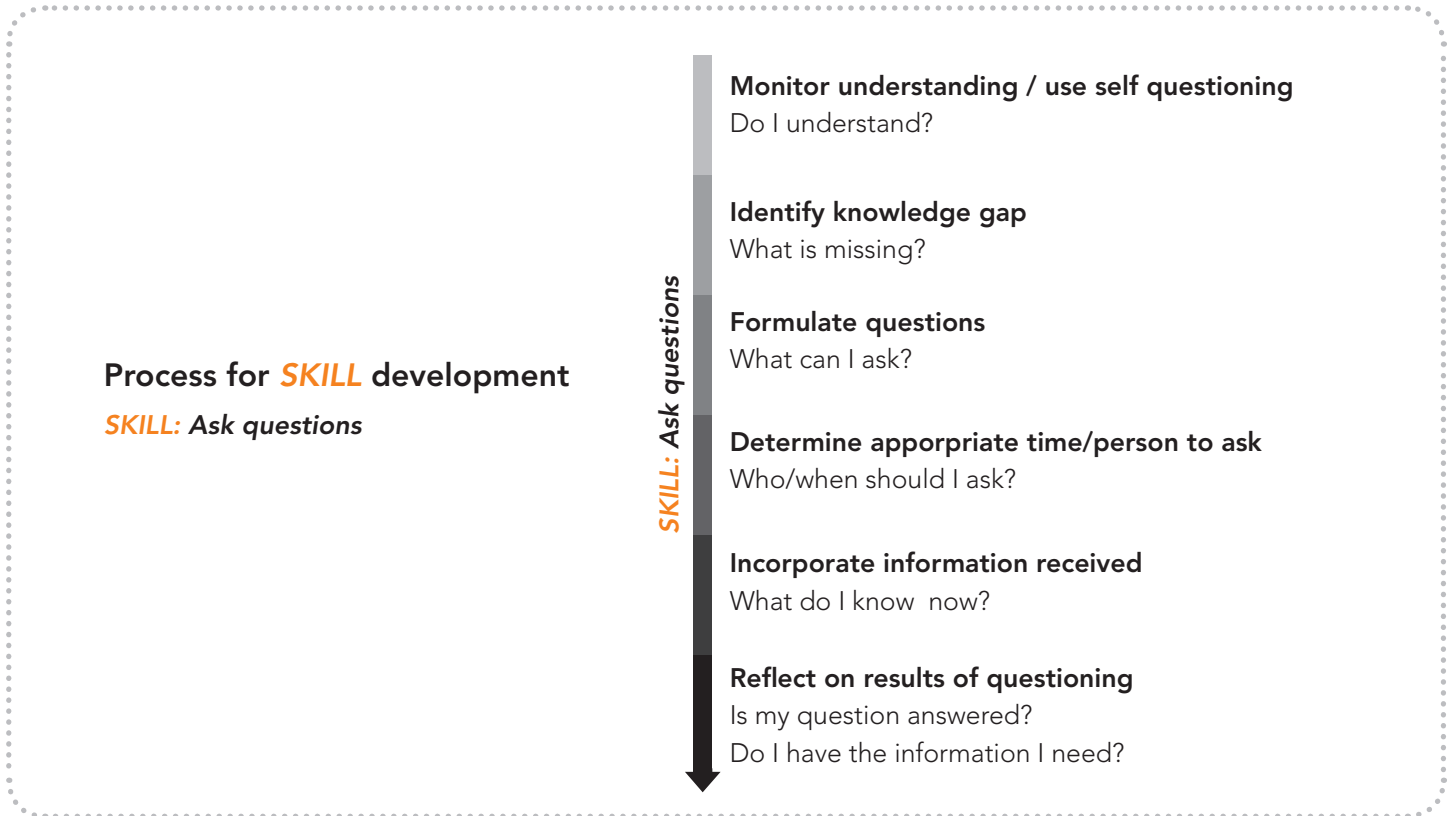
Learners will have skills that they can build on in order to demonstrate engagement in their learning process. Learners have reasoning skills that they have applied in different contexts and may already be aware of the differences between their native culture and the cultural expectations in Alberta. Instructors can encourage learners to make connections between previous experiences learning experiences and their classroom learning.

Varying your instructional methods by targeting a variety of learning styles (e.g. oral, kinesthetic, visual) will help you to build on the strengths learners bring. Reflecting on previous experiences of learning and risk-taking can provide learners with insights into their current learning process. Learners may hold positive beliefs about their personal ability to learn, and instructors can emphasize and build upon these positive attitudes.



HABIT OF MIND: Engagement

SKILL: Ask questions

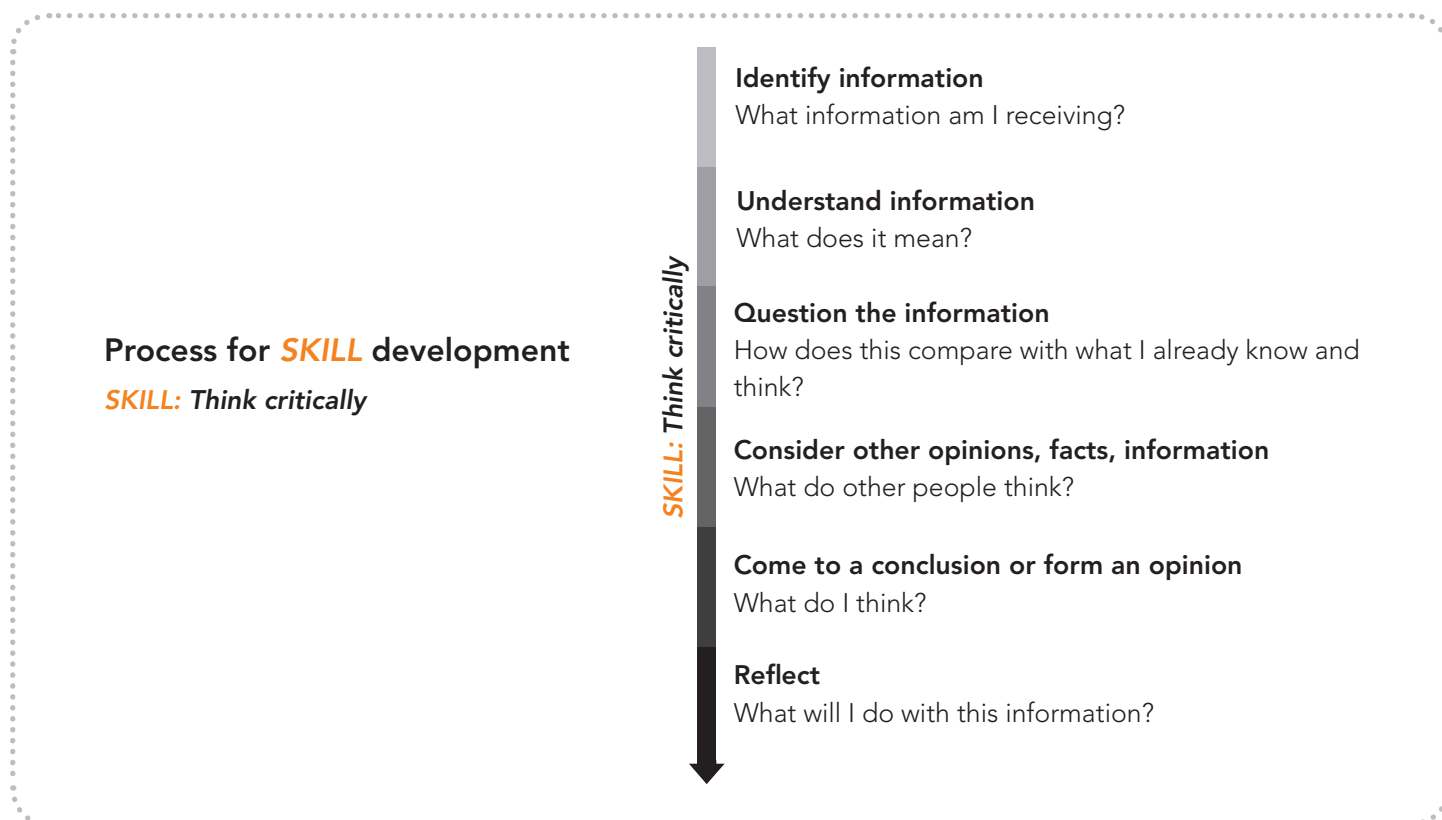


How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to ask questions?

- teach language structures and cultural understanding (e.g. time/manner/person to ask) needed for effective questioning
- foster a safe learning environment where asking questions is accepted and valued
- encourage learners to share experience and knowledge by asking questions
- use an inquiry-based approach to reading and listening tasks (e.g. brainstorm questions as a group before listening or reading)
- create opportunities for learners to ask questions in safe environments outside the classroom (e.g. set up information interviews with people in programs or employment areas in which learners are interested)

HABIT OF MIND: Engagement

SKILL: Think critically



How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to think critically?

- recognize and affirm learners' prior experiences of critical thinking
- recognize and celebrate learners' attempts/developments in critical thinking
- use a "think-aloud" teaching process (explain your thought process) when modeling critical thinking in the classroom
- design learning activities and experiences that require analyzing and evaluating information
- connect critical thinking to tangible and familiar situations and experiences (e.g. shopping and determining which product is a better choice)
- reflect on culturally-based assumptions about the nature and value of critical thinking

HABIT OF MIND: Engagement

SKILL: Focus

Process for **SKILL** development

SKILL: Focus

SKILL: Focus

Eliminate possible distractions before class begins

Is there anything that might make it hard to focus?

Am I ready to focus?

(e.g. turn off your cell phone, go to the washroom before class)

Choose a good location in the classroom

Where can I see, hear and learn best?

Adjust body position to stay alert

Is my body position helping me learn? and think?

(e.g. sit up straight, feet on the floor, make eye contact with the speaker)

Use self-questioning techniques throughout the lesson

Do I understand?

What am I learning? How can I use this?

Ask questions

(for clarification and information)

What more do I need to know to understand?

Reflect

What helped me learn?

How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to focus?

- vary your teaching methods, in order to target a variety of learning styles
- teach focusing strategies explicitly and give learners ample opportunities for practice
- use a think-aloud teaching process (explain your thought process) to familiarize learners with the strategies
- be sensitive to learners' unfamiliarity with expectations for classroom learning
- recognize and draw attention to successful use of these strategies
- raise learners' awareness of the benefits of focused attention in the classroom

HABIT OF MIND: Engagement

SKILL: Take risks

Process for **SKILL** development

SKILL: Take risks

SKILL: Take risks

Make attempts before seeking assistance

Can I do it by myself?

Learn from mistakes

What can I learn from my mistakes?

Recognize opportunities for innovation

Where can I try something new?

Reflect on effects of risk-taking

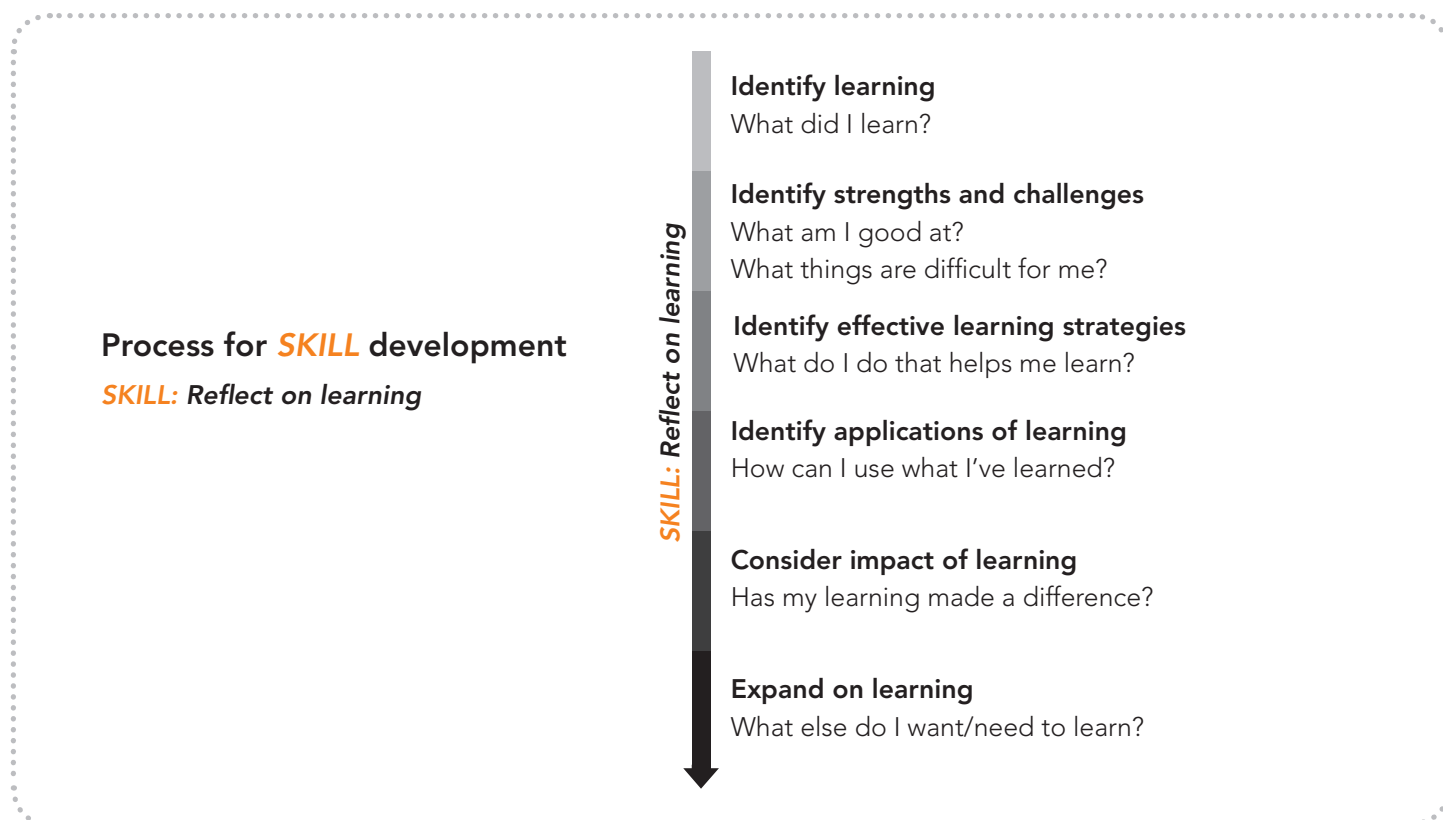
What happened when I tried that?

How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to take risks?

- create and foster a safe and supportive learning environment
- demonstrate how errors and risks can contribute to learning
- focus on the learning process, not always accuracy
- encourage self-confidence
- reflect on your own experiences of and beliefs about taking risks in a learning environment

HABIT OF MIND: Engagement

SKILL: Reflect on learning



How can instructors foster and develop learners' ability to reflect on learning?

- raise learners' awareness of how reflection benefits their learning
- incorporate reflection in learning on a regular basis at all levels
- use "think-aloud" processes (explain your thought process), visual supports, class reflection activities and concrete, personally relevant examples
- encourage and provide opportunities for both formal and informal reflection on learning



SUMMARY

Learning outcomes are at the core of an effective adult ESL literacy curriculum. They allow for transparent communication, accountability and intentional, focused instruction.

This section has outlined learning outcomes for reading, writing, literacy strategies and Habits of Mind. Listening and speaking outcomes can be found in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults* (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000). Recommendations for integrating numeracy and technology learning outcomes are included in *Appendices A and B*.

This section has also outlined program principles for building an outcomes-based curriculum. The classroom concept *Make Learning Meaningful* details a process for designing outcomes-focused thematic units and the importance of explicit teaching of literacy strategies and Habits of Mind, as well as balancing instructional approaches.

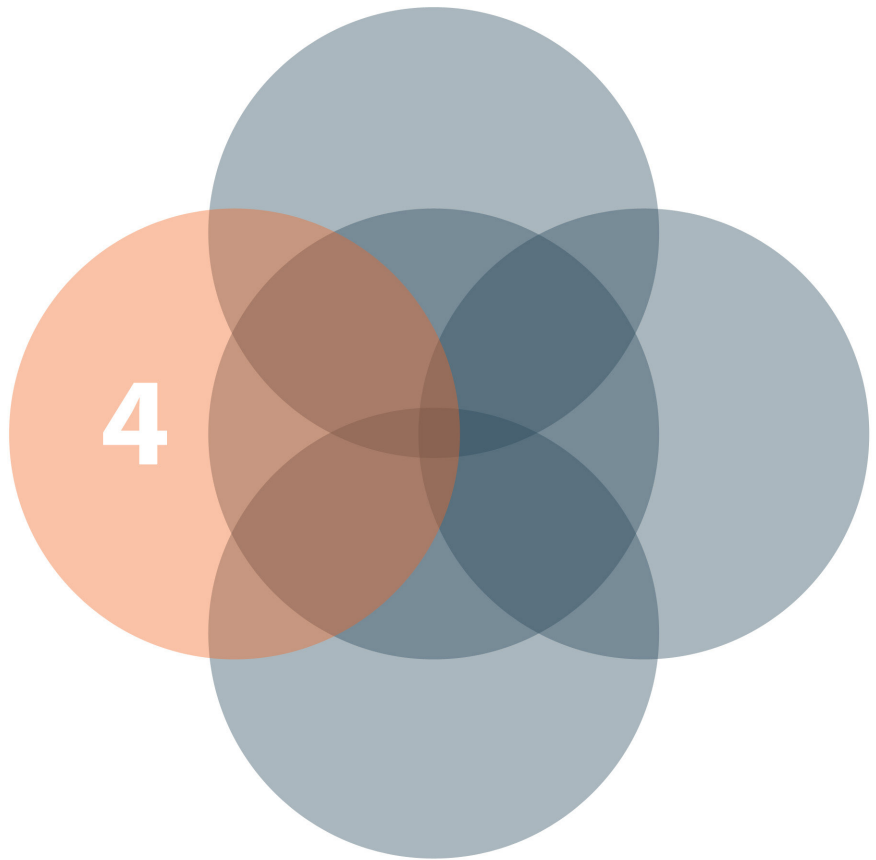
Setting learning outcomes is a critical stage in the development of an effective ESL literacy curriculum. Effective learning outcomes are linked to the program's purpose, goals and approach, and enable programs to address the needs of learners and the community.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Bow Valley College. (2009). *Learning for LIFE: An ESL literacy handbook*. Calgary: Bow Valley College.
- Campbell, P. (2003). *Teaching reading to adults: A balanced approach*. Edmonton, Alberta: Grass Roots Press.
- Costa, A. L., & Kallick, B. (Eds.). (2008). *Learning and leading with Habits of Mind: 16 essential characteristics for success*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Holmes, T., Kingwell, G., Pettis, J., & Pidlaski, M. (2001). *Canadian language benchmarks 2000: A guide to implementation*. Ottawa: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks.
- Spiegel, M., & Sunderland, H. (2006). *Teaching basic literacy to ESOL learners*. London: London South Bank University.





STAGE **4**

Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework
STAGE 4: INTEGRATE ASSESSMENT

STAGE 4 | TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTEGRATE ASSESSMENT

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT GUIDE: STAGE 4

Stage 4: Integrate Assessment

Summary: Assessment is an integral part of curriculum design. Effective assessment is ongoing and linked to established learning outcomes. The curriculum framework outlines assessment for three purposes: assessment **for** learning, assessment **as** learning, and assessment **of** learning. Learning portfolios are effective tools for collecting and using information gathered through assessment.

Development tasks	Process and guiding questions
Choose or develop placement assessments	<p>Determine whether you will use an existing placement assessment or develop a specialized placement assessment for your program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How will you assess learners' oral skills?</i> • <i>Will you assess learners' first language literacy skills? How?</i> • <i>How will you assess learners' reading and writing?</i> • <i>On what basis will learners be accepted into your program and placed into levels?</i>
Outline the expectations for classroom assessment for your program	<p>Determine what kind of documentation will be necessary for learners when they leave your program. Refer to your program purpose and goals (Stage 2: Determine Focus). Review the purposes for assessment. Determine which will be addressed in your program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are the expectations of instructors in conducting:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>assessment for learning?</i> • <i>assessment as learning?</i> • <i>assessment of learning?</i> <p>Determine whether your curriculum will prescribe assessment tasks or measures. If yes, develop or outline these tasks or measures.</p>
Outline the assessment management expectations for your program	<p>Review the types of portfolios.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Will the curriculum outline the types of portfolios to be used?</i> • <i>Will the curriculum outline portfolio contents to be included?</i> <p>Consider the support that instructors will need in order to implement the assessment approach outlined in your curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What kind of tools will instructors need?</i> <p>Develop the tools (e.g. rubrics, portfolio checklists, assessment tasks) that will help instructors implement the assessment approach effectively.</p>



STAGE 4: INTEGRATE ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Assessment is a transparent, ongoing process of purposefully gathering useful information that directs instruction and enables communication about learning. Effective assessment provides detailed, useful information for instructors, learners and other stakeholders.

Integrating assessment is the fourth stage of curriculum development. Effective assessment directly measures learning outcomes (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*). This ensures that assessment supports the program's purpose and goals (see *Stage 2: Determine Focus*), which is developed in response to the needs of learners and the community (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). Effective, purposeful assessment promotes accountability and transparency (see *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*) at both program and classroom levels.

Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners and ATESL Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta (ATESL, 2009) provide the standards that inform this framework. The *ESL for Literacy Learners* document describes the stages of literacy development from Foundation to Phase III. The *Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta* document outlines expectations for effective instruction and program delivery, including assessment. The assessment section of this framework is informed by both of these documents.

In this section, you will find:

- background information on effective assessment
- *Program Principles* for integrating assessment into the curriculum, in four areas:
 - developing placement assessments
 - ongoing assessment
 - supporting instructors
 - ensuring accountability
- *Classroom Concept: Make Assessment Meaningful*. Guidance for instructors on classroom assessment in:
 - assessment **for** learning
 - assessment **as** learning
 - assessment **of** learning
 - assessing literacy strategies and Habits of Mind
 - managing assessment
- a summary
- helpful resources



Guiding Principles for Assessment

This chart outlines guiding principles for gathering useful information through assessment.

Guiding Principles for Assessment	
Effective assessment is	Guiding Principles
transparent	<p>Learners understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is being assessed • how they are being assessed • why they are being assessed • how the information from the assessment will be used
ongoing	<p>Varied assessment methods are used throughout the learning period to gather information that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informs the next steps for instruction • provides a holistic picture of learners' development • assists the learners in understanding their literacy development <p>Effective assessments include formal assessments (e.g. quizzes or assignments marked with rubrics) and informal assessments (e.g. anecdotal notes and self-assessment checklists).</p>
purposeful	<p>Assessment is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used for clearly articulated reasons • directly tied to learning outcomes • carefully designed to elicit useful, detailed information • well-documented
meaningful	<p>Assessment is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used for communication between learners, instructors and others • linked to instruction and learning focus • fair and valid (<i>see ATESL Best Practices for more information</i>)

Partially sourced from ATESL (2009)



Effective ways of involving learners in the assessment process include:

- using assessments for different purposes
- integrating informal assessment as part of the classroom routine
- using a portfolio based language assessment approach
- integrating regular learning conferences as an opportunity for communicating about learning expectations, challenges and achievements

See the *Classroom Concept* in this section for more information on assessment for different purposes, learning conferences and a portfolio approach to managing assessment.

In this framework, the sections on classroom assessment approach and managing assessment provide more information on involving learners in the assessment process.

In order for assessment to be truly effective, its goals and outcomes must be communicated clearly with the learners. Involving learners with limited formal education in the assessment process and communicating with them about the purpose, the nature and information gleaned from assessments can be challenging. We encourage you to keep the guiding principles in the forefront and be creative in the way you design and communicate with learners about assessment.

PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

How can we apply these ideas in our program?

Applying the guiding principles for effective assessment in your curriculum development process will include considerations in the following areas:

- placement assessments
- ongoing assessment process
- support for instructors
- accountability

Develop Placement Assessments

Placement assessments are a key factor in the success of a program. They allow programs to:

- determine learners' English literacy proficiency
- assess learners' content knowledge
- distinguish between learners who are part of the intended target audience and those who are not
- group learners in classes by ability
- inform teaching by determining areas of strengths and weaknesses

The most effective placement tools are tailored to the program they are designed for, incorporating the context, vocabulary and level of language appropriate to the program. Use the results from your program needs assessment (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*) to guide content in the assessment tool. Be sure that the questions included align with the program purpose (see *Stage 2: Determine Focus*) and assess what learners will be focusing on in the program.

✔ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #52**

There are processes in place to ensure the learners' appropriate placement in the program.

Standardized Placement Tests

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks has developed a Literacy Placement Tool available for order through their website at www.language.ca. This placement tool relates directly to reading, writing and numeracy competencies in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* from Foundation Phase to Phase II. There are two volumes of this assessment available.

- Volume 1 relates to competencies in Foundation Phase and Phase I of the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners. This tool “is designed to help identify adult ESL learners who might benefit from placement into an ESL literacy class (Foundation Phase or Phase I)...(It) may also be used by classroom practitioners to provide useful information for planning appropriate training for multi-level classes.”

(Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2005, p.7)

- Volume 2 relates to competencies in Phase II of the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners. This tool “is designed to help assessors, workplace trainers and literacy practitioners to make informed decisions about an adult ESL client’s literacy needs. The tasks are intended to facilitate identification and placement of adults into re-skilling programs, workplace training programs and ESL literacy programs that support newcomers in making the transition into the Canadian workforce.”

(Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2006, p.5)

At this time there is no assessment tool that relates to Phase III of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*.

Designing an In-House Placement Assessment

An in-house placement assessment or placement component to accompany a standardized assessment provides specific information to enhance program effectiveness. When designing such a tool, give careful consideration to the findings from your learner and community needs assessments (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). Ensure that the placement tool aligns with the program purpose and assesses learners in the areas that the program will focus on. Questions that focus on aspects of the learner profile, such as years of education, background, goals and prior training should be included to assess whether or not learners are part of the target audience.

Questions that identify literacy skills and content knowledge will help you effectively place learners in program levels.

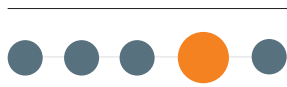
What to include:

- an oral interview
- an oral reading component
- a reading and writing assessment section
- a marking tool that relates directly to program levels

Oral Interview Component

The oral interview helps to identify participants for the program by assessing oral ability and determining background and prior learning experiences. Questions in an oral interview that focus on specific program-related information help to ensure a good match between program and learner. For example, in a family literacy program, questions may gather information about how many children the learner has and their ages; for a specific workplace program, questions may focus on prior training, certificates received and work experience outside of Canada.

An oral interview can also include tasks that help determine literacy in first language, such as responding to the prompts: “Can you write your first name for me in your language?” “Please write the numbers 1-10 in your language.” If it is possible, first language oral interpreters should be present for the oral interview to ensure understanding and to gather detailed information.



Sample Oral Interview Question Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Note to assessor: This portion of the placement assessment focuses on gathering background information, not on assessing English language ability. Give the learners any necessary prompts to help them understand the questions. Rephrase the questions and model as necessary. Note answers and observations under comments. You can have the learners write their response to numbers 9 and 10 on the back of this sheet.

Question:	Comments:
What is your name?	
Where are you from?	
When did you come to Canada?	
Did you go to school in your country?	
How many years did you go to school in your country?	
How old were you when you stopped going to school?	
What job do you want to do in Canada?	
What language(s) do you speak?	
Can you write your name for me in your language?	
Can you write the numbers 1 to 10 for me in your language?	
Did you go to another school in Canada? (If so, where? For how long?)	



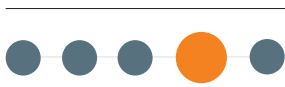
Oral Reading Component

The oral reading component helps to determine awareness of print without requiring the learners to read instructions or write. Learners are asked to identify items, pictures, letters and then words in a one-on-one setting. The assessment should begin with concrete examples that learners are familiar with such as labels or signs that learners are likely to have already encountered in daily life (e.g. a pop can, a no smoking sign). After concrete, hands-on manipulatives, use photos or diagrams and then move on to print materials. Reading tasks should get progressively more challenging to test a range of ESL literacy phases. Instructions should be given orally and demonstrated. Adjust the phrasing of the instructions if they are not understood.

The following link to a video, provided by Literacywork International, illustrates a reading demonstration that focuses on concrete, relevant materials. http://www.literacywork.com/Literacywork/Videos/Entries/2010/5/23_The_Reading_Demonstration.html

Examples of skills to focus on in an oral reading component are:

- Can the learner identify common symbols on objects that he/she is likely to encounter in daily life?
e.g. *What is this?* Show the learner a pop can.
- Can the learner identify one shape in a group of three?
e.g. *Point to the circle.* Show a picture with a circle, square and triangle on it.
- Can the learner count the number of objects in a picture (up to five)?
e.g. *How many?* Show a picture with four of the same object such as a pencil.
- Can the learner identify certain letters in the alphabet?
e.g. *Point to the B. Point to the S.* Show the learner the alphabet in large print.
- Can the learner identify his/her own name in a list?
e.g. *Show me your name.* Show the learner a list with three to five names, including their own.
- Can the learner read basic sight words?
e.g. *What does this say?* Point to a word in a list of basic sight words in large print.
- Can the learner read a short paragraph?
e.g. *Can you read this?* Show the learner a short paragraph. Watch for the ability to decode words.



- Can the learner understand what he/she reads in the paragraph?
e.g. *What was the story about?* Ask particular questions related to the story to determine comprehension.
- Can the learner read words or text specific to the focus of your program?
e.g. *Can you read this?* Show the learner words and then a short text.

Reading and Writing Component

The reading and writing component of a placement assessment helps to assess learners' abilities in English literacy. Assessment tasks in reading and writing should progress across the benchmark levels of a program. Provide tasks that increase in complexity as learners progress through the assessment, in order to give all learners a chance to demonstrate what they know. Questions at the higher levels will involve reading for meaning and information as opposed to decoding.

When designing the reading and writing tasks, ensure the focus is on identifying the reading skills and not background or cultural knowledge. Put the necessary supports in place so that learners can complete the task. Aim to use relevant vocabulary and content that most learners are familiar with.

Process for creating a reading and writing assessment

1. Determine the range of levels in your program.
2. Identify the outcomes you will focus on in your program.
3. Include tasks that target the outcomes at each level, beginning with the lowest level and progressing to the highest. Ensure that there is a balance of tasks from each level.
4. Determine the type and amount of support to be given with each task.
5. Create instructions for each task, stating the criteria for each task and including visuals when appropriate.
6. Determine the scores for each task and total score for assessment.
7. Design your marking tool.
8. Train the assessment administrators for consistency of marking

Sample reading and writing tasks that relate to outcomes at Foundation Phase

- identify same/different shapes by circling or crossing out
- match similar letters, shapes or pictures
- copy letters or simple words directly beside an example

Sample reading and writing tasks that relate to outcomes at Phase I

- copy simple sentences
- fill in basic personal information
- match basic words to pictures
- identify specific words in a short text
- complete short sentence stems



Sample reading and writing tasks that relate to outcomes at Phase II

- read a short basic text and respond to questions with short answers
- select words to form a word box to complete simple sentences
- write simple sentences
- locate purpose and key information in short texts

Sample reading and writing tasks that relate to outcomes at Phase III

- fill in authentic forms
- interpret and compare information from short texts, charts or graphs
- identify purpose and key information in longer texts
- infer meaning from texts
- produce a focused writing sample

Marking Tool

A clear, standardized marking tool should accompany the placement assessment. Key things to consider and include are as follows:

- Clear indicators of the conditions for each task in the assessment should be detailed on the marking tool.
- Instructions detailing the assessment administrator's prompts for each question should be outlined and described clearly. ESL literacy classes will involve extensive support for the learner, so prompts are necessary in the assessment.
- Scores should be included for each task and for the assessment as a whole.
- The marking tool should relate scores to Phases or program levels for ease of placement.
- Clear explanations of how the score determines the learner's placement level should be provided.
- All assessment administrators should be trained in the assessment and marking tool to ensure consistency.



This sample provides a model for a marking tool, and differentiates abilities between Phases. In your program, it may be necessary to further differentiate within the Phases.

Sample Placement Assessment Marking Tool

Instructions: Mark each section according to the conditions and points listed. If the learner scores 8/10, then he/she has demonstrated the outcome for that level. If the learner scores 8/10 on both tasks for the level, then he/she is ready for the next level. Continue marking the sections until the scores are consistently below 8/10.

Learner Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Section	Conditions and points	Score	ESL literacy Phase demonstrated
A	Conditions: Learner must circle only one object in the row. Points: 1 point for each correct object circled.	____/ 10	Foundation
B	Conditions: Spelling must be copied accurately; letters should be recognizable. Points: 1 point for each word copied correctly. Do not deduct for capitalization errors.	____/ 10	Foundation
C	Conditions: Learner must circle only one object in the line. Points: 1 point for each word placed correctly. ½ point for correct word used but copied incorrectly.	____/ 10	Phase I
D	Conditions: Words must be recognizable. Points: 1 point for each word used. Do not deduct points for spelling or messy letters.	____/ 10	Phase I
E	Conditions: Learner must circle only one answer per line. Points: 1 point for each correct answer circled.	____/ 10	Phase II
F	Conditions: Sentences must be related to the topic. Points: 2 points for each sentence written correctly. Deduct half a point for incorrect spelling or punctuation.	____/ 10	Phase II
G	Conditions: All information must be accurate, legible and written in the boxes. Points: 1 point for each correct item included. No point if the item does not meet the conditions.	____/ 10	Phase III
H	Conditions: Answers should be in complete sentences. Spelling and punctuation should be correct. Points: 1 point for each sentence. ½ point if the sentence includes spelling or punctuation errors.	____/ 10	Phase III

Placement level: _____



Implementation Considerations

There are several factors that can influence the successful implementation of your placement assessment. Consider the following:

- time
- content
- setting
- learners' impressions
- resources

Time

Learners should be able to complete the placement assessment in a reasonable period of time. If the assessment has different sections, these may need to be completed at different times. If an assessment is too long, learners may be unable to complete the assessment or may not demonstrate their true abilities.

Time also needs to be considered from a program point of view. Design a placement tool that is manageable in your particular context, incorporating as many of the above recommendations as possible.

Content

Move from concrete to abstract. Begin with real objects that connect to the learners' lives before moving to more abstract reading and writing tasks such as a story about a fictional person. Tasks should include content that learners are likely to be familiar with. Relate the tasks on the placement tool directly to the type of program. In a workplace program, tasks should involve document use and reading schedules. An academic preparation test should focus more on identifying the main topic and supporting details in a text.

Setting

It is ideal if placement assessments can be done one-on-one. If this is not possible, they should be done in a safe and comfortable environment and tasks should be explained clearly, one at a time.

Learners' impressions

Stop the learners when they still feel successful so that the assessment is a positive experience. If a learner attempts a task that is too difficult, provide lots of prompts so the learner feels able to complete it, but do not mark it for the final score.

Resources

Consider the resources available in the program when designing the placement assessment. Only design the oral interview to include a first language interpreter if first language interpreters are accessible in all the languages likely to be represented. Include an oral reading component if there is sufficient time, enough instructors and the space to do one-on-one assessments. Consider the resources available for marking when designing the length of the assessment.

Encourage Ongoing Assessment

Once learners are placed in a level within a program, there is a need for ongoing assessment. Effective assessment throughout a program requires a consistent structure that is clear to instructors and learners. Effective programs provide guidelines that detail:

- outcomes to be assessed
- the documentation process
- assessment reporting process

Effective assessment connects to the learning done in class and is done frequently. This ensures adequate observation of learners' abilities to inform teaching and to help learners better understand their progress. Encourage instructors to provide a balance among assessment for, as and of learning when assessing (see the *Classroom Concept* in this stage for more information on assessment for, as and of learning).

✔ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #53**

Ongoing formative evaluation and feedback, of value to learners, are integrated into the teaching/learning process and inform class direction.

Support Instructors

Effective programs designate time and resources to support instructors in the assessment process. Set aside time for professional development focusing on assessment in your program. Ensure that instructors are aware of the placement process as well as the expectations for assessment throughout the program. Allowing time for instructors in a program to meet and discuss assessment at various points in a term facilitates consistent results across the program.

Tools to document progress, such as rubrics and portfolio checklists, also ensure consistency in a program (see the “Managing Assessment” section for more information about portfolios). Depending on your assessment process, provide instructors with guidelines and tools that facilitate record-keeping and organization of assessments. A standard process and record-keeping tools make it easier for progress to be reported clearly to learners, upcoming instructors and funders.

✔ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #27**

The program provides resources and opportunities for staff to expand their understanding of the learner population, adult second language acquisition, and best practices in the TESL field.

Ensure Accountability

Accountability to all stakeholders is an important part of assessment. In effective programs, learners, instructors and funders are aware of how the assessment process is carried out and reported. Ensure that there is a system for accurate documentation of progress that is clear and understandable, relates to the goals of your program and illustrates the progress demonstrated. When progress is documented and communicated clearly and consistently, it makes future placement of learners easier for instructors in other programs, helps learners better understand their level of ESL literacy and clearly illustrates program effectiveness to funders.

✔ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #56**

Learner progress within the program is documented, and this information is presented in such a way as to be useful and recognized for transfer into training programs, the work-place, and post-secondary education.



See Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability for more information on ensuring transparency and accountability in your program’s assessment measures.

CLASSROOM CONCEPT: MAKE ASSESSMENT MEANINGFUL

How can I apply these ideas in my classroom?

Many ESL Learners with Interrupted Formal Education will be unfamiliar with assessment and self-assessment processes. Part of the process of helping them be more effective learners is to familiarize them with the purpose and process of assessment in the classroom. Connect all assessment to the learning being done in class and make the purpose of your assessments clear to learners.

Reading and writing outcomes, literacy strategies and Habits of Mind can all be assessed. There are many different methods of assessing learners, several of which will be highlighted in this section of the framework. A key consideration in this section, however, is being aware of the different **purposes** for assessment.

The document *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind* (Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education, 2006) outlines an assessment structure that addresses the three main purposes for classroom assessment. For the purposes of this framework, the model outlined in *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind* has been adapted to reflect the assessment needs in adult ESL literacy classrooms and outlines assessment for three purposes:

- assessment **for** learning
- assessment **as** learning
- assessment **of** learning

This chart summarizes the three purposes of assessment. Each purpose is described in more detail throughout this stage, with samples provided.

Summary of Assessment Purposes		
Purpose	Also known as...	Characteristics
Assessment for learning	<i>Formative Assessment</i>	<p>Assessment for learning helps instructors form a clear picture of the abilities and needs of their learners. Assessment is done for the purpose of measuring what the learners can and cannot do at any given point in the learning process, and informs instructional decisions. It:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is ongoing • is tied to learning outcomes • provides information that informs decisions about planning and instruction • allows instructors to provide immediate, descriptive feedback that guides learning <p>Examples: focused questioning in class, anecdotal notes</p>
Assessment as learning	<i>Self-assessment</i>	<p>Assessment as learning involves the learners in the process of looking at their learning and reflecting on their own abilities. With instructor guidance and through focused activities, learners are encouraged to think about and assess their learning. It:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is ongoing • is tied to learning outcomes • assists learners in becoming aware of their learning process • involves self-monitoring and self-evaluation • requires teacher direction and support <p>Examples: in-class discussion of learning points, self assessment checklists, learning logs</p>
Assessment of learning	<i>Summative Assessment</i>	<p>Assessment of learning measures the learners' abilities to meet outcomes after learning and practice have occurred. It can be formal or informal. It:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is tied to learning outcomes • occurs at the end of a learning theme or cycle • is used to evaluate whether learners have achieved the learning outcomes, and to what degree • is used to make decisions about learners' next placement <p>Examples: anecdotal notes, quizzes, writing samples marked using rubrics, documented observations</p>

Adapted from Western and Northern Protocol for Collaboration in Education (2006)



As illustrated in the Summary of Assessment Purposes chart, it is possible for the same type of assessment tool to be used for different purposes. The purpose determines how the information gathered during assessment is used. For example, anecdotal notes can be used for instructional planning (assessment *for* learning) as well as to evaluate whether learners have achieved the outcomes (assessment *of* learning).

Plan for Assessment

Effective assessment follows a process. Rethinking Assessment with Purpose in Mind (Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education, 2006) outlines a series of questions that highlight the key considerations for planning, designing and implementing assessment.

Use the steps in this process to ensure that your assessments have a clear purpose, use valid and appropriate methods and provide useful information.

A Process Approach to Assessment Planning

WHY am I assessing?

Clarify the purpose of assessment: for learning, as learning, or of learning?



WHAT am I assessing?

Clarify the outcome that is being assessed.



WHAT assessment method should I use?

Determine the most suitable assessment method e.g. informal observation, learning log, rubric. (See the assessment methods table for more examples).



HOW can I ensure quality in this assessment process?

Design the assessment carefully so that it measures the intended outcome.



HOW can I use the information from this assessment?

Ensure that the information is used consistently with the assessment purpose.

Adapted from Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education (2006))

This chart suggests several methods of assessment for each of the assessment purposes.

Methods of Assessment

Assessment *for* Learning

Questioning

asking focused questions in class to elicit understanding

Observation

systematic observations of students as they process ideas and demonstrate learning

Developmental continua

profiles describing learner progress to determine next instructional steps

Anecdotal notes

focused, descriptive records of observations of learning over time

Learner profiles or checklists

information about the quality of students' work in relation to curriculum outcomes or a learner's individual learning plan

Learning conferences

opportunities for learners and teachers to examine/discuss learners' progress/next steps

Retelling

learners describe what they have learned; helps determine learning success and gaps

Teacher-selected reading/writing samples

compare samples over the course of the term

Assessment *as* Learning

Reading logs

process in which learners track and reflect on what they read over time

Reflective journals

reflections learners maintain about their learning process and learning goals

Self-assessment

process in which learners reflect on and assess their own performance and learning

Goal setting checklists

a method of self-monitoring progress in relation to learners' individual goals

Learning photographs

learners reflect on their strengths and pose for a photograph beside a picture/heading that represents these strengths

Learning posters

opportunities for learners and teachers to examine/discuss learners' progress/next steps

Learning stories

learners write/dictate their strengths, challenges and goals and then read the text

Sign in/sign out chart

a tool for helping learners track their attendance

Assessment *of* Learning

Quizzes, tests, examinations

opportunities for learners to show their learning through formal response

Demonstrations/presentations

opportunities to showcase learning in oral and media performances /exhibitions

Simulations/role play

simulations or role plays that encourage learners to connect learning to a situation

Anecdotal notes

focused, descriptive records of observations of learning over time

Scoring based on rubrics

a process in which instructors can assess a task by looking at the entire piece and marking for specific criteria

Records of achievement

detailed records of students' accomplishments in relation to outcomes

Progress reports

brief summaries about learner progress

Learning Conferences

Investigative discussions with students about their learning process and learning goals

Portfolios

Systematic collections of learners' work that demonstrates accomplishments, growth and reflection about learning

*Adapted from Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education (2006),
Bow Valley College(2009) and Cooper (1997)*



Integrate Assessment FOR Learning

Assessment **for** learning, or formative assessment, is integral to planning for effective teaching and learning. In this type of assessment, the focus is on gathering information that helps learners and instructors decide on the next steps for learning. Assessment is undertaken and evaluated to determine learners' abilities. The results clarify for both instructor and learner where more practice and reinforcement is needed. Learners receive feedback that helps them progress and instructors use the information gathered to make instructional decisions.

Assessment **for** learning helps instructors answer questions such as the following:

- *What is needed next?*
- *What areas are learners having difficulties with?*
- *In which areas have learners progressed?*

Purpose

The purpose is to identify areas of strengths and challenges in individual learners and across the class to inform future teaching decisions and to make learners aware of their progress.

Process

Assessment **for** learning occurs throughout the learning cycle. Every learning task involves some form of assessment, whether formal or informal. Instructors are continuously looking for evidence of learning and indicators of support needed in all outcome areas: reading, writing, literacy strategies and Habits of Mind.

In assessment **for** learning, each learner's progress and learning needs are evaluated in relation to the curriculum outcomes. This can be done formally (e.g. using rubrics or checklists) or informally (e.g. through classroom observation and immediate feedback).

How Can I Ensure that Quality Information is Gathered?

In order to ensure quality in assessment **for** learning, aim to be accurate and consistent in your observations and interpretations of individual learning. For example, use a template for anecdotal notes that includes the outcomes addressed and conditions provided in order to help you to focus your notes on the skills observed.

How Can I Use the Information Effectively?

You can use information gathered in assessment **for** learning to provide individual learners with accurate and descriptive feedback about their work. This helps learners understand exactly what they can do in order to improve. Review and discuss assessments done **for** learning immediately after the assessment so that the activity is fresh in learners' minds. Use the information to illustrate areas where learners need more practice or to show learners where they have demonstrated progress or used a specific strategy effectively. Assessments **for** learning can also be used in learning conferences. Keep the actual assessment sheet, record or a picture of the activity done in a portfolio to be reviewed. Show the assessment to the learner to remind them of the task when discussing results.

Assessment for learning occurs throughout the learning process. It is designed to make each student's understanding visible, so that teachers can decide what they can do to help students progress."

(Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education, 2006, p. 29)

You can use the information from assessments **for** learning to determine whether learners need more support in a particular area or if they are ready to move on. The information also helps you tailor instruction to support individual learners. For example, if an assessment in reading shows that certain learners are weaker in comprehension than others, you could create subsequent reading materials with more visual supports for those learners.

Special Considerations: Assessment for Learning at Foundation Phase

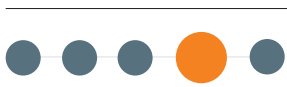
Assessment **for** learning is particularly beneficial at Foundation Phase because it can help you identify what the learners have mastered and where they need more practice.

At Foundation Phase, it is important to break outcomes down into incremental observable skills to measure progress.

For example, use a task-based anecdotal record to document the learners' ability to:

- use their finger to follow along with a picture story
- look at the wall chart for reference when matching capitals and small letters
- point to pictures as the instructor says them

This assessment **for** learning can be used to inform the instructor as to which skills need more class time and which are becoming habits so that they can be built upon. It can also be used to inform the learner about where learners are excelling and where they need to practice more. You can provide feedback to the learner verbally and by physically modeling the desired behaviour. It is also possible to provide strategies to learners who need them, such as using a coloured piece of paper to assist in following along with their fingers and eyes or providing an alphabet reference chart on the desk instead of on the wall for those who need it closer.



As another example, assessment **for** learning can be recorded with a digital camera to assess whether learners are able to orally identify common signs or symbols in context. On a walk around the neighbourhood, learners can look for specific words and take (or have the instructor take) photographs of the words. For example, the learners take photographs of all the words “push” and “pull” that they see on doors. The photos are added to the learners’ portfolios to demonstrate their progress towards achieving the specific learning outcome: *Read public signs, notices and labels* at Foundation Phase.

Anecdotal notes can be used effectively in assessment **for** learning. You can use them to assess learners' day-to-day skills and progress and to inform teaching. As learners complete a task in the classroom, circulate around the room and take notes on learners' performance. Individual learners' successes and challenges with the task are noted on a documentation sheet. This assessment technique is appropriate for all phases and for all aspects of learning: strategies, Habits of Mind, listening and speaking and reading and writing. Adapt the criteria to meet the outcomes for their level.

Organizational Strategies:

Anecdotal notes can be organized by:

- task: taking notes on several learners for one task on one day
- learner: taking notes on one learner, for several tasks over a period of time

Conditions for Effective Implementation:

- Organize a chart with specific outcomes that you will be looking for throughout the term.
- Do not try to assess everyone in everything, every day. Select specific outcomes related to current class focus to assess on certain days.
- Jot down notes in point form on the chart, keeping them simple so that the assessment does not become cumbersome and labour-intensive.

Suggestions for Using the Assessment Information Effectively:

- Determine areas to focus on for whole class review and practice.
- Determine skills that individual learners need extra support and practice in.
- When appropriate, provide immediate and descriptive feedback to learners so they know what they need to do to improve.
- Use the anecdotal notes in learning conferences to discuss skills improved and areas to work on.

Variation:

- These documentation sheets can be used at any level, by adapting the outcomes and criteria to suit the level.
- Observations could be noted on sticky notes during class which can be stuck to each learner's chart after class.

TASK BASED ANECDOTAL ASSESSMENT RECORD

Level: Phase I**Course dates:** Sept.- Dec.**General Learning Outcome:** Interpret informational text**Specific Learning Outcome:** Engage in personal reading**Task:** Read a language experience story**Conditions:**

- Class made story, context is highly familiar and personally relevant
- Familiar vocabulary
- No wrap around text/font is large and clear
- Task is familiar; class-made language experience stories have been done previously
- Reading has been practiced chorally with teacher support

Name	Decoding/ sounding out words	Comprehension
Maria	Can read most words	Answers questions accurately
Nefeesa	Guesses using first consonant	No trouble with yes/no
Abraham	Trouble with many words – gets first sound of some, then stops	Difficulty with yes/no and oral questions

Retelling is an effective method of assessment **for** learning in which learners describe what they have learned in a particular class, time period or unit. In this case the purpose is to assist in determining what the learners are confident with and where gaps may exist in learning. Having the learners practice retelling on a regular basis also reinforces their ability to use this strategy in their reading. This assessment can be done at all Phases with varying levels of support. In Phases II and III however, learners are more confident with language and will be able to share more about what they have learned.

Organizational Strategies:

- Make retelling a regular part of the classroom routine, either at the end of each class, week or unit. As the learners become used to retelling, they will begin to participate more in this assessment.
- Make a mental note or write brief notes about what the learners feel they have learned. Refer to it when planning future lessons.

Conditions for Effective Implementation:

- Be conscious not to assess the learners on their responses or the correctness of their grammar. This purpose of this assessment is to gather information to plan future lessons. It is not assessment *of* learning.
- Encourage all learners to participate so that you can get an accurate picture of learning in the class and not just of certain learners.

Suggestions for Using the Assessment Information Effectively:

- Determine areas to focus on for whole class review and practice.
- Determine skills that individual learners need extra support and practice in.
- Keep a record of information gathered from retelling. Watch for patterns that indicate a need for more focused review in certain areas.

Checklists can be used for indicating the presence of skills over time. You can simply check off which learners demonstrated certain skills, strategies or Habits of Mind on various days throughout the term.

For example, a checklist for the whole class could include the following:

- contributes orally to vocabulary game
- remembers pencil
- contributes orally to “what’s your favourite...?”
- puts worksheet in binder independently
- and positions paper correctly on desk

The demonstration of these practices over time gives the instructor specific information about which learners need more time and support in these areas.

Organizational Strategies:

- Create a chart that lists each learner’s name and specific skills to be focused on in class.
- Observe learners doing various tasks throughout the term, and record demonstration of skills on the chart with a checkmark, date or note.

Conditions for Effective Implementation:

- Make it a habit to record success when observing learners.
- Encourage learners by drawing their attention to their successes when you observe them.
- Do not try to observe each learner in each skill every day, but note things when they come up.

Suggestions for Using the Information Effectively:

- Refer to the chart when planning lessons to determine areas where review is needed.
- Refer to the chart during learning conferences to discuss areas of success or challenge with individual learners.



For more information on designing and using checklists in the ESL literacy classroom, refer to Chapter 11 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*

Sample Foundations Checklist

Date: Oct. 18-22
Purpose of Assessment: Assessment for learning
General Learning Outcome: Interpret formatted text
Specific Learning Outcome: Interpret lists, charts and tables
Task: Naming and ordering letters

Conditions:

- task is familiar
- task is modeled/prompted by instructor

	Participates in choral rote reciting of alphabet	Contribtes orally to naming various letters	Spells name aloud	Using a model and working in pairs, puts alphabet flashcards in order	Uses finger for tracking on a model while class recites alphabet
Nyabile	✓	✓		✓	✓
Farida	✓		✓	✓	✓
Adam	✓	✓	✓		

Integrate Assessment AS Learning

Assessment **as** learning is also known as self-assessment. Learners with limited experiences of formal education may be unaware of how self-assessment can contribute to learning success. In this type of assessment, the focus is on developing learners' metacognitive skills. Metacognition is *thinking about thinking* and *learning about learning*.

"Assessment as learning is a process of developing and supporting metacognition for students. It requires that teachers help students develop, practice, and become comfortable with reflection, and with a critical analysis of their own learning."

(Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education, 2006, p. 13)

Purpose

The purpose is for learners to reflect on and assess their own learning and progress.

Process

In assessment **as** learning, individuals are supported in their efforts to reflect on their learning in all outcome areas: reading, writing, literacy strategies and Habits of Mind. Assessment **as** learning takes many forms. Examples include reading logs and learning photographs. In all levels of ESL literacy programs, learners will need structure and support to develop their abilities to reflect on their learning and use the reflection to improve their learning, both in class and independently.

How Can I Ensure that Quality Information is Gathered?

Learners need support in their self-assessment efforts. When learners are initially exposed to the concept of self-assessment, it may be most effective to do this as a class. Draw learners' attention, on a regular basis, to questions such as:

- *What did we learn today?*
- *How did we practice it?*
- *Which way of practicing helps you learn best?*
- *What can you do to help yourself when you have that problem?*

This reduces the pressure associated with self-assessment. Model self-assessment whenever possible. Build time into your class schedule for reflection and provide regular opportunities for self-assessment in class. Initial self-assessments in paper format will need to be highly supported and immediately relevant to learners.



How Can I Use the Information Effectively?

Discuss learning with the class on a regular basis. As mentioned previously, building a regular routine of self-reflection and assessment will enable learners to see how their learning has progressed over time. A safe and supportive learning environment is essential to learners' abilities to be honest about their learning successes and challenges. In learning conferences, the instructor and learner can use the self-assessment information to discuss next steps for learning in and out of class.

Special Considerations: Assessment as Learning at Foundation Phase

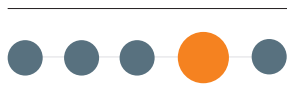
For learners with 0-3 years of formal education, assessment **as** learning, or self-assessment, can be quite abstract and will require a great deal of support. The purpose of assessment **as** learning at the Foundations Phase is to expose learners to the practice of thinking about how they learn.

Most assessments **as** learning for Foundation Phase will be done as a group, rather than individually. As part of the daily routine, you might ask the learners what they learned that day, guiding them in their answers by pointing to the flipchart of new words or opening up the picture dictionary to the page looked at that day. In Foundation Phase, most of the answers will be single word answers, but over a number of weeks, this may increase.

One type of self-assessment that can be used successfully at Foundation Phase is reflecting on one's own best writing. For example, during classroom letter formation practice, each learner practices writing letters. When finished, learners look back and circle the letter they feel is their best.

The classroom portfolio is a very effective method for conducting assessment **as** learning. The instructor and learners determine a place in the classroom, such as a bulletin board, where they can display and celebrate their learning. With the instructor leading the activity and learners contributing, the classroom portfolio can be used as a stepping stone to self-reflection.

Classroom portfolios are discussed in more detail in the Managing Assessment section, later in this stage.



Assessment AS Learning | Assessment method: sign in/sign out chart

A sign in/sign out chart for class is an effective assessment tool for any phase. It focuses on the specific learning outcome, “manage time” in Habits of Mind and it can also be used to assess learners’ abilities to organize information in lists, tables and charts. Learners in Foundation Phase or Phase I will require extensive modeling and support.

Organizational Strategies:

- Create an attendance chart with each learner’s name and the class dates on it.
- Post the chart inside the classroom near the door so that learners can make a check in the appropriate box for the dates when they are in class. They should write an **L** when they are late and an **A** for the days that they are absent (to be written upon their return to class).

Conditions for Effective Implementation:

- Discuss attendance policies and the benefits of attending regularly and arriving on time.
- Go over the chart format with the learners before beginning to use it and assist them with filling it in until they feel comfortable using it independently.
- Ensure that learners understand the symbols they will be putting on the chart before beginning to use it.
- Encourage the learners to take responsibility for their attendance and to be honest.
- Try this out for a short period at first. If it becomes habit and is not too labour intensive, continue it for the rest of the term.

Suggestions for Using the Information Effectively:

- Review the chart on a regular basis in class, giving learners the opportunity to reflect on their own attendance. Provide opportunities to discuss classroom attendance expectations and the challenges and benefits of regular attendance.
- Bring the chart to learning conferences to illustrate the connection between attendance habits and progress.



Assessment AS Learning | Assessment sample: sign in/sign out chart

Attendance					
Name:	Monday May 3	Wednesday May 5	Monday May 10	Wednesday May 12	Monday May 17
Farida	L	✓	✓	✓	✓
Luis	✓	✓	A	A	✓
Ali	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maria	✓	✓	✓	✓	L



Assessment AS Learning | Assessment method: learning photographs

Learning photographs are effective tools for assessment **as** learning. They provide learners with an initial exposure to naming strengths and areas of improvement. It is appropriate for use when the semester is well underway and learners have had ample opportunities for practice in the range of skills to be focused on in the term.

Procedure:

- Place large signs with pictures and words representing skill areas around the room. Ensure that learners can name each skill area (e.g. spelling, reading, writing, listening).
- Ask learners to think about their skills at the beginning of term. Ask them to think about their skills on day one and think about their improvement. Invite learners to move to the area of the room that corresponds to one skill they feel has improved. Use simplified oral prompts to achieve this with low oral levels.
- Take a picture of learners standing by their improved skill area. Use the pictures in a classroom portfolio display or print out copies for individual learner portfolios. This provides the instructor with a record of the self-assessment without the learner doing an abstract worksheet on the topic.

Conditions for Effective Implementation:

- Learners need to know the names of the different skills they've been working on in class (e.g. spelling, reading, writing, computer, listening, speaking).
- Learners need to have experience with activities in which they move to places around the room according to certain criteria (e.g. according favourite colour, likes/dislikes).

Suggestions for Using the Assessment Information Effectively:

- Include the photographs in a classroom portfolio or bulletin board. Call learners' attention to it during learning conferences.
- Use this activity again before the end of the semester to reflect on progress.

Variation (Increased Level of Complexity):

- Use sentences with the pictures as headings (e.g. I improved in **reading**.)
- Extend the task by asking learners to move to an area that they want to improve. Take another picture and use this to document goal-setting. Provide targeted instruction and feedback that will help learners improve in their identified area. Include this in learners' portfolios.
- Provide headings on the board. Using headings with no pictures increases the complexity. Have learners write their name under the heading to indicate the area in which they've improved. Take a picture and print it for class or learner portfolios.

Assessment AS Learning | Assessment method: reading logs

Reading logs help you and the learners track personal reading. Reading logs can be very simple, including only the date and title, or more complex, including reflection on the story. Learners can be encouraged to read materials aside from the readings focused on in class exercises. Having a shelf or box of reading materials appropriate to the reading levels of the learners in your class encourages them read more. At lower levels, learners will need help selecting reading materials and support reading. As they progress, encourage them to select materials for themselves, both in and out of class.

Go through the chart with the learners when they do their first few entries, so that they understand what they should be writing. Do not mark the learners' reading log entries, but use them as a means to discuss reading progress and encourage interest in reading.

Conditions for Effective Implementation:

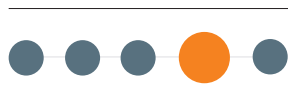
- Vocabulary in the reading log headings is pre-taught.
- Pre-writing discussion and brainstorming of vocabulary for answering questions is provided.
- Free reading should be part of a regular routine in class.
- The level of reading materials provided should be at the independent level (learners know 90-94% of the vocabulary). Learners should feel comfortable with the materials and experience success when reading.

Suggestions for Using the Assessment Information Effectively:

- Use the free reading time as an opportunity to do some one-on-one reading with learners while others are reading.
- Have volunteers work with learners one-on-one to give the learners a chance to share their reading.

Variation:

- Encourage the learners to do reading outside of class as well.





Assessment AS Learning | Assessment sample: reading log #1

Purpose of Assessment: Assessment **as** learning
General learning outcome: Interpret informational text
Specific learning outcome: Engage in personal reading
Level: Phase I Adequate

Reading Log

Name: _____

Date	Name of Story	 I liked this story	 I didn't like this story

Purpose of Assessment: Assessment **as** learning
General learning outcome: Interpret informational text
Specific learning outcome: Engage in personal reading
Level: Phase II Adequate

Reading Log

Name: _____

Date: _____
Title: _____
Author: _____

Write two sentences about your reading. You can use these to start your sentences:

I liked.....

I didn't like.....

I learned.....

This reading was about....

Assessment AS Learning | Assessment sample: reading log #3

Purpose of Assessment: Assessment as learning
General learning outcome: Interpret informational text
Specific learning outcome: Engage in personal reading
Level: Phase III Adequate

Reading Log

Name: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____

What happened?

How do I feel about the reading?

How does this connect to my life?



Integrate Assessment OF Learning

Assessment **of** learning (also called summative assessment) is one component of effective assessment. When effective assessment **for** learning and assessment **as** learning are integrated throughout the learning period, learners are not surprised about their results in assessment **of** learning.

Purpose

The purpose is to measure learners' proficiency in relation to the learning outcomes and to determine readiness for subsequent levels.

Process

Assessment **of** learning occurs at the end of a learning theme or cycle and aims to determine which outcomes learners have achieved. It can be done through tasks marked with rubrics, formal tests, documented observations of progress or other methods of assessment undertaken after learning and practice have occurred. Outcomes in reading, writing, literacy strategies and Habits of Mind can all be assessed in this way.

How Can I Ensure that Quality Information is Gathered?

Using a range of assessment methods will ensure that the assessment information provides an accurate picture of learners' skills. In addition, learners need to know what is being assessed and what the criteria for success are in order for them to effectively demonstrate their skills. This can be a challenge with beginner learners, but it is possible to achieve this by using visual supports, incorporating self-assessment and using assessment records with level-appropriate language and layout.

Assessment records should include the following information:

- outcome being assessed
- task used to assess the outcome
- conditions or level of support provided
- criteria for measuring success
- information on learners' degree of proficiency

Assessment **of** learning can be formal or informal. Both rubrics and anecdotal notes are examples of effective methods of assessment **of** learning. Sample anecdotal notes and a sample rubric with a detailed process for creating effective rubrics follow this section.

How Can I use the Information Effectively?

You can use the information gathered in assessment **of** learning to determine learners' overall benchmark levels, make decisions about subsequent class placements and communicate with learners about the reasons for placement. Information from and the reason for assessment **of** learning needs to be communicated clearly with learners.

Measuring Progress

Many factors influence learners' performance. As a result, "ESL literacy students may perform inconsistently on assessment tasks from day to day" (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000,p.ix). Take this into consideration when measuring progress to determine placement in subsequent levels and weigh assessments accordingly.

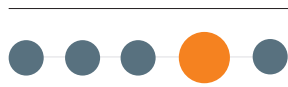
Special Considerations: Assessment of Learning at Foundation Phase

At Foundation Phase, the content and format of assessments must be *identical*, rather than just similar, to what the learners have been practicing. An assessment **of** learning begins with providing all the initial support for the activity. What distinguishes the assessment from a regular learning task is that learners finish the remainder of the task independently.

Foundation Phase involves the development of key concepts, skills and oral language that form the basis for future language learning. Learners may take a long time to develop these concepts and skills and may remain in this Phase for an extended period of time. They are learning how to learn in a classroom, becoming proficient in using pencil and paper and gaining an awareness of the printed word. In addition, they are developing their oral skills.

Learners who begin their ESL literacy education in Foundation Phase generally have between 0-3 years of education. At present, there is no research that determines how long it takes to master the concepts and skills that form Foundation Phase. However, a learner's amount of education is a predictor of language acquisition rates, and those with fewer years of formal education can be expected to progress at a slower rate (Watt & Lake, 2004).

Learners in Foundation Phase are not expected to master all pre-reading and pre-writing concepts before moving on to subsequent levels. In order to succeed in future ESL literacy classes, learners need to begin to understand that print conveys meaning, that letters correspond to sounds and that print is organized in predictable ways. They also need to demonstrate awareness of how a classroom operates and initial skills for demonstrating Habits of Mind.



Assessment OF Learning | Assessment method: anecdotal notes

Anecdotal notes can be used effectively in assessment **of** learning. You can use them to assess learners' day to day skills and progress. They can be referred to as a way of determining overall progress. As learners complete a task in the classroom, the instructor circulates around the room and takes notes on learners' performance. Note learners' successes and challenges with the task on a documentation sheet.

This assessment technique is appropriate for all phases and for all aspects of learning: reading and writing, literacy strategies and Habits of Mind. You will need to adapt the criteria to meet the outcomes for your level.

Organizational Strategies:

- In assessment **of** learning, it is most effective to organize anecdotal notes by learner, so that at the end of a term or unit, all of the records for each learner are on one sheet.
- On the chart, note the activity and date, support provided, strengths and areas of improvement and whether or not the outcomes were achieved.

Conditions for Effective Implementation:

- Do not try to assess everyone in everything, every day. Note achievement of outcomes when demonstrated.
- Take notes in point form on the charts, keeping them simple so that the assessment does not become unmanageable.

Suggestions for Using the Assessment Information Effectively:

- Provide immediate and descriptive feedback to learners so they know what they need to do to improve.
- Use the information in learning conferences to discuss skills improved and areas to work on.
- Refer to charts at the end of term or unit to determine progress when assessing learner placement or grades.

Variation:

- These documentation sheets can be used at any level, by adapting the outcomes and criteria to suit the level.
- Observations could be noted on sticky notes during class which can be transferred to each learner's chart after class.



LEARNER ASSESSMENT RECORD
Level: Phase I

Course dates: Sept. – Dec.

Name: Nyakul

Strand: Writing

Specific learning outcome	Activity and date	Individual support provided	Strengths	Areas for improvement	Demonstrated competence in outcome
<i>Copy accurately</i>	<i>Personal information</i> <i>Sept. 30</i>	<i>Used ID for reference</i>	<i>Capitals</i>	<i>g, y and p on line</i>	✓
<i>Copy accurately</i>	<i>Calendar</i> <i>Oct. 15</i>	<i>Help to start tracking in right direction</i>	<i>Days in correct order throughout</i>	<i>-letter formation – y in day</i>	✓
<i>Describe and explain</i>	<i>Shopping “I like... + food”</i> <i>Nov. 19</i>	<i>Oral prompting for first sentence</i>	<i>- All correct</i>	<i>N/A</i>	✓
<i>Fill out forms</i>	<i>Personal information form</i> <i>Dec 12</i>	<i>No assistance</i>	<i>Doesn’t need reference for personal information</i>	<i>Write smaller to fit on lines</i>	✓

Assessment OF Learning | Assessment method: rubric

Rubrics are a useful method of evaluating learners' proficiency related to specific outcomes. They can be used in assessment **of** learning to determine if a particular task has been completed at the benchmark level. They can also be used in assessment **for** learning to help the instructor determine learners' strengths and weaknesses and plan for future teaching.

Rubrics provide the opportunity for assessment to be both descriptive and evaluative. They allow you to:

- clearly outline all of the aspects of a task to be assessed
- describe proficiency in each aspect at different levels of achievement

Descriptors in several key components of the task enable clarity of expectations. Rubrics make the task expectations clear for both the learners and instructor. They also make it easier for many classes at the same level to be evaluated equally for the same task, outlining the criteria clearly and systematically. The final score and evaluation scale on a rubric illustrate what the learner has demonstrated and the level he/she has achieved.

What to Consider When Planning Rubrics:

Effective rubrics are tied to a specific learning outcome. There are several steps to follow in the process of designing a rubric. The steps are outlined below and followed by a visual to assist you in creating your own rubrics.

1. Consider the purpose for the assessment.

Why am I using this assessment with my learners?

Am I going to use it as an:

- assessment **of** learning? Do I want to determine learners' level by assessing the degree to which they have achieved the learning outcomes?
- assessment **for** learning? Do I want to inform my teaching by determining the areas in which learners are strong or need more practice?

2. Determine the general learning outcome and specific learning outcome that you will measure.

What am I assessing with this task?

Rubrics are most effective when tied to a learning outcome.



3. State the task.

What will the learners do to demonstrate their ability to achieve the specific learning outcome?

Make sure that the task relates directly to the outcome.

4. Outline the conditions for the task.

- *What will be pre-taught?*
- *What supports, examples and models will be provided?*
- *What amount of teacher assistance will be provided?*
- *Is there a time limit for the task?*
- *In what setting will the task be completed – independently, in pairs, in a group?*

It is critical to include the conditions of the task in the rubric. Support will be provided at all levels, but the types of support and the amount provided will vary. A task changes dramatically in difficulty with different levels of support.

5. Determine the holistic criteria for the task.

What will show me that the learner understands the task?

Include one or two yes/no statements that demonstrate whether or not the purpose of the task has been achieved.

6. Determine the analytic criteria that you want to assess in the task.

What specific components am I looking for in this task?

List three to five specifics pertaining to the task that you will evaluate when assessing.

7. Provide descriptors of potential achievement of the analytic criteria at four levels.

Describe the criterion at four levels: below Benchmark, nearing Benchmark, at Benchmark and beyond Benchmark. Begin with a description of what each criterion should look like at Benchmark level (column three). From there, move on to describing each criterion beyond Benchmark level (column 4) and nearing Benchmark (column 2) and below Benchmark (column 1).

8. Determine the overall score for the assessment task.

What is the total score that can be achieved if all of the criteria are beyond Benchmark level?

Multiply the number of analytic criteria by four (the number of columns) and subtract the number of unused squares (e.g. if the highest score for a criterion is a 3, then the fourth square – above Benchmark - will be unused in that row).

9. List the determiners to calculate a passing grade for the task.

What do the learners need to achieve to be at level?

- The response(s) to the holistic criteria must be yes.
- The score in the analytic criteria should be at least 70%.

Determine how many of the criteria need to be at 3 or above in order for the learner to achieve the Benchmark.

10. Provide a place to indicate the level achieved for the task.

How does the score for this task relate to the to the Benchmark level?

Creating a Rubric

Determine the purpose of the assessment. Purpose of Assessment

Name the general learning outcome and specific learning outcome. General learning outcome
Specific learning outcome

State the task. Task: Conditions:
Outline the conditions for the task.

Include one or two yes/ no statements that demonstrate that the learner has achieved the overall task.

List three to five specific criteria that contribute to the achievement of the task.

Criteria				
Holistic				
Analytic	1	2	3	4

Provide descriptors of potential achievement for each criterion at benchmark, beyond benchmark and below benchmark.

Determine the total score. score: _____ / 20

List the determiners to calculate a passing grade for the task. To achieve Phase II Developing for this task, the learner must have:

Provide a place to indicate the level achieved and score ranges for the task. Overall assessment
below Phase _____ at Phase _____ above Phase _____



Assessment OF Learning | Assessment sample: rubric

Purpose of assessment: Assessment **of** learning
General learning outcome: Convey information and opinions
Specific learning outcome: Describe and explain
Level: Phase II Developing

Task:

Write 5 or 6 sentences to describe your family.

Conditions

- pre-taught / recycled vocabulary
- word bank provided
- no teacher assistance
- class-written and corrected example on board as model
- pair discussion to generate ideas
- time limit: 30 minutes

Criteria				
Holistic				
	Did the learner achieve the task?	Yes	No	
	Is the writing comprehensible?	Yes	No	
Analytic	1	2	3 (at level)	4
Legibility and punctuation	Errors in letter formation and placement impede understanding. Punctuation errors throughout.	Some errors in punctuation, letter formation and placement. Errors do not impede understanding.	Prints accurately, consistently, legibly and on the line. No errors in basic punctuation or capitalization. (. , ? , !)	
Wrap-around text	Does not attempt wrap-around text.	Attempts wrap-around texts with some errors that impede understanding (e.g. crowds margins or breaks word incorrectly).	Uses wrap-around text with few errors. Errors do not impede understanding.	Uses wrap-around text with no errors.
Vocabulary	Uses inappropriate vocabulary, rather than using word bank.	Uses word bank vocabulary inappropriately (e.g. word choice contradicts meaning).	Uses vocabulary from word bank appropriately.	Uses word bank vocabulary and adds additional vocabulary appropriately.
Target structure (e.g. He is ____/ he has ____)	No use of target structure OR frequent errors in use.	Some errors in use of target structure.	No errors in use of target structure.	No errors in use of target structure and uses additional structures accurately.
Spelling	Errors in words from bank.	Some errors in high-frequency vocabulary. No errors in words from bank.	No errors in high-frequency vocabulary or words from bank.	No errors.

score: _____ / 19

To achieve Phase II Developing for this task , the learner must have:

- 2 "yes" answers in the holistic section
- a score of 14 or higher
- 3 or more scores at 3 or higher

Overall assessment: **below** Ph II Developing **at** Ph II Developing **above** Ph II Developing



Assessment OF Learning | Assessment method: worksheets (Foundation)

In this type of assessment at Foundation Phase, the instructor is assessing learners' ability to complete a familiar task they have seen multiple times with identical context and content, and with support.

Organizational Strategies:

- In classes preceding the assessment, practice the same task in class over a period of time so that it is familiar to the learners.
- Begin the assessment by recycling the task being assessed by introducing the familiar task and modeling it extensively.
- Have the class work on the task as a group with board work or the overhead.
- Hand out the familiar worksheet to be assessed, helping the learners get started on the activity as usual. Up until this point the activity should be identical to any regular activities at this level.
- From this point on, the learners should be able to complete the worksheet with only minimal guidance from the instructor. This is what is being assessed. Provided all the necessary support is in place, can the learners finish the worksheet?

Conditions For Effective Implementation:

- Ensure that learners are familiar with the task and that they have experienced success with it in a supported environment before the assessment.
- Provide the necessary support at the beginning of the task so that the learners are able to finish it independently.
- Remember that the task should be identical to those done previously.

Suggestions For Using The Assessment Information Effectively:

- Be mindful that the purpose of the assessment is to determine whether learners can complete a *familiar* task with all the support in place.
- When reviewing the assessment with the learner(s), have a visual to refer to so that learners can recall the task.



Assess Literacy Strategies

Assessment of literacy strategies helps demonstrate incremental improvements in learning and points out to learners **how** they can improve their reading and writing.

For example, in a traditional spelling assessment, spelling is generally marked right or wrong. When assessing spelling by focusing on strategy use (e.g. “sound it out”) instructors and learners can identify progress more clearly (e.g. the learner used invented spelling, and only made a mistake with one letter).

As with reading and writing skills, assessing strategies can be done for three purposes:

- assessment **for** learning
- assessment **as** learning
- assessment **of** learning

Assessment for learning: Classroom observations can be helpful when planning for instruction, as they help you identify the areas in which learners need instruction and/or support.

For example:

- **Anecdotal notes:** When completing an exercise in class that lends itself to the use of certain strategies, observe and note how many of the learners are using the strategies, such as referring to the word bank when selecting answers. Based on your findings, you may want to incorporate specific strategy instruction before upcoming activities.
- **Checklist:** Create a checklist of the strategies you have been focusing on in class and the names of all of your learners. When learners demonstrate use of strategies in class, check them off. Refer to this checklist when you are planning lessons to determine which strategies may need more reinforcement or practice.

Assessment as learning: Learners can participate in self-assessment activities that raise awareness of their strategy use. Encourage learners to identify strategies that are effective for them as individuals and to use these strategies to enhance their learning.

For example:

- **Questionnaire:** Learners can complete a self assessment about their strategy use, such as in the writing process. The self-assessment can include questions such as: *Do I plan my writing first? Do I go back and check my writing for capitalization and punctuation? Do I read it out loud to see if it makes sense?* Learners’ responses can be reviewed in learning conferences.
- **Reflection and discussion:** Ask the learners to think about a specific area of learning, such as how they remember the spelling of words in a test. Discuss the different



strategies that they come up with. Remind them of any strategies that they haven't mentioned and encourage them to try these strategies in the future.

Assessment of learning: Instructors can record observed behaviours that indicate strategy use and refer to these in learning conferences. Many of the assessments for learning can also be used in assessment of learning. The results are used to determine progress rather than informing future teaching.

For example:

- **Anecdotal notes:** When completing an exercise in class that lends itself to the use of certain strategies, observe how many of the learners are using the strategies, and record the strategy use on anecdotal notes sheets for your learners. Refer to these notes in learning conferences and when documenting progress.
- **Checklist:** Create a checklist of the strategies you have been focusing on in class and the names of all of your learners. When learners demonstrate use of strategies in class, check them off. Refer to this checklist in learning conferences and when documenting progress.

The progress of individual learners may vary within a class. Strategy assessment is not intended to be the sole indicator in determining a learner's readiness for subsequent levels. In programs that provide, recycle and spiral specific strategies, learners are able develop or draw on these strategies in later Phases.

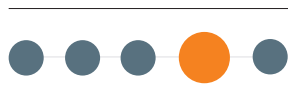
Assess Habits of Mind

Habits of Mind can be assessed by evaluating their corresponding skills (e.g. resourcefulness: *transfer learning to other contexts*). Keep in mind that each individual has demonstrated resourcefulness, motivation, responsibility and engagement in their lives.

Rather than comparing learners or determining their readiness for subsequent levels, the **purpose** of assessing skills and strategies that support Habits of Mind is to:

- identify areas for growth
- support development of skills
- recognize and document success

Effective assessment in this area highlights *individual* growth and development in order to support, encourage and reinforce skills that contribute to learner success. Assessment methods for Habits of Mind are similar to those that work for assessing literacy strategies, involving observation, reflection and documentation.



Assessment for learning: Classroom observations can indicate to the teacher that learners need instruction and/or support to further develop skills related to Habits of Mind, such as managing information (e.g. sorting types of mail received into junk mail and important mail).

For example:

- **Anecdotal notes:** When completing an exercise in class that involves skills relating to a particular Habit of Mind, observe and note how which learners are demonstrating these habits. Use your notes to inform skills and strategy instruction in future lessons.
- **Checklist:** Create a Habits of Mind checklist with the names of all of your learners. When learners demonstrate skills relating to a particular Habit of Mind check them off. Refer to this checklist when you are planning lessons to determine which Habits of Mind may need more reinforcement in class.

Assessment as learning: Learners can complete self-assessments that raise their awareness of skills that support Habits of Mind, such as their ability to access resources to complete a task.

For example:

- **Self assessment checklists:** Create a checklist that lists the Habits of Mind skills that you will be focusing on in class. Ask learners to keep it in the front of their binder and write the date every time they think they demonstrate it. Discuss this checklist with them in learning conferences.
- **Questionnaires:** Have learners complete a self assessment questionnaire about their skills relating to a particular Habit of Mind, such as “Take learning risks”. Questions could include the following: Do I try things myself before asking for help? Do I try new things when I can? Do I reflect on what happens when I try new things? These questionnaires can be reviewed in learning conferences.

Assessment of learning: Document behaviours that indicate increased awareness of Habits of Mind, such as when a Foundation Phase learner begins to demonstrate preparedness for learning by consistently bringing the appropriate learning tools (pencil, book, glasses) to class. Habits of Mind can be discussed in learning conferences in reference to individual progress.

For example:

- **Anecdotal notes:** When completing an exercise in class that involves a skill related to a particular Habit of Mind note which learners are demonstrating the skill. Refer to these notes in learning conferences and when documenting progress.
- **Checklist:** Create a checklist of the skills that you have been focusing on in class and the names of all of your learners. When learners demonstrate skills in class, check them off. Refer to this checklist in learning conferences and when documenting progress.



MANAGING ASSESSMENT

Assessing learners' progress for three different purposes – assessment **for** learning, assessment **as** learning and assessment **of** learning - requires that instructors develop a strategy for managing the information gathered so that it can be used most effectively. An effective way of managing this is to adopt a portfolio-based approach. This section provides information on several types of learning portfolios that can be used in ESL literacy programs.

Portfolios

Portfolios are an effective tool for tracking learners' development in all strands of outcomes provided in this framework: reading, writing, literacy strategies and Habits of Mind as well as listening and speaking. Learners with Interrupted Formal Education (LIFE) are often unfamiliar with the concepts of managing their academic learning and being involved in the assessment process. When programs adopt a portfolio assessment approach, learners are introduced to and supported in their ability to reflect on their own learning.

Advantages of Using Portfolio Assessment:

- provides an holistic picture of learners' progress
- allows for evidence-based assessment
- provides a vehicle for developing skills that demonstrate Habits of Mind (e.g. *reflect on learning, set and manage goals*)
- provides a forum for instructors, learners and others to talk about the learning process

In order for portfolios to be effective, you may need to take a gradual, developmental approach to adopting portfolios in your classroom or program. Begin with the components of portfolio assessment that are manageable and build from there. It is a learning process for all parties involved, but the benefit lies in the quality of the information gathered and the richness of the experience for both learners and instructors.

A portfolio approach to assessment provides you with a comprehensive tool for organizing and reviewing assessments done for different purposes. Using portfolios can be helpful in:

- documenting learning
- communicating about learning

Documenting Learning

Portfolio assessment allows instructors and learners to track, document and reflect on learners' progress and accomplishments over a period of time. Portfolios provide concrete evidence of learners' efforts in working towards and achieving outcomes.



Communicating About Learning

Portfolios and learning conferences promote conversation related to assessment and involve the learner more actively in the assessment process. Discussion and selection of materials to add to a portfolio allows learners and instructors to connect regarding the learner's progress. Regularly scheduled learning conferences involving portfolios encourage further discussion regarding progress and guide learner reflection. Including artifacts (physical reminders of the assessment task, such as photographs or the manipulatives used) and examples of learners' work assist learners in recalling particular tasks and provide concrete examples of progress and challenges.

Special Considerations: Using Portfolios at Foundation Phase

Learners at Foundation Phase are unlikely to be familiar with portfolio assessment. They may expect the instructor to do the assessing without learner input. At Foundation Phase, learners are being introduced to the idea of portfolios and will require a great deal of instructor support. Assessments included in portfolios need to be concrete and highly visual to help the learners connect the paper records in the portfolio to the actual assessments done in class. Classroom portfolios and evaluation portfolios are most effective for this level and are described in more detail in this section.

Types of Portfolios

A portfolio can take many different forms, depending on the level of the learner, who is maintaining it and what the end goal is. It is important to consider these factors when planning a portfolio process for your learners.

Four different types of portfolios are described here:





- **classroom** portfolios
- **evaluation** portfolios
- **showcase** portfolios
- **collaborative learning** portfolios

Each portfolio type can be used to address one or more of the purposes for assessment.

Portfolio Types and Purposes of Assessment			
Portfolio Types	Assessment for learning	Assessment as learning	Assessment of learning
Classroom portfolio		✓	
Evaluation portfolio			✓
Showcase portfolio		✓	✓
Collaborative learning portfolio	✓	✓	



For more information on portfolios for the ESL literacy classroom, see Chapter 11 of Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook.

TYPE OF PORTFOLIOS	Foundations	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Classroom	✓	✓		
Collaborative Learning		✓	✓	✓
Showcase			✓	✓
Characteristics As learners become more skilled and independent, they are gradually able to assume more responsibility for the collaborative learning and showcase portfolios. Learners in all Phases require level-appropriate instruction in thinking, speaking and writing about the learning process. The use of classroom collaborative learning and showcase portfolios helps learners to develop the skills outlined in Habits of Mind: reflect on learning; set and manage goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> portfolios include tangible "artifacts of learning" portfolios include visual representations of learners' progress work with learners to complete "I can" checklists or self reflection activities to reinforce learners' progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> portfolios include tangible "artifacts of learning" evaluation portfolios include visual representations of learners' progress support is provided in selecting pieces to contribute to the collaborative learning portfolio self-reflection pieces use visuals and simplified language to focus on concrete, familiar aspects of the learning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organizational structure is provided for learning and showcase portfolios learners are encouraged and supported in selecting and organizing pieces for the learning and showcase portfolios self-reflection pieces use simplified language to focus on concrete, familiar aspects of the learning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some structure provided (e.g. table of required contents for showcase portfolio) but learners select own samples for showcase and learning portfolios models/ examples of well-designed, well-organized learning and presentation portfolio are provided self-reflection pieces focus on familiar aspects of the learning process 
Levels of support	Bars indicate decreasing level of support from Foundation Phase to Phase III. Note that the level of support decreases but is still provided at Phase III.			

Classroom Portfolio

Purpose: Assessment **as** learning

Description

Classroom portfolios are most appropriate for learners in Foundation / Phase I. A classroom portfolio provides low-level learners with an introduction to assessment **as** learning. The goal is to develop learners' awareness of the learning process, and of the connection between class activities, learning tasks and their own learning. This type of portfolio is instructor-led and requires a high level of support. It can take many forms, from a binder to a display wall, PowerPoint presentation or poster.

Process

Classroom portfolios are created as a group. Guide activities and discussion about the learning that has happened in the class. Classroom portfolios highlight the outcomes achieved within the themes taught. Schedule regular (e.g. weekly) time for the class to identify and reflect on learning, choose items collectively and celebrate achievements. Post samples of work, photographs and other visuals in the classroom. The visuals help make the classroom portfolio more meaningful for learners. Through classroom portfolio activities, instructors can introduce learners to the process of reflection and developing a portfolio.

Examples of what to include

- photos of class learning activities and field trips that have clear visual indicators of the nature of the learning task (e.g. trip to grocery store to learn about pricing / signage)
- individual learner reflections (e.g. circle the face that shows how you felt about the trip)
- class reflections
- class-generated stories about learning experiences
- "I can" statements
- samples of learners' work
- key vocabulary words from the theme or unit
- tactile reminders or artifacts of learning experiences that will jog learners' memories

Special considerations for using classroom portfolios at Foundation Phase

Classroom portfolios are an effective way to introduce portfolios at Foundation Phase. Instructors can work with the learners to determine what to put on a class bulletin board to celebrate the most recent learning unit. For example, after a unit on family, learners can make a classroom portfolio by dictating family words they now know (orally) to the instructor for the board. Learners can put their photographs up on the bulletin board with some labels about family members. Each learner can choose a completed worksheet they'd like to post on the board. Learners can work on a poster together which shows their new knowledge with each learner's name written by the learner and checkmark beside *married*, *single*, etc. The instructor can refer back to the board in following classes, talking about all the things they have learned and helping the learners use the classroom portfolio board for reference. Used this way, a classroom bulletin board becomes a stepping stone towards self-assessment.



Evaluation Portfolio

Purpose: Assessment **of** learning

Description

The evaluation portfolio is maintained by the instructor. This type of portfolio is suitable for any level as it is put together and maintained by the instructor. It is a collection of samples that provide evidence of outcomes achieved and strategies used effectively. In an evaluation portfolio, instructors aim to determine whether or not learners have achieved curriculum outcomes and make decisions about learners' future placement in the program.

Process

Throughout a term, instructors regularly and deliberately collect samples of learners' assessments and work completed. The samples collected are directly tied to the outcomes for the level. Evaluation portfolios include samples for each learning outcome of the program from different points in the learning process. The samples in the evaluation portfolio are used to determine outcomes achievement and learner progress. Evaluation portfolios also facilitate discussion regarding progress in learning conferences. Instructors can **show** learners how they are progressing, in which areas they are doing well, and areas that need improvement.

Examples of what to include

- outcomes-related assessments that provide evidence of the highest level outcomes achieved
- samples of learners' in-class work
- rubrics from assignments
- unit tests
- anecdotal notes; classroom observations
- tactile reminders or artifacts of learning experiences that will remind learners of tasks

Special considerations for using evaluation portfolios at Foundation Phase

Outcomes at Foundation Phase involve a growing understanding of oral English and non-language skills that are the precursors to learning how to learn in the classroom. Using a binder, referring to environmental print, following along in a bingo game and successfully navigating a simple game on the computer are all very real gains at this phase that must be recognized. Documentation of observed behaviours is an effective way of measuring achievement of these outcomes. Evaluation portfolios are useful to track the subtle progress of learners at Foundation Phase. They are managed entirely by the instructor, who chooses and collects the learners' work to add to the portfolio.

Samples of work that could be included in evaluation portfolios might be flashcards that the learner can match or digital photographs of the learner's work with realia and manipulatives. Also included could be various instructor checklists and anecdotal records about the learner.



Showcase Portfolio

Purpose: Assessment **of** learning, assessment **as** learning

Description

Showcase portfolios are designed to document and highlight a learner's highest quality or best work. They allow learners to provide evidence of their mastery of outcomes and the quality of their learning process. The aim in using showcase portfolios is to further involve learners in thinking and talking about their learning and accomplishments. Building a showcase portfolio gives learners another opportunity to reflect on and describe their learning process. As the learners are highly involved in selecting and discussing materials for their portfolios, this type of portfolio works best in Phase II or III.

Process

This type of portfolio is created by the learner, with assistance from the instructor. Instructors should encourage learners to select samples of their work that illustrate progress or achievements to add to a portfolio that will be shared with others. Over time in a program, learners will be able to gradually assume more responsibility for selecting pieces and maintaining the showcase portfolio. Because it is a showcase, the finished product should be polished. Showcase portfolios can be discussed at learning conferences and provide an opportunity for learners to share their reflections on learning. Building in other formalized opportunities for learners to present and discuss their showcase portfolios with others (other classes, an open house, with the wider school, etc.) allows learners to become more practiced in talking about their learning and accomplishments.

Examples of what to include

- a table of contents created by learners (with instructor input and guidance) that lists the outcomes learners are required to address
- samples that provide evidence of outcomes achieved
- favorite samples of work and explanation why
- learning reflections
- awards received
- final projects

Collaborative Learning Portfolio

Purpose: Assessment **for** learning, assessment **as** learning

Description

Collaborative learning portfolios are a combination of instructor-chosen and learner-chosen samples of work that demonstrate learners’:

- development and work towards achieving outcomes
- reflection on learning and self-assessment

The collaborative learning portfolio can be used in Phases I – III, with support provided throughout. Learners will gradually be able to assume more responsibility for selecting and organizing samples for the portfolio as they progress through the levels.

Process

Instructors and learners work together to select samples of work and learners’ self assessments. The process of building a collaborative learning portfolio involves reflection on and discussion of learning.

Assessment **for** learning: Instructors can use the samples in this portfolio to inform decisions about the instructional process and individual learning needs. During learning conferences, learners will be able to see evidence of their learning progress, which can aid in developing specific, achievable learning goals.

Assessment **as** learning: Learners’ work in reflecting on learning and goal-setting is an important part of the collaborative learning portfolio. When learning reflections and goal-setting are part of the portfolio, they provide an opportunity for discussion about the learning process. It is important that the self-reflection and goal-setting tasks are scaffolded and appropriate to learners’ literacy and language levels. Contributing to the portfolio and gradually assuming more responsibility for the organization provides learners with a valuable opportunity to develop their skills in managing information.

Examples of what to include

Instructor-selected:

- artifacts of learning (especially at lower levels) – pictures, cards, tactile reminders of learning experiences
- representative samples of learners’ work towards achieving an outcome
- rubrics, assessments that highlight learners’ success and challenges in achieving outcomes
- anecdotal notes providing evidence of outcomes-related learning

Learner-selected:

- work that shows progress
- stories that learners can read confidently
- goal-setting and learning reflections
- self-assessments
- work that they are proud of or enjoyed working on

Learning Conferences

A learning conference is an opportunity for learners and instructors to have a one-to-one discussion about each learner's progress, strengths, challenges and factors impacting their learning. Learning conferences address all purposes for assessment:

- Assessment **for** learning: The learning conference provides a forum for providing detailed, descriptive feedback to learners about how they can improve their skills.
- Assessment **as** learning: The learning conference provides learners with an opportunity to reflect on their learning and discuss it with another person. This contributes to metacognitive awareness, and a reason to practice the English necessary to talk about learning.
- Assessment **of** learning: In preparation for learning conferences, instructors review assessments and consider progress relating to outcomes. This facilitates an accurate discussion regarding learner accomplishments.

Learning conferences are most productive and meaningful to learners when the discussion is based on tangible evidence of classroom learning. Portfolios provide an effective vehicle for achieving this.

Provide regular opportunities for one-on-one learning conferences between instructors and learners. At the very least, these conferences should take place at mid-term and end of term. This allows learners to deepen their understanding of the purpose of these conferences and gives them the practice they need to develop the skills to reflect on and communicate about their learning.

Strategies for Making Learning Conferences Meaningful and Manageable

Prepare for the conference

Prior to the conference, consider each learner, making note of outcomes achieved, areas for improvement, questions to ask and information to provide. Consider using or developing a tool such as the one below for a Phase I class:

Name	Outcomes achieved	Areas for improvement	Questions / comments	Notes from conference
Nabila	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Writing) Fill out forms: uses correct date order in forms• (Reading strategy) uses pictures to aid understanding• (Habits of Mind) brings binder every day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write on lines• Use first letter sound to help with word• Try independently first before asking for help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is learner coming late to class?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance – daughter's daycare opens at 8:00 – difficult to get to class on time

Involve learners in preparing for the conference

For example, a Phase I instructor can involve the learners in organizing the contents of their portfolios the day before the learning conference by using the following process:

- Bring the collections of work that will go into each portfolio.
- With each assessment or sample, hand it back to the learners and talk about each assessment as a group.
- Use artifacts or pictures to remind learners of the activities.
- Draw learners' attention to the score or feedback they received. Learners are then instructed to put their own piece in the portfolio.
- By the end of the session, each learner has organized samples of their work into their own portfolio. Their memories have been refreshed and they have a better understanding of what is in their portfolios.

When the learning conference takes place, the pieces of paper in the learner's portfolio are more relevant to him/her.

Use pictures and artifacts

Bring pictures or artifacts from activities (e.g. matching cards or vocabulary flash cards) to refresh learners' memories of the learning activities. This helps learners participate more actively in the conference. Bringing pictures and artifacts is more appropriate for low levels (Foundations/Phase I), but learners in higher levels will also need an opportunity to refresh their memory prior to the conference.



Teach learners how to talk about their learning

Learners need explicit instruction in naming strengths, challenges and goals. In effective programs, this skill is scaffolded, recycled and spiraled throughout the levels.

Provide opportunities to practice talking about learning

Learners will need to rehearse the language for talking about learning. Provide support and opportunities in class for practice that is appropriate for the learners' level, with opportunities to name and discuss their learning strengths and challenges throughout the semester, not just before the conference. One way of doing this is to have learners name or review what's been learned at the end of every day or week.

Special Considerations: Learning Conferences at Foundation Phase

Learning conferences at Foundation Phase will involve manipulatives, pictures and concrete reminders of tasks that the learners did in the classroom. Samples of activities and digital photographs included in the portfolio help the learner understand and remember the activities and stimulate discussion. A reading activity that the learner can "read" could also be included to review at the learning conference. This could be a photo story about that particular learner, with one or two sentences, or another familiar, concrete story with single words, such as a picture of a binder and the word *binder*. Having tangible, familiar items in the portfolio will facilitate the learning conference. The evaluation portfolio can be used to both evaluate the learner and to guide the learning conference.



For more information on learning conferences in the ESL literacy classroom, refer to Chapter 11 of *Learning for Life: An ESL Literacy Handbook*

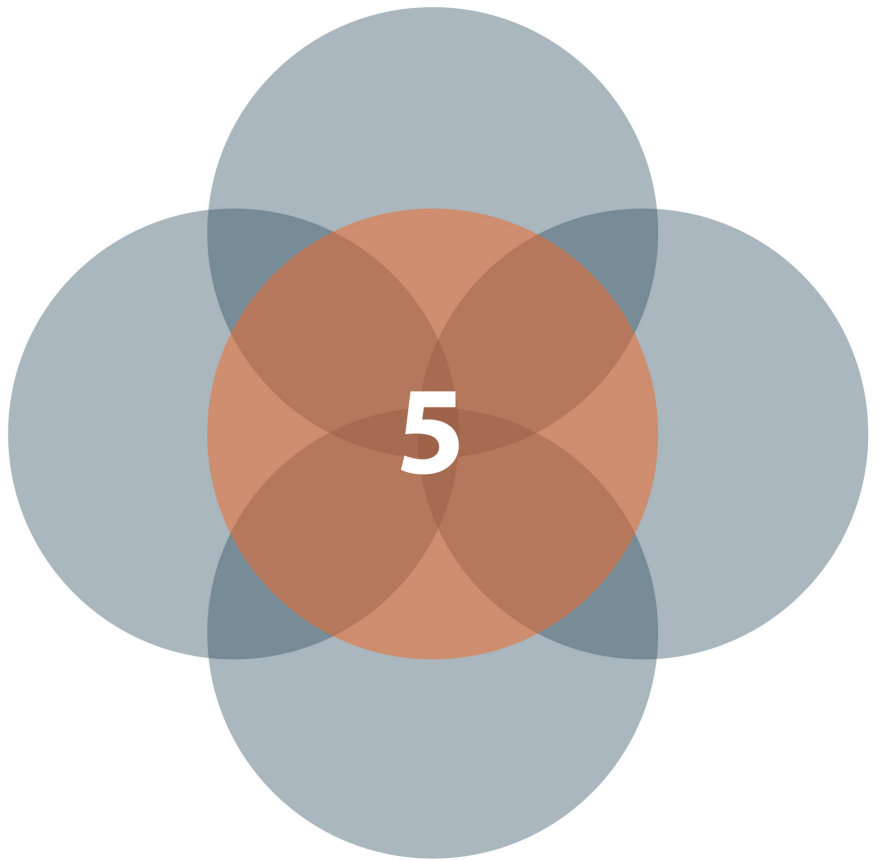
SUMMARY

Assessment is integral to a program and can provide teachers, learners and other stakeholders with valuable information about the learning process. Effective assessment is a transparent process that involves assessment for three different purposes: assessment **for** learning, assessment **as** learning and assessment **of** learning. A portfolio approach to managing assessment is recommended, and explanations of four types of portfolios are provided: evaluation, classroom, collaborative learning and showcase portfolios.

Effective assessment is tied to learning outcomes (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*). In programs of excellence, these learning outcomes directly support the program's purpose and goals (see *Stage 2: Determine Focus*), which are based on a clear understanding of learner and community needs (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). Clearly communicating the purpose of and information gathered from assessments is one way of maintaining accountability in your program (see *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*).

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- Bow Valley College (2009). *Learning for LIFE: An ESL literacy handbook*. Calgary: Bow Valley College.
- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (2005). *Canadian language benchmarks literacy placement tool: Volume 1 Foundation and Phase 1*. Ottawa: Author.
- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (2006). *Canadian language benchmarks literacy placement tool: Volume 2 Phase 2*. Ottawa: Author.
- Manitoba Labour and Immigration Adult Language Training Branch. (2004). *Collaborative language portfolio assessment: Manitoba best practices guide*. Retrieved June 30, 2010, from http://www.atesl.ca/cmsms/uploads/File/Resources/LTPproject%20Reference_1.pdf
- O'Malley, J., & Valdez Pierce, L. (1996). *Authentic assessment for english language learners: Practical approaches for teachers*. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing.
- Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education (2006). *Rethinking classroom assessment with purpose in mind*. Retrieved June 30, 2010, from <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/wncp/index.html>



STAGE **5**

Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework
STAGE 5: DEMONSTRATE ACCOUNTABILITY

STAGE 5 | TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEMONSTRATE ACCOUNTABILITY

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT GUIDE: STAGE 5

Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability Summary: In effective programs, accountability is demonstrated to stakeholders: learners, instructors, funders and the wider community. Maintaining transparency throughout the processes of curriculum development, implementation, evaluation and revision is key to demonstrating accountability.	
Development tasks	Process and guiding questions
Review the stages of curriculum development	Reflect on your curriculum development process. This reflection can be ongoing. Adjust elements of your curriculum as necessary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does the curriculum address the needs identified?</i> • <i>Does the curriculum reflect the program purpose, goals and approach?</i> • <i>Are the learning outcomes directly linked to learner needs and program goals?</i> • <i>Are the assessment expectations clearly articulated in the curriculum?</i>
Communicate with stakeholders	Determine how you will communicate about the curriculum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What kinds of information will different stakeholders need?</i> • <i>What is the most effective way to communicate with the different stakeholders?</i> Develop tools/approaches for communicating clearly with stakeholders.
Evaluate the curriculum on a regular basis (e.g. once a year)	Gather information from stakeholders in order to evaluate the curriculum. Evaluation occurs after the curriculum has been implemented. Evaluate the curriculum product : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are the needs of learners and the community still the same?</i> • <i>Does the curriculum address these needs?</i> • <i>What improvements could be made to the curriculum?</i> Evaluate the curriculum process : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Was the curriculum developed with input from all stakeholders?</i> • <i>Did the curriculum development process include all five stages?</i> • <i>Are there additional areas to be considered in the next revision?</i>
Revise the curriculum as necessary	Recognize that the curriculum will be more effective when revised regularly. Base revisions on feedback gathered in the evaluation process (above). Revision occurs after the curriculum has been implemented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Which curriculum revisions are necessary?</i> • <i>Which stages of the curriculum development need to be revisited?</i>



STAGE 5: DEMONSTRATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Demonstrating accountability to learners, instructors, funders and the wider community is a critical component of adult ESL literacy curriculum development, program planning and instruction. Curriculum is at the heart of a program and influences the shape of the program and the direction and nature of the learning targeted. In this framework, accountability in curriculum development refers to curriculum as it shapes the program as a whole, which includes both how the curriculum is developed **and** how it is implemented.

Transparency throughout the processes of curriculum development, implementation, evaluation and revision is a key indicator of whether programs are demonstrating accountability. Effective adult ESL literacy programs demonstrate accountability to all stakeholders: learners, instructors, funders and the wider community.

Accountability is addressed in each stage of this curriculum framework: *Stage 1: Understand Needs*, *Stage 2: Determine Focus*, *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes* and *Stage 4: Integrate Assessment*. Following the guiding principles in each stage of the curriculum development process increases the accountability of a program. This section outlines further considerations and strategies for demonstrating accountability in adult ESL literacy programming and instruction.

In this section, you will find:

- *Program Principles* for demonstrating accountability
- *Classroom Concept: Maintain transparency*. Classroom considerations for demonstrating accountability
- a summary
- helpful resources

PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

How can we apply these ideas in our program?

When adult ESL literacy programs demonstrate accountability, stakeholders (learners, instructors, funders and the wider community) have confidence that the program is able to help learners build the skills and knowledge they need.

This section outlines programming considerations and suggestions for maintaining transparency and demonstrating accountability in four areas, which are important for ensuring the stakeholders' confidence:

- **developing** the curriculum
- **communicating** about the curriculum
- **evaluating** the curriculum
- **revising** the curriculum

Developing the Curriculum

This curriculum framework outlines stages in the process of developing a curriculum for an ESL literacy program. These stages are:

- *Stage 1: Understand Needs*
- *Stage 2: Determine Focus*
- *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*
- *Stage 4: Integrate Assessment*
- *Stage 5: Demonstrate Accountability*

Throughout the curriculum development stages of the framework, information and considerations are provided, with supporting examples, samples and suggestions. When programs work through the stages of this process, they ensure that the curriculum developed is purposeful, effective and responsive to the needs of learners and the community.

Although it is possible to work through these stages in sequence, the process is not entirely linear. Each stage in the curriculum development process is linked to and influences the others. Considerations for demonstrating accountability in the first four stages of adult ESL literacy curriculum development are outlined in this section.

Stage 1: Understand Needs

This stage involves understanding the field of ESL literacy, the needs of learners with interrupted formal education, the nature of the settlement process and the context of ESL literacy in Alberta. Programs are encouraged to conduct learner and community needs assessments to inform the direction of curriculum development.



Maintain **transparency** in this process by documenting this stage of curriculum development. Documenting learner needs and defining the target audience allows a program to communicate clearly with current learners, instructors, funders and the wider community. Programs will also need to refer to this information when conducting a curriculum review and revision process in order to answer the questions: *Is our target audience still the same? Have the learners' needs changed? Have the community's needs changed?*

Stage 2: Determine Focus

This stage involves determining your program's purpose, goals and approach. Information on four ESL literacy program contexts in Alberta is provided to guide curriculum development:

- community orientation and participation ESL literacy
- family ESL literacy
- employment ESL literacy
- educational preparation ESL literacy

Effective statements of purpose, goals and approach are connected to the needs of learners and the community, which are identified through the needs assessment processes (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*).

Maintain **transparency** in this stage by communicating your purpose, goals and approach clearly and openly with your program's stakeholders: learners, instructors, funders and the wider community. Revisit these statements regularly to ensure that they continue to reflect the needs of your target audience and are consistent with the way the curriculum is implemented by instructors.

Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes

An effective adult ESL literacy curriculum has learning outcomes at the core. Learning outcomes provide direction, structure and balance. They are measurable and allow for recycling and spiraling throughout a program. In this framework, we recommend meeting the needs of ESL literacy learners by including outcomes related to oral communication, reading, writing, literacy strategies and Habits of Mind.

Maintain **transparency** in this stage by ensuring that the learning outcomes in your curriculum are directly linked to your program's purpose, goals and approach, which reflect the needs of learners and the wider community. Provide instructors with clear information on which learning outcomes they are expected to target and the expectations for spiraling of outcomes throughout the program.

Stage 4: Integrate Assessment

This stage involves developing an assessment approach and tools that are directly linked to the learning outcomes established in *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*. This ensures that assessment is also linked to program purpose and goals and continues to reflect the needs of learners and the wider community. Effective assessment is transparent, ongoing, purposeful and meaningful. This framework recommends that assessment be conducted for three purposes: assessment **for** learning, assessment **as** learning and assessment **of** learning. A portfolio approach is recommended as an effective way of managing classroom assessment.

Maintain **transparency** in this stage by ensuring that all assessment measures are linked to learning outcomes, which are connected to the program's purpose and goals. Provide instructors with professional development and support (e.g. resources, templates, designated preparation time) to ensure that the approach to assessment is consistent throughout your program.

Communicating About the Curriculum

Transparency is a critical indicator of a program's level of accountability. In ESL literacy programs, transparency involves clear communication about the program and curriculum to all stakeholders.

Communicating with Learners

It is critical that learners understand the purpose, goals and approach of your program (see *Stage 2: Determine Focus*). Learners will need to understand **what** they can expect to learn, **how** this learning connects to their needs and goals, and **how** their progress will be measured. Although it can be challenging to communicate with learners about these topics, it can be accomplished effectively when approached creatively. Some ways of achieving this include:

- providing print information on the program in learners' first language
- providing first language translators to convey this information to learners
- using realia, photographs and pictures to illustrate the skills learners will acquire
- using realia, photographs and pictures to illustrate the contexts in which learners will be able to apply their skills
- explaining the evaluation process in simple oral terms, with visual support

✔ Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #13

There are policies and procedures in place that facilitate communication with learners.

Communicating with Instructors

Communicating clearly and openly about the curriculum with instructors is vital to the success of your program. Seek instructors' input throughout the curriculum development process and provide instructors with the information and support they need in order to be able to implement the curriculum. This involves providing information, training and resources in the following areas:

- the target audience and their needs (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*)
- the purpose, goals and approach for your program (see *Stage 2: Determine Focus*)
- the learning outcomes in the curriculum (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*)
- the assessment protocols for your program (see *Stage 4: Integrate Assessment*)

Communicating with the Wider Community

Clearly defining your target group and program niche (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*) helps other organizations, the wider community and funders understand the nature of ESL literacy development, the need for programs in this area, and the needs learners in ESL literacy programs have. Communicating with funders and the wider community about your ESL literacy program also involves providing clear and consistent messages about your program's purpose, goals and approach.

Evaluating the Curriculum

Evaluating the curriculum on a regular basis helps you to demonstrate accountability to your stakeholders. Curriculum and program evaluation is a "process used to determine whether the design and delivery of a program were effective and whether the proposed outcomes were met" (Cafarella, 2002, p. 225).

✓ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #6**

There are processes in place for regular program evaluation.

Effective adult ESL literacy programs establish a regular and manageable process for evaluating their curricula and their programs. You will need to determine what is manageable in your organization, but it is important that curriculum review and evaluation be undertaken regularly (e.g. once a year).

A curriculum is a living document, and effective adult ESL literacy programs work to maintain a balance between "curriculum as planned" and "curriculum as lived" (Aoki, 2005). "Curriculum as planned" is based on environmental scanning and an assessment of learner and community needs (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*). "Curriculum as lived" is the way the planned curriculum translates into a classroom reality, as instructors respond to the needs and interests of individual learners within the structure of the program. "Curriculum as planned" and "curriculum as lived" each influence the other and curriculum evaluation is one way of ensuring a balance between these two faces of curriculum.



In gathering information for curriculum evaluation, it is important to identify two groups of people:

- Who will you will gather information **from**?
- Who is the information **for**?

Gather information **from** these stakeholders:

- learners
- instructors
- administration
- community transition contexts (e.g. in employment or educational preparation ESL literacy programs, it is important to understand whether learners are succeeding when they transition into these contexts)

Different stakeholders require different kinds of information. Gather information **for** these stakeholders:

- instructors
- program coordinators
- curriculum developers
- funders

Consider how the information will be used and the purpose of using it when gathering the information. For example, for instructors, program evaluation often involves feedback from learners on how the classes are run, whether the way the information is presented makes sense, whether the teaching is congruent with learning styles, etc. This information is used to inform instruction on an ongoing basis. However, funders often require information about the completion rates, increases in language proficiency, the number of learners who successfully transition, etc. This information can be used to inform future funding decisions.

Because different stakeholders will benefit from different kinds of information, evaluate both the curriculum development **product** and the curriculum development **process**. Here, we highlight considerations in each area, provide guiding questions and suggest strategies for collecting information to answer these questions.

The Curriculum Development Product

Evaluating the curriculum development *product* involves reflecting on the curriculum as it has been designed and implemented over a period of time. It is important to identify both what is effective about the curriculum *and* what needs revision.

The following guiding questions are suggested to help you in the process of evaluating your program's curriculum development **product**:

✔ Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #37

The program ensures regular review and renewal of the curriculum and supporting materials.

- *Is the target audience still the same as when the curriculum was developed?*
- *Does the curriculum continue to reflect the needs of learners?*
- *Does the program develop the necessary skills?*
- *Are the program's purpose, goals and approach clear? Do all stakeholders understand them?*
- *Are the learning outcomes manageable and meaningful?*
- *Are the assessment measures effective?*
- *Does the curriculum provide enough information to guide instructors, without being overly prescriptive?*
- *Are learners satisfied with their progress and the skills they've developed in the program?*

The Curriculum Development Process

Evaluating the curriculum development *process* involves reflecting on how the curriculum was created. Consider the process as a whole and identify which aspects of the process were most successful or challenging. Use this information to inform the way your program conducts curriculum revisions.

The following guiding questions are suggested to help you in the process of evaluating your curriculum development **process**:

- *Was the curriculum developed based on input from all stakeholders? Which other stakeholders should be included when the curriculum is revised?*
- *Did the curriculum development process involve all five stages outlined in this framework? Do any of the stages need to be revisited?*
- *Are there additional areas to be considered when the curriculum is next revised?*
- *Were some stages of curriculum development emphasized over others? What impact did this have in the curriculum product?*
- *How can we improve the curriculum development process for next time?*



Strategies for Gathering Information in Program Evaluations

In order to evaluate both your curriculum *product* and your curriculum *process*, it will be necessary to gather information from different stakeholders. All stakeholders will need to understand **why** the information is being collected and **how** it will be used. Learners will need support to understand the meaning and purpose of evaluations in the context of Alberta. All stakeholders will need assurance that it is safe and necessary to express their opinions truthfully, that they will not face negative consequences for expressing their opinions and that their input is a valuable part of determining future directions.

Strategies for gathering information from various stakeholders that address the guiding questions above are suggested in this section.

Gathering information from learners

Learners' feedback on your program and curriculum is a key component of effective program evaluation. Although it can be challenging to gather this information from learners with low language and literacy levels, there are several approaches that can be used effectively:

- gather information orally
- use learners' first languages
- use level-appropriate evaluations in English
- embed program evaluation in learning conferences and portfolio discussions
- use realia, photographs and illustrations
- use an opinion continuum
- gather feedback from previous learners

Gather information orally

Use formal methods (e.g. focus groups) and informal discussions with learners to discuss how well the program has served their needs. One approach is to discuss the program with learners and scribe key points on to large pieces of paper and post around the room. Learners can then discuss these points and more comments can be written by scribes or the learners themselves.

Use learners' first languages

Use translators and/or first language program evaluation forms where possible and appropriate.

Use level-appropriate evaluations in English

Use simplified English program evaluations with visual supports. Ensure that the evaluation is suited to learners' level and does not involve formatting or tasks that are unfamiliar to learners (e.g. rating scales). Pre-teach vocabulary and build learners' familiarity with the evaluation process throughout the semester. Scribes can record learners' answers to questions on the evaluations.



Embed program evaluation in learning conferences and portfolio discussions

When reflection on learning is taught and reinforced throughout the program, learners will be better able to provide feedback on the program. Questions to consider posing to learners include:

- What have you learned?
- How do you learn best?
- How can we/I help you learn better?
- What else do you need to learn?

Use realia, photographs and illustrations

With these supports, learners can identify what they have learned by choosing the pictures of what they know how to do now. With learners who have higher oral skills, this can be followed by a discussion and more detailed feedback.

Use an opinion continuum

Learners can move around the room in order to respond to statements by indicating yes/no or rating a statement with degrees of agreement/disagreement. Understanding the concept of a rating scale as a way of providing feedback will be useful to learners in other contexts as well, as this approach is commonly applied in surveys. The concept of a rating scale needs introduction and reinforcement throughout the semester, and must be low-stakes at first (e.g. responding to the statement “I like winter”). When it is part of regular practice of reflecting on learning, learners will become more skilled at expressing their opinions in a rating scale. Introducing this physically first will help learners understand how to complete paper-based rating scales, which can also be applied in program evaluations.

Gather feedback from previous learners

Establish a manageable system for tracking and following up with learners who have completed your program. Encourage learners to identify:

- the skills they developed in your program which help them now
- other skills and support that should be included in the program
- their current educational and employment situation and goals

Gathering this feedback from previous learners provides valuable information for programs, funders and future learners on how well the program achieves its purpose.

Gathering information from instructors

When gathering information from instructors, provide a balance between feedback on the current curriculum and input on future directions. Consider using the following approaches:

- form focus groups
- provide anonymous evaluation forms
- gather feedback informally



Form focus groups

Bring instructors together to reflect formally in a group on the effectiveness of your curriculum. Provide a structure for the focus group to ensure that the information you gather is relevant, constructive and useful. For example, have instructors rate statements about the curriculum (e.g. the number of outcomes is manageable) individually on paper, discuss them in small groups, then bring key points to the large group.

Provide anonymous evaluation forms

It is important to provide an opportunity for instructors to provide feedback anonymously, and this can be accomplished in both paper-based and online evaluations and surveys.

Gather feedback informally

Take advantage of opportunities to discuss the curriculum and the program with instructors informally. This provides insight into the day-to-day implementation of the curriculum, including the challenges and successes that instructors and learners experience.

Gathering information from community transition contexts

When gathering information from the community, consider the context as a whole and seek input from key stakeholders. Consider using the following approaches:

- conduct an environmental scan
- use interviews, surveys and/or focus groups
- maintain open lines of communication with stakeholders

Conduct an environmental scan

If your program is to respond to the needs of learners effectively, it is critical that the information you base decisions upon is current. This involves understanding current immigration patterns, demographic and employment trends, and other programs addressing learners' needs in your community. In programs that prepare learners to transition to educational or employment contexts, ensure that you are familiar with current entrance requirements and skills required for success. Considerations for conducting environmental scans are also addressed in *Stage 1: Understand Needs*.

Use interviews, surveys and/or focus groups

After conducting an environmental scan, it may be necessary to follow up with stakeholders. This will help your program to clarify and prioritize needs, understand requirements and form a more complete picture of the community your program is a part of.

Maintain open lines of communication with stakeholders

Build relationships with stakeholders (e.g. educational and employment settings, service agencies and community groups) so that it is possible to obtain current, accurate and useful information on a regular basis. It is important to understand whether the learners exiting your program are demonstrating the skills needed for success in the contexts they enter.

Revising the Curriculum

An ESL literacy curriculum is a **living document**. Curriculum is not fixed and unchangeable, but is continually evolving to meet the changing needs of learners. It is important that revisions of the curriculum are based on input from all stakeholders, as outlined throughout this section. The most effective revisions occur at a program level so that the integrity of a program remains intact. In this way, programs continue to remain responsive to learners' needs, while preparing them for contexts outside the ESL literacy classroom.

In order to remain responsive to needs of learners and the community, **revisit** the stages of ESL literacy curriculum development outlined in this framework. In this process, some stages may require more attention than others. For example, learners' needs may remain the same, but the number of outcomes may need to be changed so that they are achievable within the given time frame. Use the information gathered in the program evaluation process to inform the curriculum revisions you undertake. In order to maintain your program's effectiveness and responsiveness, ensure that there is a regular, manageable process in place for program evaluation and revision.

CLASSROOM CONCEPT: MAINTAIN TRANSPARENCY

How can I apply these ideas in my classroom?

Instructors play a key role in how an ESL literacy program demonstrates accountability to learners, administrators, funders and the community. Programs differ in the emphasis they place on formalized curriculum development and accountability measures. However, even in the most loosely structured programs, instructors can adopt an individual approach to demonstrating accountability.

This section outlines instructional considerations and suggestions for demonstrating accountability in four areas:

- **implementing** the curriculum
- **communicating** about the curriculum
- **evaluating** the curriculum
- **revising** the curriculum

Implementing the Curriculum

This ESL literacy curriculum framework outlines a five-stage process for developing a curriculum. Following the guiding principles provided in each stage to guide lesson and unit planning helps ensure that instruction is purposeful, effective and responsive and prepares learners for contexts outside the ESL literacy classroom. Accountability involves transparency in each of the stages of curriculum development.

The following section highlights the Classroom Concept for each stage and provides suggestions for maintaining transparency throughout the process, from an instructional perspective.

✓ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #43**

Class content is meaningful, appealing and engaging, with a transparent connection to the learners' real-world needs and future goals.

Demonstrating Accountability in your Classroom	
Classroom Concept	Maintain transparency by...
<i>Stage 1: Understand Needs</i> Know your learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conducting formal and informal needs assessments appropriate to learners' language and literacy levels on a regular basis sharing the results of needs assessments with your class
<i>Stage 2: Determine Focus</i> Know your program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> becoming familiar with the structure and expectations of your program becoming familiar with the supports available to learners within the program and in the wider community communicating clearly and openly with learners about the program's purpose, goals and approach, in a way appropriate for their language/literacy level
<i>Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes</i> Make learning meaningful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that all learning tasks are connected to learning outcomes ensuring that thematic content is current, relevant and meets learners' needs communicating clearly and openly with learners about the learning outcomes that will be focused on in the program, in a manner appropriate for their language/literacy level
<i>Stage 4: Integrate Assessment</i> Make assessment meaningful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that all assessment measures are linked to a learning outcome communicating clearly and openly with learners about what is being assessed, why it is being assessed and how the information from the assessment will be used using a variety of level-appropriate methods to communicate assessment information to learners communicating respectfully with learners about their challenges, progress and next learning steps



Communicating About the Curriculum

As an instructor, you have an important role in demonstrating accountability by maintaining open lines of communication between learners, program administrators and the wider community. This section provides suggestions and considerations for communicating with learners and program administrators about the curriculum.

Communicating with Learners

One way that you can demonstrate accountability is by communicating clearly and openly with learners. Effective ESL literacy instructors invest the time in getting to know their learners' interests, needs and goals (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*) and use this to inform instruction. Effective instructors also communicate consistently and clearly with learners about learning outcomes, thematic content and assessment measures.

✔ **Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #42**

Instruction is both guided by the objectives and goals of the curriculum and responsive to the needs and goals of the learners.

In effective ESL literacy classes, instructors regularly and explicitly draw learners' attention to their learning process, which builds learners' metacognitive skills (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*) and maintains transparency in the process. It is important to build this in to every level of instruction, and adapt the methods of communication to the learners' language/literacy level. Consistently calling learners' attention to the following guiding questions ensures that learners have a clear understanding of their learning process.

Guiding Questions:

- *What am I learning?*
- *Why am I learning it?*
- *How am I learning it?*
- *Where can I use what I'm learning?*
- *How well am I learning?*
- *What can I do to learn better?*

The complexity of information communicated will depend on learners' language and literacy proficiency. As learners become more skilled, they can take more responsibility for identifying their learning and reflecting on the process for learning it, as well as identifying opportunities to transfer their learning.

Communicating about the curriculum with learners who have low oral communication skills can be challenging. One way of accomplishing this is to build a routine in which the beginning and ending of each class involves identifying the kinds of skills learners focused on. Use visual supports when necessary. For example, at the beginning of the day, show learners pictures of the skill areas you will be addressing (e.g. computers, reading, listening). At the end of class,



review the day's learning by having learners choose pictures of the skills that were targeted during class that day.

Communicating with Program Administrators

Program administrators rely on instructors to provide information about curriculum implementation that is current, accurate and useful. Programs may be required to provide information to funders about learner progress and attendance. You can demonstrate accountability and transparency in this area by maintaining accurate records (e.g. attendance) and up-to-date assessment portfolios that demonstrate learners' progress in achieving learning outcomes. This information helps programs demonstrate accountability to funders and the wider community.

Instructors also have a role in ongoing curriculum development and revision. Effective programs are responsive to the needs of learners, and as someone who is in frequent contact with learners you can provide information that helps inform curriculum development and revision. Communicating with administration about changes in learners' individual and group needs helps programs remain responsive to these needs.

For example, in one ESL literacy program, the learner profile was historically learners with high oral skills and low literacy skills and 2-3 years of formal education. Over the course of a few semesters, instructors noticed a new learner profile emerging: learners with low oral and literacy skills, often with 0-1 years of formal education. These instructors communicated this shift to administrators, which was taken into consideration in the next curriculum review. Instructors also began to adapt their teaching approaches to better suit the needs of learners with low oral skills. In this situation, instructors played a key role in helping the program to maintain responsiveness, and also demonstrated accountability to the learners in their class.

Evaluating the Curriculum

As an instructor, you work directly with both the curriculum and learners and have an important role in evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum. Demonstrate accountability in the process of curriculum evaluation by building a reflective teaching practice and seeking feedback from learners.

Build a Reflective Teaching Practice

Effective instructors reflect on their teaching practices and seek to improve on an ongoing basis. A reflective approach to teaching also deepens your understanding of the curriculum, which enhances your ability to provide feedback and recommend curriculum changes to program administration.



Guiding questions

These questions are provided as a starting point for building a reflective teaching practice. We encourage you to reflect on other areas of your teaching practice, as is appropriate for your context.

- *Am I implementing the curriculum as outlined? If not, why not? How can I improve in this area? What curriculum revisions can I recommend?*
- *Are there learner needs that are not addressed in the curriculum? Which skill areas can I recommend be added or removed?*
- *Is my instruction responding to the needs of the learners in my class?*
- *Are the materials and tasks purposeful and connected to learning outcomes?*
- *Are all the assessments linked to learning outcomes? Do I use a variety of assessment measures? Do learners understand how they are being assessed and for what purpose?*
- *What strengths do I bring to my teaching practice? How can I build on these?*
- *What aspects of teaching do I find most challenging? How can I improve in these areas?*
- *What research and theory can I draw on to inform my teaching practice?*

Gathering information

You can use various methods for gathering information to answer the guiding questions. The following suggestions are intended to help you deepen your reflective teaching practice.

- Partner with another adult ESL literacy instructor in your institution or another institution. Conduct regular discussions about teaching, implementing the curriculum, methods used, challenges and successes, etc. Conduct peer observations and provide feedback on strengths and suggestions for improvement, as well as sharing ideas for developing tasks, materials or assessments.
- Maintain a teaching journal. Over a period of time, take notes on a particular aspect of your teaching (e.g. assessment or error correction). Try different methods and note how effective these methods are with your learners.
- Make a video recording of a lesson, series of lessons, or an aspect of a lesson (e.g. providing instructions) over several lessons. View the recording and notice strengths and areas for improvement in your teaching. Commit to improving one area as follow-up to this reflection.



- Focus on one stage of curriculum development, as outlined in this framework. Consider which of the guiding principles outlined in *Classroom Concepts* are manageable in your context and make an effort to align with these. Over a period of time, reflect on the effectiveness of these strategies. Consider providing feedback and suggestions to program administration, in the interests of improving the curriculum.

Elicit Feedback from Learners

ESL literacy programs exist to help learners develop the knowledge, skills and strategies needed for success in a variety of contexts. As key stakeholders, it is important to elicit learners' feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and of the program as a whole. You can demonstrate accountability in their classroom practice by seeking feedback and input from learners on a regular basis. This feedback can be used to inform your instructional decisions and can also be communicated to program administrators to inform curriculum revisions and programming decisions.

"No one can provide better feedback on overall course quality than students. This may seem obvious but, in practice, it is often overlooked."
(Nikolic & Cabaj, 2000, p.231)

The concept of providing feedback to one's instructor may cause confusion and discomfort for some learners, depending on factors such as cultural background, prior educational experiences and beliefs about learner and teacher roles. Make every effort to increase learners' comfort levels with this process by building it in as a regular part of instruction. The process of reflecting on instruction also benefits learners by increasing their awareness of their own learning processes.

Guiding questions

These questions are provided as a starting point for eliciting feedback from learners.

- *What are you learning in this class?*
- *Which learning activities help you learn best?*
- *Which learning activities are not helpful?*
- *What can I do to help you learn better?*
- *Which activities are (too) easy for you in class?*
- *Which activities are (too) difficult for you in class?*
- *What other skills do you want/need to practice?*



Gathering information

Build learners' familiarity with the process of providing feedback by integrating it as a regular part of class time.

- Gather feedback **daily or weekly**. When concluding a lesson, ask learners to provide feedback on aspects of the lesson that were helpful. This also helps learners reflect on their learning and review what they have learned, which is an important learning strategy. This feedback can inform the tasks, materials and pacing of subsequent lessons.
- Gather feedback **at the end of thematic units**. Based on feedback from learners, you can adjust the design of your next thematic unit (e.g. length of unit, tasks, materials, number of outcomes).
- Gather feedback at **midterm** and **end-of-term**. This feedback can focus on the semester as a whole, in order to identify areas to focus on for the remainder of the semester, and guide your instruction with future groups of learners. It is often helpful to convey mid and end-of-term feedback to program administrators, as it can influence future programming decisions.

Learners usually require pre-teaching and scaffolding in order to provide feedback to instructors. The following methods are suggested for gathering feedback from learners in ESL literacy programs. You will need to adapt methods and provide supports (e.g. photographs, word banks) as necessary to suit learners' language/literacy levels.

- Use realia, photographs and illustrations to help learners identify the skill areas they want to continue developing.
- Use open ended statements. For example: *I learn best when we practice _____. I need to do more _____*, etc. Learners can finish these orally or complete written sentences with support provided in the form of word banks or scribes.
- Use opinion continuums and rating scales. Have learners move around the room to indicate their degree of agreement/disagreement with statements about the lesson, theme or semester. For example: *Working with my table group helps me learn. I like practicing spelling every day. Writing in my journal helps me learn. I learn when we take class trips*. This can also be accomplished in written form, by expressing an opinion on a rating scale. Scaffold this task by reviewing each statement orally first and then having learners mark their opinion on the rating scales. Another approach is to provide learners with a slip of paper with a rating scale and read a statement orally, which they then respond to on the slip of paper. This can be done daily as a way of gathering feedback on the effectiveness of the lesson.



Revising the Curriculum

An effective adult ESL literacy curriculum is not fixed and unchanging. We encourage you to aim for a balance between the “*curriculum as planned*” (the formalized program-level curriculum) with “*curriculum as lived*” (the way the planned curriculum is implemented within the classroom). Using information gathered through reflective practice and eliciting learner feedback, you can influence revisions in both the “curriculum as planned” and the “curriculum as lived”.

You can play a role in influencing revisions in the “curriculum as planned” by providing feedback to program administrators on the effectiveness of the planned curriculum and making recommendations for revision. It is important that significant curriculum revisions, such as adding/deleting learning outcomes and revising the assessment protocols, be conducted at a program level. This ensures that learners continue to be prepared for subsequent levels and for the contexts into which they will transition.

You can also play a role in influencing revisions in the “curriculum as lived”. This is the process in which instructors change classroom approaches, tasks and pacing based on their reflective practice and feedback from learners.

SUMMARY

Effective adult ESL literacy programs demonstrate accountability to all stakeholders: learners, instructors, funders and the communities of which they are a part. Maintaining transparency throughout the processes of curriculum development, implementation, evaluation and revision enables programs and instructors to demonstrate accountability.

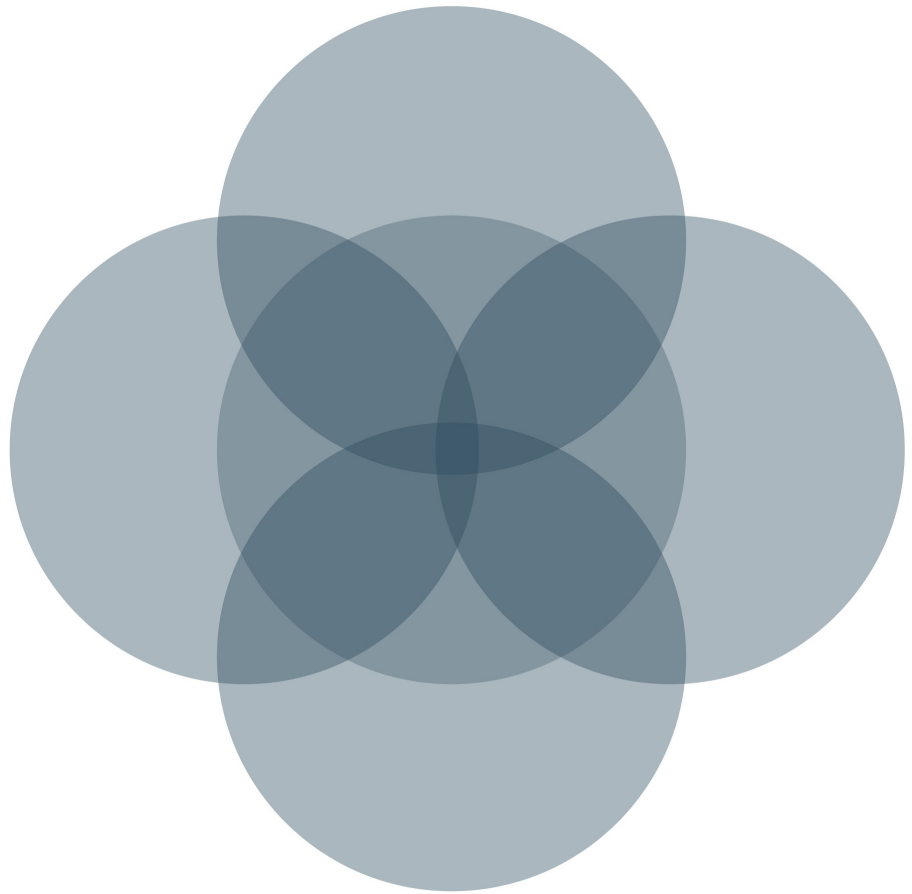
Accountability is addressed throughout the five stages in this curriculum framework. This section has highlighted ways of maintaining transparency throughout the process of curriculum development outlined in *Stage 1: Understand Needs*, *Stage 2: Determine Focus*, *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes* and *Stage 4: Integrate Assessment*. This section has also outlined further considerations for demonstrating accountability in curriculum implementation, communication, evaluation and revision from both programming and instructional perspectives.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Caffarella, R. S. (2002). *Planning programs for adult learners* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Chambers, W., Illott, W., Messaros, C., & Dawson, K. (2011). *ATESL curriculum framework for adult ESL programs*. Edmonton, AB: ATESL.
- Nikolic, V., & Cabaj, H. (2000). *Am I teaching well? Self-evaluation strategies for effective teachers*. Toronto: Pippin.





APPENDIX

A

Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework
APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
INTEGRATING NUMERACY

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING NUMERACY

Numeracy is a part of everyday life in Alberta. Setting an alarm clock, changing channels on the television, checking a weather forecast, reading a bus schedule, paying for merchandise and checking one's change are all everyday numeracy applications. Many learners with interrupted formal education (LIFE) struggle with these tasks, because they have not had the opportunity to develop basic numeracy skills. Numeracy is the knowledge, skills and language necessary to communicate about and use mathematics in everyday situations. It includes:

- understanding whole and decimal numbers
- adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing
- recognizing patterns
- deciphering data in tables, graphs and charts
- understanding measurement and geometry
- identifying the mathematics required to calculate answers and solve problems

Basic numeracy skills contribute to a learner's ability to cope independently with everyday life in Canada. "These skills are as important in everyday life as being able to read and write" (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000, p. iv).

Numeracy Learner Profiles

LIFE have a range of mathematical understanding and experience. The learner profiles here illustrate the range of numeracy skills you may find in your classroom or program.

Learner A

This learner shops and spends money, but relies on cashiers to take cash and change from her purse. She cannot count orally in English, and cannot add or subtract one or two digit numbers.

Learner B

This learner refers to being taught math 'a long time ago'. He cannot articulate mathematical processes, but can mentally add and subtract very quickly, and he knows some times tables by rote. He used to assist his father in the family's shop in his home country.

Learner C

This learner is a confident and competent mathematician. She completed nine years of schooling in her home country and loves finding solutions to problems, but she struggles to identify the key mathematical language required in English in order to calculate correctly.



For more detailed numeracy learner profiles, see Chapter 12 of *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*.

As illustrated in the profiles, some learners need to develop foundational numeracy skills, while others need to learn more advanced skills. Other learners have strong math skills, but need to learn the English necessary to be able to demonstrate their existing knowledge and skills. For learners who plan to transition into career training or adult basic education programs, numeracy skills and the English to describe mathematical processes and solve problems are particularly important.

In this section, you will find:

- Program Considerations for integrating numeracy skills
- Classroom Considerations for integrating numeracy skills
- an excerpt from a sample Bow Valley College numeracy curriculum
- helpful resources

PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

In this section, we highlight several considerations from a programming perspective. These are intended to guide you in the process of incorporating numeracy into your adult ESL literacy curriculum.

Align Approach with your Program Purpose and Goals

In your program, learners' numeracy skills will vary and they do not always correlate with literacy levels. For example, a learner's literacy levels may fall into the Phase II range, according to the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*. The same learner may have low numeracy skills that fall into the Foundation Phase range. Given that learners have different mathematical experiences and understanding, multi-level classrooms are often the reality.

You will need to determine your approach to numeracy instruction based on learners' needs (see *Stage 1: Understand Needs*) and the focus of your program (see *Stage 2: Determine Focus*).

In this section, we outline three common approaches to integrating numeracy instruction, and the benefits and challenges of each:

- offer separate, leveled classes specifically for numeracy instruction
- integrate numeracy into thematic instruction in the ESL literacy class
- offer designated multi-level numeracy time within the ESL literacy class

Offer Separate, Leveled Classes Specifically For Numeracy Instruction

In this approach, learners can be grouped according to numeracy understanding and knowledge gaps, and transition between classes as their numeracy skills develop. They can work through clear objectives and experience success as they move from one level to the next. Instructors can focus on particular skills and knowledge gaps and develop vocabulary. The benefit of this approach lies in the opportunity to provide highly focused numeracy instruction that is systematically organized based on the development of mathematical concepts and skills.

The main challenge of this approach is that, while learners' numeracy levels are similar, their language and literacy levels may not be. This may make discussion or explanation of mathematical concepts more difficult than when learners have similar language proficiencies. As the focus is numeracy development, many instructors choose to address this challenge by encouraging learners to support one another in their first languages, where possible.

Other challenges of this approach involves delivering numeracy instruction in a fixed, regular timeslot so that learners can attend the class that is the most appropriate for them. As well, outcomes must be clearly articulated for each level, and transition criteria between classes must also be agreed upon. It is important to conduct numeracy assessments at the beginning and end of a period of study.

Integrate Numeracy into Thematic Instruction in the ESL Literacy Class

In this approach, the instructor looks for opportunities to introduce numeracy into thematic teaching within the ESL literacy classroom. For example, in a theme around transportation, numeracy content could include:

- reading tables and schedules
- reading analog and digital time (including the 24 hour clock)
- using money in daily transactions
- reading maps including navigation of grid systems and compass directions

The greatest benefits of this approach are the reinforcement of the themed material and vocabulary and the opportunities to make the numeracy as 'real' as possible. Learners who are experienced in using math and performing necessary calculations in their lives will still benefit from learning the language to explain their calculations and decisions in English. Learners with limited numeracy skills will benefit from both the numeracy and the language instruction.

Challenges of this approach can arise with differentiation of resources and activities, as some learners will be experiencing or learning the material for the first time and others will be learning the English vocabulary for knowledge and skills they already possess. It is crucial to continually adopt a 'show me what you know' approach (see *Classroom Considerations* in this section) to inform instructional planning.

Offer Designated Multi-Level Numeracy Time in the ESL Literacy Class

In this approach, a certain amount of time is regularly designated for numeracy in the schedule. Because learners are still grouped according to literacy level, numeracy instruction is multi-level.

The main benefit of this approach is that numeracy concepts and skills can be introduced sequentially and built upon. Other benefits include providing learners with a new opportunity to share their knowledge and skills with their peers. Learners are mentors and teachers in this approach – roles they may not otherwise feel confident taking on in their literacy classroom.

The main challenge of this approach is in differentiating materials and instruction in order to meet the needs of learners with a variety of skill levels.. As well, the instructor will need to conduct ongoing assessment **for** learning (formative assessment) as each individual will arrive with different levels of knowledge and skill gaps.

Identify Learners' Starting Points

Regardless of which approach you choose to take, it will be important to determine learners' existing numeracy needs and levels of understanding. Individual learners will have different gaps in their numeracy concept and skill development.

One approach to identifying learners' numeracy starting points is to conduct a successive numeracy assessment. In this approach, learners move through a series of increasingly complex numeracy tasks. In order to move on to the next set of tasks, learners need to successfully complete the previous ones. The assessment can be completed over a period of time, rather than all at once.

This chart illustrates a successive numeracy assessment process.

Successive Numeracy Assessment	
Assessment 1	Identify patterns Identify numbers
Assessment 2	Read and write numbers in words and digits Add and subtract single-digit numbers
Assessment 3	Add and subtract two- and three -digit numbers Multiply and divide simple calculation
Assessment 4	Solve word problems with the four operations calculate with money
Assessment 5	Use fractions, ratios and percents

Adapted from Bow Valley College (2009)

Access the *Financial ESL Literacy Toolbox* through the ESL Literacy Network (<http://www.esl-literacy.com>) for a placement assessment which correlates with Phases I – III in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*. This three-tiered assessment is designed to reveal knowledge gaps and inform planning and instruction in the areas of financial literacy and numeracy.

Determine Numeracy Outcomes

Integrating numeracy outcomes provides a focus for instruction and increases accountability within a program (see *Stage 3: Set Learning Outcomes*). If you plan to integrate numeracy into your curriculum, you will need to determine the number of outcomes that are manageable for your program. Base this decision on learners' needs, the approach you choose, and your program parameters such as the number of contact hours, levels and instructors.

In order to select or develop your numeracy outcomes, it is helpful to draw upon existing resources. In Alberta, there are two main resources that describe the progression of numeracy skills.

- *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000)
- *Mathematics Kindergarten to Grade 9 Program of Studies* (Alberta Education, 2007)

This section provides a summary of the two resources and outlines the benefits and challenges of each.

Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners

The *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* document provides numeracy learning outcomes in Phases I, II and III. Within each Phase, you will find outcomes, sample tasks and applications and language and literacy competencies for developing numeracy skills. In each Phase, information about the learning conditions is also provided.

Numeracy learning outcomes are grouped into the following categories:

- number concepts
- patterns & groups
- operations
- time & temperature
- measurement
- money

The benefit of using this resource is that it is designed for adult ESL literacy learners. It links language instruction to numeracy instruction and provides examples for tying numeracy to content and real-life applications. However, in some cases (e.g. in educational or employment preparation ESL literacy programs), the numeracy outcomes may not extend to a high enough level. Depending on your program's purpose and goals (see *Stage 2: Determine Focus*), you may need to further differentiate and extend the numeracy outcomes.

Mathematics Kindergarten to Grade 9 Program of Studies

This resource is designed for use in kindergarten through grade nine classes in Alberta.

Goals of the K-9 Program of Studies

The main goals of the mathematics education in the K-9 Program of Studies are to prepare students to:

- use mathematics confidently to solve problems
- communicate and reason mathematically
- appreciate and value mathematics
- make connections between mathematics and its applications
- commit themselves to lifelong learning
- become mathematically literate adults, using mathematics to contribute to society

Alberta Education (2007, p. 2)

This program of studies is divided into four strands, with some sub-strands. Each strand is addressed from kindergarten through grade 9, and is outlined below (Alberta Education, 2007, p. 8-9).

Strand: Number

- Develop number sense.

Strand: Patterns and Relations

- Patterns: Use patterns to describe the world and to solve problems.
- Variables and Equations: Represent algebraic expressions in multiple ways.

Strand: Shape and Space

- Measurement: Use direct and indirect measurement to solve problems.
- 3-D Objects and 2-D Shapes: Describe the characteristics of 3-D objects and 2-D shapes, and analyze the relationships among them.
- Transformations: Describe and analyze position and motion of objects and shapes.

Strand: Statistics and Probability

- Data Analysis: Collect, display and analyze data to solve problems.
- Chance and Uncertainty: Use experimental or theoretical probabilities to represent and solve problems involving uncertainty.

Consider selecting the most appropriate strands and adapting the outcomes, if your program's purpose is to transition learners into a context that requires advanced numeracy skills or language related to numeracy. Some contexts in which this may be appropriate are educational preparation and employment preparation ESL literacy programs.



See Stage 2: Determine Focus for more information on educational preparation and employment preparation ESL literacy program contexts.

One considerable benefit of adapting the *Mathematics Kindergarten to Grade 9 Program of Studies* for an adult ESL literacy program is that the outcomes extend mathematical knowledge beyond what is provided in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*. In addition, there are areas of mathematical skill and understanding that are not addressed in the ESL literacy benchmarks. In programs that aim to develop learners' numeracy and related language skills to a more sophisticated degree, it may be most appropriate to draw on this resource.

The main challenge in using the *Mathematics Kindergarten to Grade 9 Program of Studies* is that it does not address language and literacy development concurrently with numeracy development. If you intend to base your numeracy curriculum on the outcomes provided in this resource, it will be necessary to develop learning outcomes for the language and literacy skills needed in order to achieve the numeracy outcomes.

An excerpt from a numeracy curriculum based on the *Mathematics Kindergarten to Grade 9 Program of Studies* is provided at the end of this Appendix.

Support Instructors

Teaching numeracy may be unfamiliar to instructors in ESL literacy programs; they will need support, time and resources to develop their expertise and confidence in ESL numeracy instruction.

Being a math teacher is by no means a prerequisite for teaching numeracy to LIFE. However, it is key that instructors have expertise in ESL literacy instruction, and that they are given support to learn how to teach numeracy. Instructors should bring the best practices of literacy instruction to their numeracy teaching.

To provide numeracy instruction, ESL literacy instructors will need to:

- introduce mathematical concepts
- introduce and recycle mathematical vocabulary
- create activities that scaffold learning
- create 'real-life' scenarios for use in the classroom provide opportunities for learners to apply numeracy understanding and skills in the community
- devise activities to reinforce concepts and build confidence
- create opportunities for learner self-assessment and reflection

If you plan to introduce a numeracy component in your adult ESL literacy program, provide instructors with opportunities for professional development. Consider providing numeracy-related resources, workshops with numeracy experts and time for instructors to collaborate. Peer observations may also be helpful for those new to numeracy instruction.

CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS

This section highlights several considerations, from an instructional perspective. These are intended to guide you in the process of integrating and providing numeracy instruction to Learners with Interrupted Formal Education.

Adopt a “Show Me What You Know” Approach

Learners’ numeracy skills do not always correlate with their English language and literacy skills. Understanding learners’ numeracy knowledge and skills will help you provide instruction that is focused and intentional.

In adopting a “show me what you know” approach, you avoid making assumptions about individual learners’ numeracy skills. Create opportunities for your learners to demonstrate their numeracy skills and understanding in a variety of ways. Record learners’ ideas and knowledge, on their behalf if necessary. Use realia or visuals wherever possible to support brainstorming.

Maintain a Strong Focus on Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary development is a crucial aspect of numeracy instruction. Learners will need to develop their numeracy vocabulary in order to:

- explain their reasoning and decisions
- understand what is being asked of them in numeracy tasks, such as problem-solving

Approach vocabulary development in the same way you would in literacy-focused lessons. Build individual and classroom vocabulary banks throughout a unit of study. Recycle vocabulary frequently to ensure that it becomes familiar and understood. Encourage learners to use the vocabulary of the numeracy unit in their speech and writing.

It will be important to teach the names and pronunciation of English numbers. In addition to these, you may find it helpful to teach terms such as the following:

plus	minus	times	answer
divided by	equals	difference	percent
sum	total	more	less
together	place value	maximum	separate

All vocabulary will need to be contextualized, with visual or tactile support provided when possible. Learners will need to understand the numeracy concepts underlying the vocabulary you build in class. For some learners, this will mean simply learning the English word for

something they already know in their first language. For other learners, the numeracy concepts themselves will be new, in addition to the vocabulary.

Facilitate Regular Small-Group Problem Solving

Providing opportunities for small-group problem solving is valuable in numeracy instruction, as it gives learners an opportunity for collaboration, debate and conversation as they apply their numeracy knowledge and skills. Learners who share a first language can also share their numeracy knowledge with each other. As an instructor, this can help you navigate some of the challenges in communicating concepts to learners who have a range of oral English skills.

The following suggestions are provided to guide you in planning for small-group problem solving.

- Have learners work in mixed-ability groups to solve mathematical word problems. Each learner brings unique information and experience to the group.
- Create word problems that contain the unit vocabulary in real-life scenarios.

Encourage learners to explain and defend their decisions, and question and challenge the rationale of others, as this creates opportunities to use new vocabulary and skills.

Create a Numeracy-Rich Environment

Just as it is important to provide a print-rich environment for literacy development, providing a numeracy-rich environment is important for teaching numeracy. Create an environment in which learners are surrounded by resources and opportunities to learn and apply numeracy skills.

In your instruction, use manipulatives and realia wherever possible, avoiding explaining words with more words. For example, when developing financial literacy skills, using real coins helps learners attach meaning to vocabulary such as quarter, dime, nickel, penny, etc. Providing tangible objects, such as popsicle sticks, buttons, etc. for basic addition and subtraction can help learners grasp and apply numeracy concepts more effectively.

Make every effort to ensure that the learning setting contains the equipment and resources necessary to assist numeracy learning. This list represents an ideal 'shopping' list for an ESL numeracy class. It may not be possible to have all of the items on this list, but aim to provide as many as you can.

For general or everyday use

individual whiteboards	calculators	graph paper
pencils and erasers	highlighters	vocabulary bank templates
counting blocks	2D and 3D shapes	clocks
large place value chart	large vocabulary posters	abacus
measuring equipment: for mass, volume, length, cooking	real coins and some paper money	computer and computer games

For games and activities

playing cards	dice	card games
number flashcards	equation flashcards	

For brainstorming and problem-solving

chart paper	flipchart paper	individual whiteboards
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From the community and banks

advertising flyers	direct mail and bills	newspapers
coupons	cheques	gift cards (empty)
money orders	deposit slips	withdrawal slips
ATM receipts	debit receipts	shopping receipts

For sample numeracy lesson plans and resources targeting the development of financial literacy skills across Phases I, II and III of the ESL Literacy Benchmarks, please access the *Financial ESL Literacy Toolbox* through the ESL Literacy Network (<http://esl-literacy.com>).

SAMPLE: EXCERPT FROM A NUMERACY CURRICULUM

This sample provides an excerpt from a numeracy curriculum developed for the Bridge Program at Bow Valley College, based on the Mathematics Kindergarten to Grade 9 Program of Studies (Alberta Education, 2007).

The Context

This curriculum has been developed to meet the needs of learners aged 18-24, in the Bridge and Youth in Transition programs at Bow Valley College. These programs support learners at risk of not completing high school education, thus at risk of missing out on opportunities for post-secondary studies or career training. In developing the curriculum, it was important to include provincial mathematics outcomes as many learners will transition into further educational and career programs in Alberta, where this knowledge will be required, re-encountered and further developed.

The primary aims of the numeracy component in these programs are to:

- develop English mathematical vocabulary
- address mathematical knowledge and skills gaps
- develop problem-solving skills

Instruction in these programs takes place four hours per week. There are five different levels of classes into which learners are grouped according to their numeracy skills and understanding.

The Curriculum

Each of the five levels targets outcomes adapted from the *Mathematics Kindergarten to Grade 9 Program of Studies*. As LIFE have a range of numeracy understanding that has also been shaped by real life experiences and applications, each of these classes is multi-level.

An intake assessment is used to gauge new learners' levels of numeracy and place them in one of the five classes. At the beginning of every new semester, learners take another placement assessment based on the content of the upcoming semester. These assessments place learners in the most appropriate levels, as it is recognized that all learners have different knowledge and knowledge gaps, and that there is not necessarily a correlation between a learner's literacy and numeracy levels.

As learners are on individual learning paths, rather than in cohorts, it is not feasible to address all aspects of the *Mathematics Kindergarten to Grade 9 Program of Studies*. In developing the curriculum, the decision was made to prioritize three strands, which are offered over three semesters.

- Number and Operations: Semester 1
- Patterns and Data: Semester 2
- Measurement and Geometry: Semester 3

Within each strand, vocabulary development, small group problem solving and mental mathematics are the key areas of focus. In semesters 2 and 3, *number and operations* outcomes are reinforced where appropriate throughout the other strands.

The sample provided here details the *patterns and data* outcomes to be addressed in each of the five leveled classes (or levels). At the beginning of the semester, all learners take a placement assessment based on the upcoming content in order to identify their knowledge and skills gaps.

This version of the curriculum map was piloted in the Bridge Program at Bow Valley College during the 2010/2011 academic year.

Patterns and Data Outcomes: Level 1	
Patterns	<p><i>Use patterns to describe the world and solve problems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify, reproduce, extend and create repeating patterns (two to four elements) using manipulatives, sounds and actions • sort a set of objects using one attribute and explain the sorting rule • translate repeating patterns from one representation to another <p><i>Represent algebraic expressions in multiple ways</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record equalities using the equals sign • describe equality as a balance and inequality as an imbalance, concretely and pictorially (0 to 20)
Data	<p><i>Collect, display and analyze data to solve problems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather and record data about self and others to answer questions

Patterns and Data Outcomes: Level 2

Patterns	<p><i>Use patterns to describe the world and solve problems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• describe, extend, compare and create numerical (to 1000) and non-numerical repeating and increasing patterns using manipulatives, diagrams, sounds and actions• describe, extend, compare and create numerical (to 1000) and non-numerical decreasing patterns using manipulatives, diagrams, sounds and actions• sort objects or numbers using more than one attribute and explain the sorting rule <p><i>Represent algebraic expressions in multiple ways</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate and explain the meaning of equality and inequality concretely and pictorially• record equalities and inequalities using the equal or not equal sign• solve one-step addition and subtraction equations involving a symbol to represent an unknown number
Data	<p><i>Collect, display and analyze data to solve problems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• construct and interpret concrete graphs and pictographs to solve problems• collect first-hand data and organize it using tally marks, line plots, charts and lists to answer questions• construct, label and interpret bar graphs to solve problems

Patterns and Data Outcomes: Level 3

Patterns	<p><i>Use patterns to describe the world and solve problems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify and describe patterns found in tables and charts• translate among different representations of a pattern, such as a table, a chart or concrete materials• represent, describe and extend patterns and relationships, using charts and tables, to solve problems• identify and explain mathematical relationships, using charts and diagrams, to solve problems• determine the pattern rule to make predictions about subsequent elements <p><i>Represent algebraic expressions in multiple ways</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• express a given problem as an equation in which a symbol or letter value is used to represent an unknown number (limited to whole numbers)• solve one-step equations involving a symbol to represent an unknown number
Data	<p><i>Collect, display and analyze data to solve problems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate an understanding of many to one correspondence• construct and interpret pictographs and bar graphs involving many to one correspondence to draw conclusions• differentiate between first-hand and second-hand data• construct and interpret double bar graphs to draw conclusions

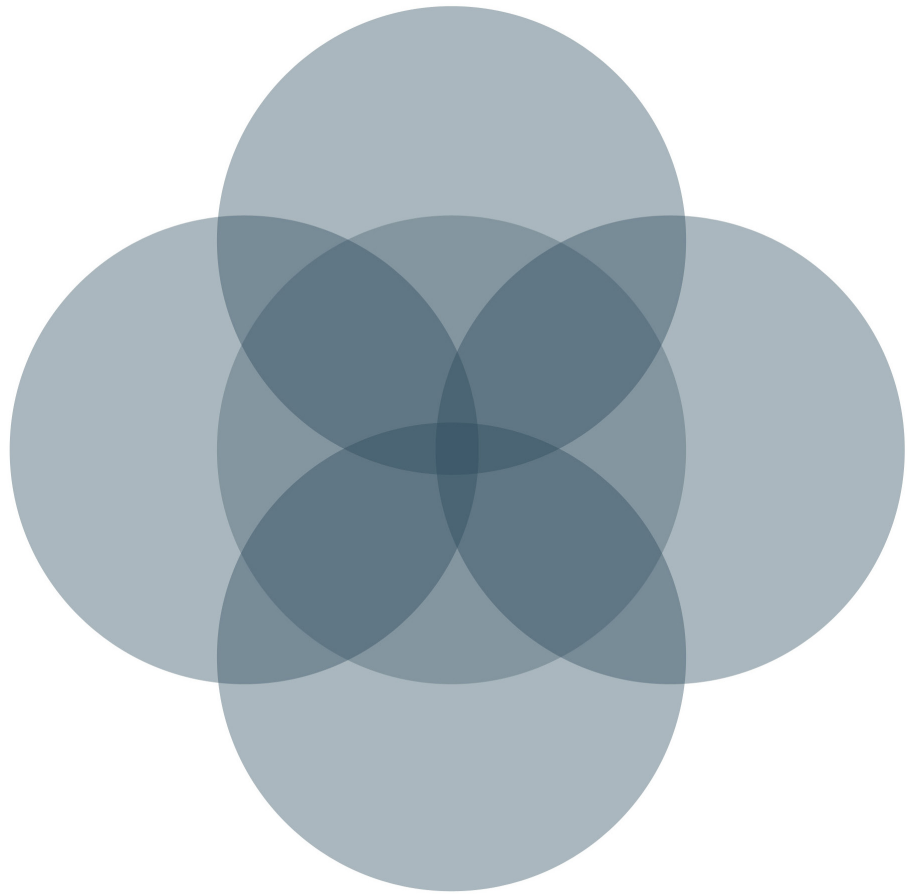
Patterns and Data Outcomes: Level 4

Patterns	<p><i>Use patterns to describe the world and solve problems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• represent and describe patterns and relationships, using graphs and tables <p><i>Represent algebraic expressions in multiple ways</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• represent generalizations arising from number relationships, using equations with letter variables• express a given problem as an equation in which a letter variable is used to represent an unknown number
Data	<p><i>Collect, display and analyze data to solve problems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• create, label and interpret line graphs to draw conclusions• select, justify and use appropriate methods of collecting data, including questionnaires, experiments, databases and electronic media• graph collected data and analyze the graph to solve problems• demonstrate understanding of central tendency (mean, median and mode) and determine the most appropriate measure to report findings• construct, label and interpret circle (pie) graphs to solve problems

Patterns and Data Outcomes: Level 5	
Patterns	<p><i>Use patterns to describe the world and solve problems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpolate and extrapolate graphed data to solve problems
Data	<p><i>Collect, display and analyze data to solve problems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critique ways in which data is presented in circle graphs, line graphs, bar graphs and pictographs • describe the effects of bias, use of language, ethics, cost, time and timing, privacy, cultural sensitivity • select and defend the choice of using either a population or a sample of a population to answer a question • develop and implement a project plan for the collection, display and analysis of data

HELPFUL RESOURCES

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APPENDIX

B

Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework

APPENDIX B: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

Technology is a part of everyday life in Alberta. Using a bank machine, buying transit tickets, using a computer and operating a microwave all require technology skills. Technology skills are key to success in many Albertan contexts, such as adult education, workplace and community life. Computer literacy skills are linked to higher employment and earning rates (Crockett 2002; Veenhof, Clermont & Sciadas 2005). Human Resources and Social Development Canada lists computer use as one of nine Essential Skills, those “skills that people need for work, learning and life” (Conference Board of Canada, 2000; HRSDC).

Possessing the skills to use information and communications technologies (ICT) effectively allows individuals to function in the digital world, much like basic literacy enables various forms of engagement in other parts of everyday life... ICT skills are an integral part of an emerging concept of literacy.”
(Veenhof, Clermont & Sciadas, 2005, p.3)

Effective ESL literacy programs provide instruction that helps develop learners’ technology skills and computer skills.

Depending on their background, learners come to ESL literacy programs with different degrees of proficiency and comfort in technology and computer use. Some learners may be excited to experiment with technology that is new to them, while others may be quite hesitant. The classroom should provide a safe environment where learners can ask questions and practice using different technologies.

Technology and computer skills do not necessarily correlate with literacy skills. Two learners at the same ESL Literacy phase may have very different computer skills. For example, a Phase I ESL literacy class may include:

- a learner who has recently arrived from a small rural village or a refugee camp. He has never used a computer before. He doesn’t understand how or why to use debit and bank machines. He knows how to use the basic 🗑️ functions on his cell phone.
- a learner who has been living and working in Alberta for more than a year. She has very limited keyboarding and software skills, though she is able to use a mouse to access familiar items on the internet (e.g. to listen to news from her country). She frequently uses debit and bank machines, but has trouble with phone systems.

Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta #49
Technology is used to encourage learners to explore and create language, as well as to use language to explore ideas, solve problems, develop new skills, and negotiate and communicate with an expanded audience.

This appendix to the ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework outlines key programming and instructional principles for integrating technology and computer skills in ESL literacy programs.

It also provides a sample progression of computer skills from one ESL literacy program at Bow Valley College and suggests resources for instructors and online resources for learners.

In this section, we separate computer skills and technology skills (e.g. bank machines, phone systems, vending machines, household appliances). Computer skills differ from technology skills in that they require a developmental approach. In order to be able to do basic word processing, emailing or internet searching, learners need to develop an extensive set of skills; many of these skills build upon others.

The purpose of integrating technology and computer skill development into an ESL literacy program is to expand learners' proficiency and familiarity with technology and computers. When technology and computer skill development is integrated, learners become more comfortable and their degree of independence in these areas increases.

In this section, you will find:

- program considerations for integrating technology and computer skills
- classroom considerations for integrating technology and computer skills
- a sample progression of computer skills
- helpful resources for learners
- helpful resources for your program

PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS: INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTER SKILLS

In this section, we highlight several considerations from a programming perspective. These are intended to guide program administrators in the process of incorporating technology and computer skills into your adult ESL literacy curriculum.

Align Approach with Program Purpose and Goals

Learners' technology and computer skills will vary. You will need to identify learners' skills and gaps, and then use this information to prioritize and select the skill areas that will be included in the curriculum. In *Stage 1: Understand Needs* and *Stage 2: Determine Focus* of this framework, program planners are encouraged to thoroughly investigate learners' needs in order to define their purpose, goals and approach. These steps then guide the rest of the curriculum development process.

In the case of computer and technology skills, ask the following questions:

- *What is this program preparing learners for?*
- *What technology skills will learners need when they finish the program?*

When these have been clarified, it will be possible to create learning outcomes for technology and computer skills that are linked to your program's purpose and learners' needs. A sample of a developmental sequence of computer skills is provided at the end of this section.

Next, determine your approach. There are several options for integrating technology and computer skill development into your program. Determine your approach based on:

- learners' needs
- your program purpose and goals
- what is feasible, given the context of your program

Three common approaches are outlined in this section:

- integrate technology into classroom instruction
- provide multi-level computer classes
- provide single-level computer classes

Integrate Technology and Classroom Instruction

In this approach, technology skills are taught in the classroom and are connected with thematic teaching. For example, in the thematic unit “Getting around Calgary”, one class learned how to operate transit ticket vending machines. In another unit on “Healthy Eating”, learners practiced using various kitchen appliances (e.g. blender, microwave, slow cooker) to help them cook nutritious food at home.

Provide Multi-level Computer Classes

In this approach, learners are grouped according to language and literacy level. Most commonly, a class of learners has designated instructional time in a computer lab. Learners often have different skill and comfort levels with computers. The advantage in this approach is that learners have similar language levels, allowing instructors to communicate with learners more consistently. The challenge in this approach is that learners will have very different needs as they develop their computer skills. Beginning learners often need individual assistance, and more advanced learners will require more challenge and different kinds of support. Managing the demands of learners with varying levels of computer skills can be facilitated by providing small class sizes, providing teaching assistants and drawing on volunteer resources.

Provide Single-level Computer Classes

In this approach, learners are grouped according to their technology and computer skill levels. Learners leave their regular class (grouped by language and literacy skills) for focused instruction in computer/technology skills. In this computer/technology class, learners have varying language and literacy levels, but similar computer and technology skills. This allows instructors to focus on systematically building the computer and technology skills of everyone in the class. The challenge in this context is finding ways to communicate information and ideas with learners that have a range of language and literacy levels. In cases where learners share first languages, it is possible to have learners translate and instruct one another.

Integrate Technology & Computer Skill Training Throughout the Program

The development of both technology and computer skills requires explicit instruction, support, extensive practice and opportunities to transfer learning. Learners will need multiple opportunities to practice the technology and computer skills that they are developing. Effective adult ESL literacy programs introduce technology and computer skills at the lowest levels, with appropriate amounts of support. When the skills are introduced early in the program, it is possible to recycle and spiral the skills throughout the program. This provides learners with the greatest chance of increasing their proficiency and independence.

Target Assessment

Learners will develop and use language and literacy skills as they increase their computer and technology skills. It is important to maintain a focus on the technological skills when assessing computer and technology learning outcomes. Ensure that assessment tasks do not involve new vocabulary, grammar or formatting. Effective assessment in this area focuses on what learners can do with technology, not with language.

In the beginning stages of computer skill development the focus is on increasing learners' familiarity and comfort level with computers. As learners progress, the focus is on increasing learners' proficiency and independence with computers. When assessing computer skill development, capture learners' growth in these areas, considering the focus of each stage.

CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS: INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

In this section, we highlight several considerations from an instructional perspective. These are intended to guide adult ESL literacy instructors in the process of incorporating technology and computer skills into their classes.

Build on Learners' Strengths

As in all aspects of ESL literacy instruction, the most effective instruction builds on learners' existing knowledge, skills and preferred learning styles. Many learners have knowledge of and experience with various forms of technology (including computers). Provide learners with opportunities to share their knowledge with others (in their first language when appropriate). This validates learners' experience and provides them with opportunities to share their expertise. If your learners are highly kinesthetic or tactile learners, opportunities for hands-on practice with technology will be particularly important. Bring the technology to class or take learners to places where they can practice.

Build Computer Skills Systematically

Developing computer skills is a process. In order to be able to send an email, create a document or use language-learning software, learners will need to develop foundational computer skills. These include turning on the computer and monitor, selecting items with a mouse, using a keyboard and moving a cursor. It is important not to overwhelm learners with tasks that assume these skills, if learners have not had the time to develop them. Provide learners with simple, meaningful tasks that help them build these foundational skills. The *Computer Skill Development resources for learners* listed at the end of this section provide learners with meaningful tasks that build basic computer skills. A sample developmental sequence of computer skills is also provided at the end of this section.

Model Technology and Computer Use

Using familiar and new technology in the classroom provides learners with a model of learning and applying technological skills. Learners often find it helpful to know that their instructor is constantly learning and applying new skills as well. Make computer skills a regular part of the learning process. Use computers to help deliver material in the class (video clips, images, etc.) and as a tool for learners to improve their language skills and source information. The more learners are exposed to computers, the more comfortable they will feel using them.

Recycle and Practice Extensively

Learners will need time to learn, re-learn and practice computer skills. Just as with literacy and language skills, recycling of skills is necessary. Many learners will not have the opportunity to use computers outside of the learning environment. They will need opportunities to practice before they feel confident with their skills. Learners will benefit from a re-introduction of skills practiced previously at different points throughout their learning.

Increase Technology Skills Through Thematic Instruction

Technology and computer skills will lend themselves to thematic content. For example, in the following themes, technology and computer skill development are clearly linked.

Integrating Technology into Thematic Units	
Theme	Technology / Computer Skill Development
Going Shopping	Using a debit machine
Getting Around Calgary	Using a transit ticket machine
Looking for Work	Creating a basic resume, using a template
Renting a Place	Conducting an online search for rental housing

Whenever possible, provide learners with the opportunity to practice with technology and computer skills that they may use when living in Alberta.

Assess Technology Skills, not Language

When you assess learning outcomes in technology and computer skills, ensure that the assessment doesn't include new elements of language or literacy. Including new vocabulary, grammar or formats requires learners to devote cognitive resources to interpreting these. This can detract from how well learners demonstrate what they can do with technology.

Assessment of technology and computer skills can be achieved through class observations, anecdotal notes, and specifically designed assessment tasks. As learners will be at different stages in their computer skill development, their proficiency should not be evaluated in order to determine specific ESL literacy levels. The purpose of assessment of technology and computer skills is to document progress and determine next steps for learning.

Encourage Experimentation and Celebrate Success

Learners with little or no knowledge of the technology used in everyday interactions in Alberta will need to practice and make mistakes in a safe learning environment. Whenever possible, provide opportunities for learners to experiment with different types of technology in the classroom. Focus on the learning opportunities that arise from making mistakes. When working with computers in class, encourage risk-taking and celebrate small accomplishments.

Expect Learners' Technology Skills to Vary within Literacy Levels

Do not expect learners within a particular ESL literacy level to be homogeneous in their level of technology or computer skills. You may find it helpful to group learners by ability when working with computers. Depending on the range of abilities among your learners, you may need to select separate programs for them to work on. Often, you can start the learners off in a program or on a website and those with more skills will simply move along more quickly than those who need help. If volunteers are available, learners with limited computer skills can benefit greatly from one-on-one assistance. Another strategy is to set aside part of the class for learners to work together. Pair more proficient learners with those who have less developed computer skills so that learners can help each other.

SAMPLE: COMPUTER SKILL DEVELOPMENT

This sample is based on the technology component used in the *Computer-Enhanced ESL Literacy* program at Bow Valley College. This part-time ESL literacy program provides learners with an opportunity to develop language, literacy and computer skills. In this program, computer skills are taught explicitly, with computer lab time provided during each class.

Computer skills do not always correspond with language and literacy levels. The sample provided in this framework outlines a progression of computer skills, across three basic stages: familiarization, development, and application. This chart provides an overview of these three stages and is followed by detailed learning outcomes for each stage.

Overview of Computer Skill Development	
Stage	Description
Familiarization	<p>Learners are being introduced to computers. Their keyboard/mouse, software and internet skills are not yet developed.</p> <p>This stage includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• basic computer skills• basic software skills• introduction to internet skills <p>Focus: Increasing learners' comfort level with/awareness of computers</p>
Development	<p>Learners are becoming more confident when using computers. They are developing specific skills to manage computers and software.</p> <p>This stage includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• computer/software skills• internet skills• introduction to email <p>Focus: Increasing learners' basic computer skill proficiencies</p>
Application	<p>Learners are beginning to use their computer skills to manage information. They are building more sophisticated skills to use computers more effectively and independently.</p> <p>This stage includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• software skills• internet skills• email skills <p>Focus: Increasing learners' independence in using computers</p>

Familiarization Stage

1

Basic Computer Skills:

- name the basic parts of a computer: mouse, monitor, keyboard and earphones
- identify if computer is on or off
- control the mouse: move pointer, left/right click
- distinguish between numbers and letters on keyboard

Internet:

- identify Internet browser with assistance
- open a literacy activity website by clicking on a link with assistance

Software/Program Skills:

- identify software/program icon on desktop with assistance
- click on icon with assistance
- type letters in spelling program with assistance
- copy by typing one word answers in computer activities with assistance
- close and exit software program with assistance

2

Basic Computer Skills:

- name the basic parts of a computer: printer, hard drive, screen, desktop
- turn computer and monitor on/off with assistance
- adjust monitor and keyboard for comfort with assistance
- control mouse: single/double click, drag and drop
- adjust position of mouse on desk, hold correctly with assistance
- identify specific letters and numbers of keyboard

Internet:

- open the Internet using a familiar browser with assistance in identifying the icon
- click on a link with assistance
- click next/back in a website to move between pages with assistance

Software/Program Skills:

- open teacher selected software/program by clicking on desktop icon with assistance
- navigate instructor-selected program with assistance
- type letters and numbers
- type one word answers in computer activities with assistance
- close and exit program/software following a demonstration

3

Basic Computer Skills:

- name the parts of a computer: cd, memory stick, microphone
- turn computer and monitor on/off
- adjust monitor and keyboard for comfort
- control mouse: adjust mouse on desk, hold comfortably
- use basic keys on keyboard: letters, numbers, enter, backspace

Internet:

- open and close Internet browser with assistance
- click on a familiar link to open a website
- navigate through pages (forward and back) following a teacher demonstration

Software/Program Skills:

- open software/program by clicking on desktop icon
- navigate software/program
- type letters in spelling program
- type one word answers
- close and exit software/program

Development Stage

1

Computer/Software Skills:

- open and close a document
- use backspace, enter and space bar keys
- scroll using up/down arrows
- copy relevant information by typing: date, name, address, phone number
- type a simple sentence with assistance

Internet:

- identify a web address with assistance
- open internet using familiar browser
- locate address bar in internet
- type a web address by copying with assistance
- type short answers on ESL Internet site with assistance

Email:

- identify an email address with assistance
- identify headings to be filled in for an email message
- open and read emails using an in-house email system with assistance
- copy email ID and password
- copy and type a simple 1-2 line email

2

Computer/Software Skills:

- retrieve, open and close a document
- scroll using up/down arrows and/or scroll bar
- type information: date, name, address, phone number
- use capitals, symbols and tab key
- type 1-2 sentences with few errors

Internet:

- type a web address by copying
- click on link
- type short answers on ESL Internet site with assistance.
- manage pop-up windows with assistance

Email:

- open and read emails.
- type personal email address with assistance
- log in and out of email account with assistance
- fill in headings appropriately in a new email
- copy and type email ID and password with assistance
- copy and type 2-4 line email

3

Computer/Software Skills:

- open, close and print a document
- scroll using up/down arrows, scroll bar and mouse button
- type relevant personal information
- use capitals, symbols, tab and punctuation appropriately
- type at sentence level with correct spacing, capitalization and punctuation

Internet:

- search for information on a specific site with assistance
- use back and forward commands
- type a web address by copying
- type short answers on ESL internet site
- manage pop-up windows

Email:

- open and read old and new emails unassisted
- type personal email address
- type email ID and password
- log in and out of email account
- copy and type 3-5 line email

Application Stage

1

Software Skills:

- open, save, close and print a document with assistance
- move insertion point using mouse or arrow keys
- highlight text
- use spell check
- use capitals and punctuation with some mistakes and begin to self-correct
- type a paragraph with assistance

Internet:

- identify different browsers used to open Internet: *Netscape, Explorer, Firefox, etc.*
- begin internet search with assistance
- type web address in URL address space with assistance
- register on website with assistance

Email:

- open and read and reply to emails
- delete emails with assistance
- add an attachment with assistance
- type an unfamiliar email address with assistance
- type email ID and password unassisted
- type a short email message with greeting, message and closing with assistance

2

Software Skills:

- open, save, close and print a document with little assistance
- cut, copy and paste with assistance
- use spell and grammar check with assistance
- use capitals and punctuation with some mistakes, self-correct
- type at the paragraph level

Internet:

- use different browsers to open Internet
- complete an internet search with assistance
- navigate a website with assistance
- type web address in URL address space
- register on website following a model
- access online learning tools such as dictionaries

Email:

- delete emails
- distinguish between reply and reply to all with assistance
- add attachments following an example
- type an unfamiliar email address
- type a short email message with greeting, message, and closing following a model

3

Software Skills:

- open, save, close and print a document unassisted
- format text: point size, font and justification
- cut, copy and paste unassisted
- use spell and grammar check
- use capitals and punctuation with few mistakes, self-correct
- type 2-3 paragraphs with correct indentation

Internet:

- use a search engine to do a simple Internet search for information
- navigate a website
- add site to favorites or bookmark a site
- type web address in URL address space
- register on website

Email:

- maintain account by sorting, deleting and saving messages
- add attachments
- add addresses to address book with assistance
- forward an email with assistance
- type an unfamiliar email address
- type an email message with greeting, message and closing

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR LEARNERS: COMPUTER SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Adele's ESL Corner www.members.iinet.net.au/~adelegc/index.html

A site with basic vocabulary, listening and grammar activities with text

Adult and Family Education Links to English Learning Activities www.johnmh.com/esl.html

Links to sites that focus on building ESL literacy skills

Adult Learning Activities – California Distance Learning Project www.cdlponline.org

A site with readings on various topics. Some come with audio and video

Arlington Education and Employment Program REEP World www.reepworld.org/englishpractice/

A site with basic computer skills practice, family, employment and health activities

BBC – Skillswise www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise

A site that includes reading, writing, listening, vocabulary, grammar, numeracy and computer activities

BBC – Webwise – Computer Tutor www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/courses/

A site which focuses on teaching learners basic computer skills; there is spoken instruction with visuals. This site is best for learners with strong listening skills.

EL Civics for ESL Students www.elcivics.com/

A site with lifeskills and civics lessons with simple text and pictures; an American site, but has some universal themes as well

Interesting Things for ESL Students www.manythings.org

A site with spelling games, vocabulary games, hangman and computer-generated paragraphs

Literacy Center Education Network – Play www.literacycenter.net/lessonview_en.htm#

A site with basic letter and word activities; it is designed for children, but the letter activities are not too childish and are useful for adults with low literacy skills

The Internet Picture Dictionary www.pdictionary.com/

A site with single images, categorized by theme

The University of Victoria's Language Teaching Clip Art Library hcmc.uvic.ca/clipart/

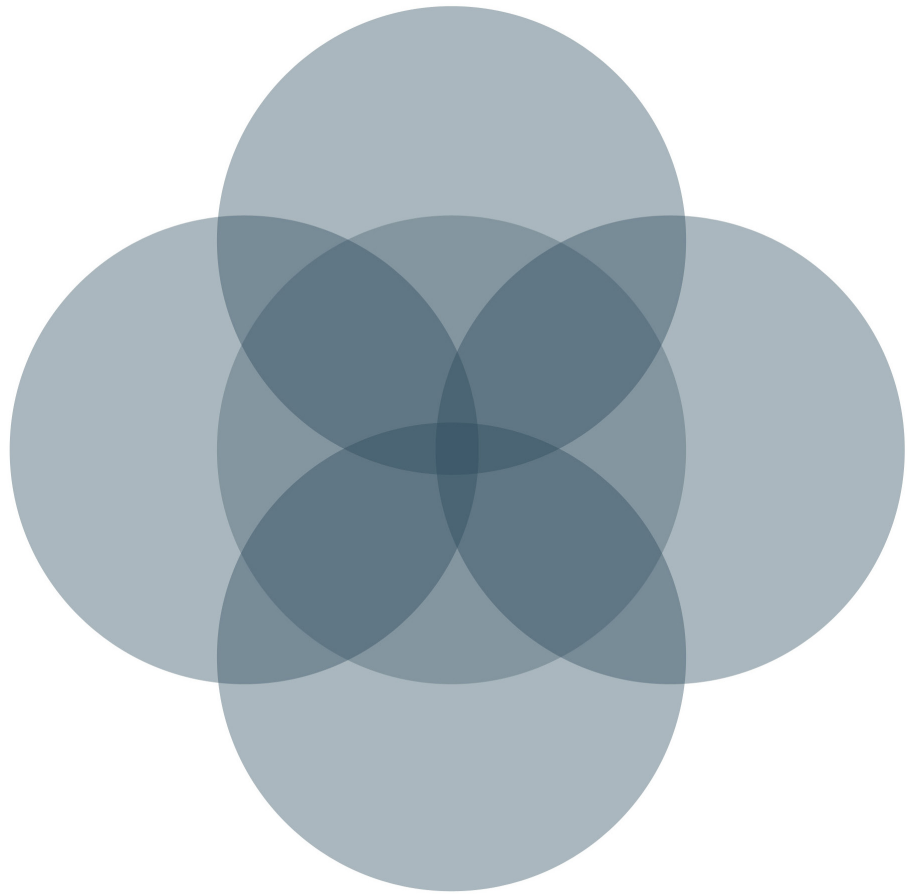
A library of about 3000 clipart images useful for the teaching of vocabulary

Web Learning Projects www.susangaer.com/studentprojects/indextest.html

A site with ESL web-based learning projects ranging from food vocabulary to investigative projects on the cost of living

HELPFUL RESOURCES

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