

**BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES
FOR
ADULT ESL / LINC PROGRAMMING AND INSTRUCTION
IN ALBERTA**

Prepared by
Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL)
for the
Government of Alberta
Advanced Education and Career Development
and
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Citizenship & Immigration

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**BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR
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IN ALBERTA
(PART 1)**

Preface

This document is based on a collaboratively developed set of *Best Practice Guidelines*. (For an account of the consultation process used to arrive at these guidelines, please refer to Appendix A.). The self-study process outlined in this guide is intended for all ESL (English as a Second Language) programs in the province. Based on the premise that reviewing fundamental elements of practice is beneficial, provincial and federal departments responsible for ESL would like to ensure that programming and instruction practices are consistent throughout the province.

It should be looked upon as a tool to help new or established programs improve, develop, and become more responsive to learner needs while at the same time providing a measure of accountability to the public, and to the funders. It must be stated that *the purpose of this particular document is for self-assessment and not as a way of determining funding*. Nevertheless, it seems that programs can expect funding to be tied to an accountability framework sometime in the future.

This set of guidelines has been developed to assist people who are providing English language programs for adult immigrants to Alberta.

Because the needs of the learners vary so widely, no program is able to be all things to all people. There is a variety of programs in the community to meet the wide variety of student needs. When you establish a program or when you evaluate an existing program, you need to decide what the focus of that particular program is and how that program helps your students to fulfill their own purposes for learning English.

These guidelines outline a process for:

- planning your program around the intended focus;
- evaluating the success with which your program meets the needs of the learners;
- providing a measure of accountability to the public and to funders who need to know that programs meet community needs and priorities.

There is a vast body of experience and research in teaching and learning English as a Second Language which has provided a basis for these guidelines for 'best practice'. We look to this body of knowledge to establish standards for the best possible programs in Alberta. Regardless of the nature of your particular program, these are the common principles which can assist you to meet your students' needs.

There are two sections:

Part 1 begins with a brief definition of self-evaluation, followed by the advantages of using such a process. Following that is advice on how to prepare for the process.

This is followed by a set of principles for each Best Practice category.

Part 2 is the self-evaluation document. The step by step description of each Best Practice category includes a checklist and a series of self-study questions.

PART 1

Philosophy of Self-Evaluation

1.0 Self-Evaluation

The distinction between “program standards” and “best practice guidelines” is an important one. While “program standards” implies a form of yardstick based on an ideal, “best practice guidelines” are an attempt to highlight the development qualities inherent in any evaluation process.

Naturally, not all programs are the same. Size, location, and purpose are some of the major ways in which programs differ. The Best Practice Guidelines detailed here have been written with this in mind, but it is to be expected that not all programs will be able to answer the questions to the same depth because of local circumstances.

1.1 Process of Self-Evaluation

Evaluation refers to a judgment of the worth or value of a thing, in this case an ESL program. For a judgment to be made, there must be measurement of some kind against recognized criteria or standards. In this document, these criteria are referred to as Best Practices. Program self-evaluation is based on the premise that reflection and growth are the hallmarks of good practice. The Best Practice Guidelines outlined here are the crucial aspects of ESL programming which make up sound programming and instruction.

The framework for program evaluation in this document is organized according to these headings:

Program philosophy	Staff
Curriculum	Facilities
Program structure	Resources

A thorough program evaluation will take considerable time and energy to complete. First, the areas above are complex and multi-faceted. Second, program evaluation necessarily involves a process which incorporates all stakeholders' points of view. Last, because of its recursive nature, evaluation takes place on a regular basis¹ within a specified period of time.

Evaluation is a recursive process of:

¹ What constitutes "regular" will vary with local circumstances.

Needs assessment This involves gathering data in the area(s) where a program will develop. That information could come from the results of a previous study or may be imposed from outside pressures.

Analysis Data from the assessment is collated in a way which will inform the decision making about the program.

Identification Information from the needs assessment and subsequent analysis make it possible to articulate the need for change indicated by the data.

Action Once the nature of a change is understood, it is possible to specify the steps needed to effect that change.

Evaluation It is important to monitor whether or not the desired change took place. This step naturally leads into another type of needs assessment.

The headings for good practice provide a framework for data collection. Naturally, there are many sources of information which can be included in a program evaluation.

Ideally, data for a program evaluation should be collected from:

- (a) Students
- (b) Teachers
- (c) Administrator(s)
- (d) Support staff
- (e) Multi-faceted performance appraisals:
 - instructors by supervisors,
 - instructors by students,
 - supervisors by instructors,
- (f) Internal, community and other external stakeholders.
- (g) Relevant documentation from the program (e.g., student demographics, drop-out rate, other statistical information, etc.)

The type of information used in an evaluation can either be quantitative or qualitative. The former uses data from Likert scales, statistical studies, and other similar methods. The latter uses non-numerical information from focus groups, individual interviews, observations, case studies, etc. In addition, an evaluation can be based on material from a combination of collection styles: formal (e.g., questionnaires) or informal (e.g., staff meeting).

Over the past two decades, a more qualitative approach to measurement has become recognized. As many programs in ESL vary considerably from one location or situation to another, it is highly inappropriate to measure them all by the same yardstick (i.e., a standardized test of student outcomes). With the advent of a more qualitative approach, came the concept of involving the program's participants in the evaluation process. Both Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)(1985) and Selman (1991) developed self-study guides for program evaluation. These guides look at the various components of a program and discuss strengths and weaknesses in relation to a set of standards or good practice statements. In this way

areas requiring improvement are identified and plans for change can be made. All those involved in the evaluation are participants in the program and ideally come to it with considerable knowledge and understanding of why and how it functions.

A self-evaluation may be comprehensive, comprehensive with special emphases, or it may deal only with specific areas. This study is meant to be comprehensive, although there is nothing to prevent a program from placing special emphasis on any area the participants feel may need more work. In conclusion then, we can say that the purpose of a self-evaluation is two-fold:

1. To determine to what extent a program meets standards or, in this case, Best Practices.
2. To bring about change and development.

1.2 Advantages of Self-Evaluation

There are several advantages to doing a self-evaluation (Kells,1983):

- (a) It provides a useful document for any external evaluator or agent.
- (b) It creates a greater awareness of ESL programs among stakeholders and the organizations or institutions which host these programs.
- (c) It leads to program improvement and provides the basis for future planning.
- (d) It also provides an orientation to the program for any new staff involved in the process, and develops new talents among other staff as a result of assigned responsibilities.
- (e) In addition to enhancing openness, it narrows the gap between personal and organizational goals and stimulates review of records, policies and procedures.

1.3 Preparation for Self-Evaluation

For a self-evaluation to be effective, the participants must all be motivated.

Step 1

The first step is for the coordinator or administrator of a program to share with the participants the nature, advantages, and purpose of a self-study. When everyone has had the opportunity to ask questions, an evaluation committee should be struck involving representation from the instructional staff, the support staff, the administration, the learners, and possibly an outside person. If the program is small (only four or five classes), all the staff should be involved rather than just a few representatives. A committee leader who has good management and human relations skills should be chosen at this time, as well as someone to record what takes place during the sessions/meetings. The leader will be responsible for keeping the rest of the program

informed as to the committee's progress and for inviting feedback from them. The leader may or may not be the coordinator of the program.

Step 2

The second step is to set up an agenda which will include the committee's examination and discussion of the Best Practices. This guide will take you through the Best Practice Guidelines one by one, providing checklists and analytical questions for each. However, before starting the self-evaluation process, it is important that participants know their organization well. To accomplish this, the group must spend at least one session brainstorming their impressions of the program, what its general purpose is, how it operates, and its general condition in terms of strengths, weaknesses, and areas needing review. In other words, this activity should result in the identification of the following:

1. the general purpose of the program.
2. the program structure (i.e. staffing, responsibilities, hours of work, hierarchy, etc.).
3. a description of how the program fits into the institutional hierarchy (if applicable).
4. the average number of learners enrolled in the program.
5. a general description of the learners (i.e. the intended population).
6. a general description of the learners needs.
7. how the program is funded.
8. times of operation of the program (hours, days, and months; length of sessions/terms).
9. liaison with other programs and organizations.

You will also find it helpful to gather together copies of any documents you may need during the evaluation process. These include:

1. the mission statement of the organization,
2. the program philosophy,
3. the curriculum,
4. a list of resources (these may or may not be included in the curriculum),
5. a list of equipment,
6. an organizational chart,
7. the program budget,
8. job descriptions,
9. learner placement tools and procedures, and
10. any evaluations of the program done by learners.

Best Practice Guideline Statements

1.0 Program Philosophy Statement

A program's philosophy guides decisions about curriculum, program structure and evaluation by establishing a clear sense of vision and common purpose. A program philosophy helps to focus regular, critical evaluation and reflection. Regardless of 'labels', a philosophy document should articulate an organization's beliefs, assumptions and goals in a meaningful way.

It should be related to the goals of the larger institution if that is applicable and to the needs of the community.

Program Philosophy Principles

A program philosophy...

1. is demonstrably relevant to adult learners.
2. includes designated participants in a regular process of review.
3. is available upon request and in a form which learners can understand by themselves or with the help of a translator or interpreter.
4. contains:
 - (a) a Mission Statement. A mission statement of an organization outlines the overall intentions of that organization and in so doing delimits its nature and market. A specific program's philosophy should in no way conflict with this statement. For our purposes, a program's Mission statement "defines the arena and answers the questions, 'What is the program for?' and 'How will the world be different as a result of our being in business?'" (Carver, 1990). A mission statement may also contain a statement of values (i.e., the shared values guiding the Mission Statement).
 - (b) a statement of Assumptions. An ESL program must be based on stated assumptions about language learning, language teaching and the interaction between the two. Other factors should be considered: learning styles, adult student needs and diversity of life experience (to name a few).
 - (c) a Program description which
 - (i) identifies the unique aspects of the program.
 - (ii) includes a definition of program's role in the community.
 - (iii) explains the mandate of the program (i.e., the constraints within which a program must operate).
 - (d) Broad program goals. Program goals are usually presented as a series of several clearly written statements. They derive from both the Mission Statement and Values. Program goals:

- (i) should be congruent with intended students' needs and goals.
- (ii) should be achievable within the scope of the program.
- (iii) facilitate the transferability of classroom experience to other institutions.
- (iv) recognize the importance of the relationship between teacher and student.
- (v) are related to institutional goals.

2.0 Curriculum Statement

The curriculum provides the link between the program philosophy and classroom practice. That is, it is a crucial aspect is how assumptions about language learning and language teaching are applied in classroom practice. The curriculum connects 'what you say you do' with 'what you actually do'. A curriculum is not the same as a course outline or syllabus although these are subsumed under it.

A curriculum must specify *learning objectives* and *performance outcomes*. The former tend to be abstract statements stated in pedagogical / androgical terms; the latter, concrete statements related to students' language development which guide any program or student assessment process. The curriculum is an extension of the program philosophy insofar as the learning goals and performance outcomes are 'shaped' by the program philosophy.

The curriculum should be based on a needs assessment. A curriculum also includes statements about course content, teaching methodology, materials and resources. It is relevant to adult learners and consistent with the diversity of experience, learning styles and adult student needs. In addition to the consideration of content, there should be a recursive process of revision which permits the curriculum to change in response to identified needs.

The table below indicates what the connection between a program's philosophy and its classroom practice might look like. The examples are for a relatively high-level class and are meant to be suggestive only. Naturally, the examples will change with different types of classes. It is important to point out that there are many curriculum models to choose from. The 'labels' used below may change depending on the model a particular program uses.

Table 1. *Linking program philosophy with classroom practice (high intermediate)*

Program Philosophy	1. Adults bring a variety of experiences, educational backgrounds and needs to the classroom. These must be taken into account when designing a curriculum etc....
Program Goals	1. Assist students in reaching their educational, vocational, linguistic and, where possible, their personal goals. 2. Provide instruction which assists individuals to become independent learners. etc....
Learning Objectives	1. Students can identify their own learning goals and implement a plan of action to achieve them. 2. Students learn research skills which are relevant to their needs etc....
Performance Outcomes	1.(a) Students will learn to carry out their own self-evaluation. (b) Students will complete a learning log assignment weekly etc.... 2. (a) Students will investigate the registration procedures for the school of their choice. (b) Within a small group, students will compile their information for presentation etc...
Classroom Practice	1. Learning contracts 2. Group work 3. Student presentations etc....

Curriculum Principles

The curriculum...

1. states learning objectives which are
 - (a) appropriate to the mission of the program.
 - (b) relevant to the intended student body.
2. specifies minimum performance outcomes in a way that
 - (a) is meaningful for the intended students and teachers alike,
 - (b) is demonstrable in some way,
 - (c) indicates to what extent the curriculum can be negotiated and
 - (d) is flexible enough to accommodate diversity.
3. provides for open, regular and equitable evaluation of student progress.
4. addresses methodology in a way which is congruent with program philosophy, materials, learning objectives and other curricular elements.
5. is flexible to meet changing student needs.
6. addresses the cultural dynamics of the community.
7. facilitates an understanding of community resources (e.g., legal aid, settlement services, health care, educational resources, etc.) and access to them.
8. is available upon request.

A curriculum renewal process...

1. is based on a regular planning and review cycle which:
 - (a) includes a review of classroom practice and its influence on curriculum.
 - (b) seeks input from learners, teachers, administrators, community representatives and employers as appropriate.
 - (c) acknowledges students' issues and changing community needs.
 - (d) includes linguistic proficiency as well as other learner goals.
2. supports innovation and growth.

3.0 Program Structure Statement

The program structure creates the environment which facilitates a specified service to a particular student body. Key areas under this heading are personnel management, program co-ordination, daily administration, financial management, program development and the administrator(s).

Program Structure Principles

3.1 Personnel management...

1. is based on a clear organizational structure which
 - (a) reflects a clear decision making process and
 - (b) specifies the relationships between all participants in the program.
2. provides written job descriptions and updates for all staff.
3. provides a written personnel policy which contains reference to a grievance procedure, layoff policy, etc.
4. establishes clear, fair and written criteria and procedures for evaluation.
5. actively promotes growth in all staff through access to professional development.
6. provides a policy for volunteer management (e.g., selection, training, expectations, support, recognition and supervision) where appropriate.
7. provides proactive leadership.
8. views staff as a team.

3.2 Program co-ordination..

1. provides for orderly placement and intake.
2. allows for demonstrable continuity in that
 - (a) students know how they 'move' through the program and
 - (b) students are aware of 'where they are' in the program at any given time.
3. provides cross-cultural contact within the program.
4. maintains an appropriate student-teacher ratio.
5. provides some form of program orientation for new students and staff.
6. provides information about
 - (a) eligibility for the program,
 - (b) alternative programs.
7. facilitates referral to community support services (e.g., counselling, legal aid, health care, etc.) for instructors and students as appropriate.
8. clearly articulates a plan for program evaluation.
9. demonstrates a marketing and recruitment plan.

3.3 Daily administration...

1. establishes accurate, current and confidential records management.
2. clearly specifies how administrative policies are realized in practice through understandable day-to-day office procedures.
3. adheres to current copyright legislation.

4. ensures appropriate working conditions for achieving program goals.

3.4 Financial management...

1. attempts to ensure financial stability of program.
2. attempts to maintain salary levels comparable to those in similar programs.
3. provides a clearly stated refund policy (where applicable).

3.5 The administrator...

1. is designated specifically for the ESL program.
2. has a background in teaching English as a second language.
3. ideally, belongs to a professional teaching English as a second language association.
4. supports and encourages innovation through quality programming and staffing.
5. advocates on behalf of the program, its teachers, students and/or support staff when necessary.
6. is accountable to internal, community and external stakeholders.
7. establishes linkages to the community, other service providers and the profession which are consistent with program goals.
8. demonstrates current knowledge about classroom practice and theory.
9. possesses skills in crisis intervention, problem solving and conflict resolution.

4.0 Staff Statement

Staff includes teaching staff (i.e., instructors, tutors, aides) and support staff (i.e., secretaries, office managers, counselors, advisors). Qualifications for all positions are available and are demonstrably suitable for the program. Qualifications for teaching staff must not compromise the professionalism of the TESL field.

In this context, ATESL has developed a 'definition' of professionalism in the form of accreditation guidelines².

Staff Principles

1. Selection criteria relating to qualifications and experience are available upon request.
2. All staff are demonstrably appropriate to the program.
3. Teaching staff are members of a professional TESL association.
4. Staff reflects the cultural diversity of the community (where possible).

5.0 Facilities

² For more information, contact an ATESL representative.

Facilities consist of the physical site, instructional and support equipment. All of these should be appropriate for the program and consistent with the goals of the program.

Facilities Principles

1. Access to the program's location is not a barrier to attendance. This includes a program's location, availability of public transport and access for the disabled.
2. Classroom and office facilities are
 - (a) appropriate for adults, and
 - (b) meet local health & safety standards.
 - (c) socially and culturally appropriate to particular groups of learners (e.g., devout Muslim women should be taught in their homes not in a public institution.)
3. All instructional and office equipment (includes audio visual) is
 - (a) appropriate to program,
 - (b) available to all staff during operating hours,
 - (c) maintained in working order, and
 - (d) reasonably current.
4. Designated self-study and/or common area is appropriate to the program.
5. Teaching staff has access to a common workspace.
6. There is reasonable access to other facilities (e.g., library, childcare, etc) where appropriate.
7. Classrooms have a black/white board or equivalent.
8. There is access to printing services.

6.0 Resources Statement

Resources are the "tools of the trade" in that they provide necessary support for teachers and students to further the learning process. They can be commercial, teacher- or student-generated and may also include 'human resources' such as guest speakers. They should provide a variety of learning experiences for students in a way which is consistent with program goals. Teaching staff should have input into decisions about what resources to purchase.

Resource Principles

Resources...

1. are up-to-date and relevant to
 - (a) general program goals and objectives and
 - (b) students' interests.
2. conform to copyright law.
3. contain references to potential alternatives or supplemental sources.
4. provide a variety of learning experiences in all skill areas.
5. are available for both professional development and lesson preparation.
6. provide Canadian and local content (where possible).
7. are accessible to students after hours (where possible).

**BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR
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(PART 2)**

**Best Practice Guidelines
Self Evaluation Guide**

Reporting the results

Throughout this self-study process, the recorder should maintain an orderly file containing all findings and comments. For each category, the strengths and the weaknesses of the program should be identified and stated clearly. These should be followed with a list of recommended changes and accompanied by both a short term and a long term plan for implementing these changes. Specify exactly when and how these changes will take place, and who will be involved. This report can then be used as a document to share with all participants in the program as a first step in bringing about change.

1.0 Program Philosophy

A program's philosophy guides decisions about curriculum, program structure and evaluation by establishing a clear sense of vision and common purpose. A program philosophy helps to focus regular, critical evaluation and reflection. Regardless of 'labels', a philosophy document should articulate an organization's beliefs, assumptions and goals in a meaningful way.

It should be related to the goals of the larger institution if that is applicable and to the needs of the community.

Program Philosophy Checklist

- the institution's Mission Statement (if applicable).
- the program's Mission Statement / Philosophy.
- a statement of the program's values.
- a statement of the assumptions about language learning and teaching upon which the program is based.
- the broad program goals.
- the program's role in the community.
- statements about the program's mandate which include
 - a description of the intended participants
 - a description of the needs being addressed
 - a description of any constraints within which the program must operate

Program Philosophy Self-Study Questions

1. a. Where is the Philosophy Statement for your program kept?
b. Who can access it?
c. How are the stakeholders made aware of its existence and content?
d. Are the learners aware of the philosophy?
e. If so, how is it made available to them and in what form? That is, is it understandable? (e.g., is it written in English they can understand or translated into their first languages?)
2. a. How are the general goals of the program compatible or consistent with the Mission Statement of the institution and/or the institution's goals?
b. How are these goals congruent with the intended learners' needs and goals?
3. How do the assumptions about language learning and teaching take into account such things as the diversity of life experience, learning styles and student needs among adult learners?
4. When or how often is the philosophy reviewed, who participates in this review, and why?

2.0 Curriculum

The curriculum provides the link between the program philosophy and classroom practice. That is, it is a crucial aspect of this is how assumptions about language learning and language teaching are applied in classroom practice. The curriculum connects 'what you say you do' with 'what you actually do'. A curriculum is not the same as a course outline or syllabus although these are subsumed under it.

A curriculum must specify *learning objectives* and *performance outcomes*. The former tend to be abstract statements stated in pedagogical / androgogical terms; the latter, concrete statements related to students' production which guide any program or student assessment process. The curriculum is an extension of the program philosophy insofar as the learning goals and performance outcomes are 'shaped' by the program philosophy.

The curriculum should be based on a needs assessment. A curriculum also includes statements about course content, teaching methodology, materials and resources. It is relevant to adult learners and consistent with the diversity of experience, learning styles and adult student needs. In addition to the consideration of content, there should be a recursive process of revision which permits the curriculum to change in response to identified needs.

Curriculum Checklist

- statement of learning objectives and performance outcomes for each level or class.
- course content for each level.
- statements about methodology.
- statements about materials and resources.
- statements about ongoing and final evaluation of student progress.
- statements about the curriculum review process.

Curriculum Self-Study Questions

1. On what form of needs assessment is your curriculum based?
2. a. How are the broad objectives relevant to the needs of the intended learners?
b. Explain how the objectives are compatible with the philosophy of the program.
3. a. How was the content determined? Who had input into this process and why?
b. How is the content appropriate for the stated objectives in each level?
c. In what way does the content take into account the diversity of experience, learning styles, and needs of the adult learners in the program?
d. To what extent can the content be negotiated? Explain.
4. a. Describe the methodology employed in this program.
b. How is this methodology consistent with the objectives of the program?
c. How is this methodology appropriate for the content of this program?
d. How is the methodology consistent with the principles of language learning and teaching outlined in the program philosophy?
5. a. How is learner performance measured?
b. Give the rationale for this measurement, explaining how it relates to the objectives and content.
6. If applicable, how does the curriculum address the cultural dynamics of the community and facilitate understanding of and access to community systems (legal aid, health care, settlement services, etc)
7. How is your curriculum made available for stakeholders to read?
8. a. How often is the curriculum reviewed, who is involved, and why?
b. How is the appropriate input necessary for review collected (input from learners, teachers, administrators, community representatives, employers, etc.)?
c. During this process, how do you take into account learners' changing needs, changing community needs, and students' issues as they arise?
d. What are some of the recent changes or innovations you have implemented as a result of curriculum review?

3.0 Program Structure

The program structure creates the environment which facilitates a specified service to a particular student body. Key areas under this heading are personnel management, program co-ordination, daily administration, financial management, program development and the administrator(s).

3.1 Personnel management.

Personnel Management Checklist

- an organizational chart / description of organizational structure.
- job descriptions.
- a written personnel policy.
- written criteria for staff evaluation.
- a written policy for volunteer management (where applicable).

Personnel Management Self-study

1. Using the organizational chart / description, identify the relationships between all participants in a program.
2. What is the decision making process as reflected in this chart?
3. What means does the program use to provide the staff with information regarding their evaluation, their job descriptions, and the grievance procedure (i.e. the personnel policy)?
4. What rationale is behind the criteria used to evaluate the instructors and those chosen to provide input into this evaluation?
5. In what way does the program promote or facilitate professional development? Give examples.
6. How is the policy for volunteer management communicated to the volunteers and others who may be working/studying with them?
7. a. Describe the management style within the program. Explain how this style works to the program's benefit.
b. What changes in management style do you think could further benefit the program?
8. Can you describe or explain recent changes or innovations which have come about as a result of the administrator, staff and students working together?

3.2 Program co-ordination

Program Co-ordination Checklist

- description of intake and placement processes.
- information for the students about the program
- information for the students and instructors about:
 - access to / eligibility for the program
 - counseling
 - alternative programs
 - other support services for instructors and students
- a plan for program evaluation.
- a marketing and recruitment plan.

Program Co-ordination Self-study

1. a. Describe the student intake and placement process.
b. How are students made aware of their place in the program and how they move through it? (orally, in writing, in English, in a first languages, etc.).
2. a. What are the program's expectations of the students?
b. How are they made aware of these expectations?
3. a. Describe your orientation process for new students. What information are they provided with during the orientation?
b. How is this information conveyed to those whose English proficiency is low?
c. If not in the orientation, how are potential students made aware of eligibility for the

- program and alternate programs which may be more appropriate for them?
4. What are your maximum class sizes? If they are larger than 12 for beginning levels and 20 for intermediate or higher levels, give your rationale.
 5. How does the program facilitate referral to community support for both instructors and learners when appropriate?
 6. How are the learners and instructors made aware of the program evaluation plan?
 7.
 - a. How does the program market itself and recruit new students?
 - b. Does any of the program advertising contain statements which might be misleading or misinterpreted? If so, how could you re-word them?

3.3 Daily administration...

Daily Administration Checklist

- policy & procedures manual.

Daily Administration Self-study

1. Describe your records management system for students and staff.
2.
 - a. To which records do the instructors have access? (e.g., student files)
 - b. What types of information do they provide that is useful to the instructors?
 - c. What additional information would be useful?
3. What information is kept on staff? How is this information used?
4.
 - a. How is current copyright legislation conveyed to your staff?
 - b. What means do you use to ensure that copyright legislation is followed? (e.g., purchase of class sets, texts with permission to copy, etc.)
5. Explain how the working conditions or environment are conducive to achieving program goals.

3.4 Financial management...

Financial Management Checklist

- the salary scale or grid for instructional staff.
- a statement of payment and refund policies.

Financial Management Self-study

1. What steps are taken to try to ensure some type of financial stability for the program?
2.
 - a. How was the salary scale determined?
 - b. How does the salary scale compare to that of other programs? If there is a significant difference, why?
3. How are the public, learners and staff made aware of the fee payment and refund policy in a way that is easily understood?

3.5 The administrator...

Administrator Check list

- the administrator's resume.

Administrator Self-study

1. Give examples of ways in which the administrator has supported or encouraged innovation in the program.
2. Give examples of how the administrator represents and supports the program and its stakeholders in both the larger community and the organization or institution in which it is housed.
3. Give an example of how the administrator used his/her skills in a crisis or conflict situation. Was the problem situation successfully resolved? Why/why not?
4. What recent forms of professional development or upgrading has the administrator participated in? How have these been of benefit to the program?

4.0 Staff

Staff includes teaching staff (i.e., instructors, tutors, aides) and support staff (i.e., secretaries, office managers, counselors, advisors). Qualifications for all positions are public information and are demonstrably suitable for the program. Qualifications for teaching staff must not compromise the professionalism of the TESL field.

Staff Checklist

- Statement of selection criteria for new staff.
- Evidence of teaching staff membership in a professional TESL organization.

Staff Self-study

1. Discuss the qualification requirements of those working within the program. How are they appropriate to the program?
2. In what ways does your staff reflect the cultural diversity of the community?

5.0 Facilities

Facilities consist of the physical site, instructional and support equipment. All of these should be appropriate for the program and consistent with the goals of the program.

Facilities Self-study

1. Explain how your facilities are convenient and accessible for the learners?
2. How are your facilities culturally and socially appropriate to your particular group of learners?
3. a. What instructional equipment do you have and how does it meet the needs of the program?
b. What other types of equipment would be of benefit to the program?
4. What office equipment do you have? How is it used?
5. Do students have access to a phone? If not, how can they be reached in an emergency?
6. Is a self-study area provided in your program? If not, please give your reasons.
7. a. Is there a common area for students to have their breaks and lunch?

- b. If not, where do the students go during those times? Does this present any problems?
8. Where and how is the copying or printing done for the instructors?
9. What other facilities do your students have access to (e.g. library, childcare, etc.)? How do these fit in with the goals of the program?

6.0 Resources

Resources are the "tools of the trade" in that they provide necessary support for teachers and students to further the learning process. They can be commercial, teacher- or student-generated and may also include 'human resources' such as guest speakers. They should provide a variety of learning experiences for students in a way which is consistent with program goals. Teaching staff should have input into decisions about what resources to purchase.

Resources Checklist

- a comprehensive list of all available resources.

Resources Self -Study

1. How are your resources relevant to your program goals and objectives? Give examples.
2. How are the resources relevant to the needs and interests of the learners? Give examples.
3. Explain how your resources provide a variety of learning experiences in the different skill areas.
4. How do your resources relate to your recommended teaching approach/methodology?
5. How are your resources catalogued?
6. Where are the resources kept? Is this an easily accessible location? Explain.
7. Are the students allowed to borrow these resources? If not, why?
8.
 - a. Which resources are available for professional development or teacher reference?
 - b. How are the instructors made aware of the existence of these books?
 - c. What is the "borrowing" policy?
 - d. Identify any personal or program changes brought about as a result of these resources.

APPENDIX

Background

In the spring, 1992 the federal government implemented a new language training policy for newcomers to Canada entitled LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada). More money was made available for language instruction to include immigrants who are not employment destined. (In the past, the majority of individuals eligible for language instruction had been destined for the labour market.) A substantial number of private schools as well as smaller agencies and organizations began competing for funds that originally went almost entirely to provincial institutions.

There was growing concern on the part of ATESL (Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language) about the quality of programs and whether the learners were receiving adequate instruction. In the summer of 1992, ATESL began lobbying the provincial government, under whose jurisdiction education falls, to establish minimum program standards. ATESL itself proposed ten guidelines for these standards in its fall, 1992 newsletter. Starting in September, 1992 Alberta Career Development and Employment researched the area of standards for ESL programs. A draft of recommended standards was completed in March 1993.

In January 1994, Advanced Education & Career Development (AECD), Language Training Programs and Citizenship & Immigration, LINC Program contracted ATESL to build on the work from the "Program Standards" document. The task was to develop a set of *Best Practice Guidelines* for ESL programs across the province. The project terms of reference were to:

1. produce a document which defines those essential elements of good ESL programming and practice.
2. detail best practice elements which include a discussion of what they are, how they can be achieved, and what is important about them.
3. include a form for self-assessment which can be used by ESL providers.
4. establish focus groups with representation from ATESL, public institutions, community based organizations, and the private sector.
5. produce a document which would have official endorsement from ATESL.
6. recommend procedures for implementation and monitoring of guidelines.

Consultation Process

Focus group (Calgary & Edmonton)

1. Articulate short, concise descriptors of the *Best Practice* headings.
2. Specify the importance of the heading.
3. Brainstorm a list of indicators. In other words, "How do we know a program has a *philosophy*?"

Focus group (Lethbridge)

1. Using the *Best Practice* headings, what are your expectations for minimally good practice in ESL programming? In other words, what would you expect to see if you were responsible for evaluating a particular program?
2. Having established some expectations, what indicators would you look for?

Conference & Individual calls

1. Is there anything that does not make sense?
2. Is anything missing?
3. Would you change anything?

Overview of Results

The project began with discussions around these headings: program philosophy, administration, organization, facilities, equipment, curriculum, materials, awareness, staff and program evaluation. Initial descriptions were built from the sources in the *Program Standards* document and the focus group meetings in Calgary and Edmonton. Subsequent revisions from the Lethbridge and telephone meetings resulted in some substantial reorganization of the essential elements for 'best practice'.

Calgary Friday, February 4, 1994

Carolyn Dieleman	Alberta Advanced Education & Career Development
Glenn Ennis	Medicine Hat College
Sharon George	Alberta Vocational College
Tara Holmes	Calgary Board of Education
Shaheen Jeraj	Columbia Institute
Peggy MacDonald	YWCA
regrets	
Lynette Tampe	Alberta Vocational College
Kuldip Thind	Calgary IDEAS

Edmonton Monday, February 7, 1994

Maureen Cook	Connections Language Centre
Jim Critchley	Alberta Vocational College
Tracey Derwing	ATESL
Carolyn Dieleman	Advanced Education & Career Development
Judy Durocher	Canada Immigration
Ana Maria Fantino	Catholic Social Services
Jan Fix	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Liz Karra	ATESL
Nancy Peters	Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Shirley Phillips	Edmonton Catholic Schools
Virginia Sauvé	English Language Professionals
Gayle Taylor	Canada Employment Centre

Lethbridge

Glenn Ennis
Elma Guinto
Judy Hasinoff
Nan Kornelson

regrets

Kathy Woolfrey

Monday, February 14

Medicine Hat College
Community Volunteer Association
Lethbridge Community College
University of Lethbridge

Conference call #1

Sandra Boyd
Margaret Chandler
Susan Crandall
Honour Sauvé

Thursday, March 3, 1994 (8:45 am)

Further Education, Separate School Board
Calgary Catholic Immigration Service
Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
Lethbridge Immigrant Settlement Assoc.

Conference call #2

Clint Anderson
Rosalie Banko

Thursday, March 3, 1994 (9:45 am)

Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
English Language Program, U of A

Individual Call

Diane McKee

Friday, March 4, 1994 (8:45 am)

Fort McMurray YMCA

Conference call #3

Gary Pearce
Salim Sindhu
John Taplin

Friday, March 4, 1994 (9:45 am)

Keyano College, Fort McMurray
Calgary IDEAS
English Language Centre, U of L

Individual Call

Ginny Bradbury Red Deer College

Friday, March 4, 1994 (3:45 pm)

Edmonton

Sylvia Begin
Maureen Cook
Jim Critchley
Tracey Derwing
Carolyn Dieleman
Ana Maria Fantino
Jan Fix
Liz Karra
Nancy Peters
Shirley Phillips
Virginia Sauvé
Gayle Taylor

Friday, March 18, 1994 (1:00 pm)

ATESL
Connections Language Centre
Alberta Vocational College
ATESL
Advanced Education & Career Development
Catholic Social Services
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
ATESL
Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Edmonton Catholic Schools
English Language Professionals
Canada Employment Centre

Calgary

Tara Holmes
Peggy MacDonald
Lynette Tampe

Monday, February 21, 1994

Calgary Board of Education
YWCA
AVC

regrets

Sharon George

Alberta Vocational College

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Selman, M. (1990). *Adult ESL program evaluation guide*. Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. Victoria

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. (1985). *Statement of core standards for language and professional programs*. Washington: TESOL.