

ATESL Best Practices Checklist for Skills and Language for Work

Focused EAL instruction addresses Skills for Success/Essential Skills, pragmatics, and intercultural competence. It is transparently connected to the language and skills needed in the workplace.

Use the ATESL Best Practices Checklists:

For Individuals

- To identify areas to consider when taking on a new, unfamiliar responsibility
- To reflect on your own practice
 - What am I doing well?
 - What am I doing that could be improved?
 - What am I not doing that I could or should be doing?

For Professional development and teacher training

- To identify goals to aspire to and specific steps to take to meet those goals
- To focus discussion after class observations
- To focus team meeting discussions
- To develop workshops/presentations

For Programs

- To identify strengths that distinguish your program (e.g., to justify the worth/value of the program to the broader institution, to funders, to learners, to community stakeholders)
- To identify gaps in a program or practice (e.g., to identify constraints to address, to identify initial and ongoing actions, to determine a focus for professional development, to justify requests for funding)

71. Instructional staff have the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to prepare learners for the workplace.

- Instructors develop familiarity with the Skills for Success/Essential Skills (ES) framework, ES resources, pragmatics, and intercultural communicative competence. Training opportunities orient instructors to some of the following:
 - The Skills for Success/Essential Skills framework and skills (communication, reading, writing, digital, numeracy, adaptability, collaboration, creativity and innovation, and problem solving)
 - The Canadian Language Benchmarks-Essential Skills comparative framework
 - Resources to help learners do the following:
 - Explore workplace options
 - Assess their essential skills and identify skills gaps
 - Develop transferable skills
 - Identify learning objectives and goals
 - Identify authentic language tasks connected to target occupations
 - Practice/perform authentic workplace communication tasks
 - Develop the pragmatic competence needed for success in the Canadian workplace
 - Develop the intercultural communication knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed for success in multicultural workplaces
 - Develop vocabulary and language skills related to target occupations
 - Find employment counselling and assistance beyond the classroom
- Instructors model the Skills for Success/Essential Skills, pragmatics, and intercultural competence needed for success in the Canadian workplace.
- Instructors themselves have, or are developing, the occupation-specific workplace skills and knowledge in which they are training learners.

72. EAL Instructors deliberately target the development of Skills for Success/Essential Skills (ES) in language instruction.

- Instructors introduce learners to the Skills for Success framework.
- Instructors make the Skills for Success explicit by pointing out how in-class tasks use skills that transfer to the workplace.
- Learners are referred to Skills for Success assessment and learning resources (e.g., Essential Skills mobile app; Essential Skills Quebec; Essential Skills Indicator; Essential Skills Can Do checklists).
- Instructors use ES profiles, NOCs, and OLAs to identify authentic language tasks that are connected to learners' occupations; learners use those same resources to explore workplace options.
- Instructors plan lessons that contextualize Communication, Reading, Writing, and Document Use tasks in the workplace.
- Instructors provide support and modelling to help learners develop the Skills for Success needed to perform workplace tasks.
- Instructors point out the transferability of Skills for Success tasks from one workplace to another.
- Language learning activities include opportunities for learners to develop, practice and demonstrate Adaptability, Collaboration, Creativity and Innovation, and Problem Solving.
- Recognizing that learners may have very different skill levels for numeracy and digital literacy, strategies for multilevel instruction are used when embedding these skills into language lessons, for example:
 - Grouping learners according to different levels and assigning different tasks or providing different amounts of scaffolding to each group
 - Designing activities where those with higher skill levels can apply and share their expertise

73. Learners develop the pragmatic competence and intercultural communicative competence necessary to develop and maintain effective relationships in the Canadian workplace.

- Learning activities develop learners' ability to make appropriate choices in terms of vocabulary, tone, register, grammar, intonation patterns, etc., given the context, the participants, the intention, and the task.
- Learning activities develop learners' abilities to understand the intention and effect of functional language and politeness strategies, as well as to effectively use these in spoken and written communication (e.g., requests, suggestions, apologies, accepting and declining invitations, compliments, instructions, and explanations, etc.).
- Learning activities provide opportunity for learners to do some of the following:
 - Compare and contrast similarities and differences in values, beliefs, behaviour patterns, expectations, etc., in own culture(s) vs. Canadian workplace culture(s)
 - Reflect on their personal choices regarding the balance to strike between acculturating to a workplace culture and preserving one's own culture
 - Develop attitudes of curiosity, respect for other ways of being, and appreciation for diversity
 - Notice, analyze, explore, reflect on, and engage with instances of intercultural miscommunication and/or discomfort/dissonance in the workplace

74. Language programs designed specifically to train learners for the workplace (e.g., English in the Workplace; English for Specific Purposes; Language for Employment Training, Safety, and PPE; and bridging programs to professional training) reflect labour market needs, provide clear pathways, and are transparently connected to the language and skills needed in the targeted workplace(s).

- Workplace-focused courses reflect and respond to labour market needs as identified by the following:
 - The Government of Canada
 - Alberta Works and other provincial or territorial employment standards
 - City/municipality employment needs updates
 - Professional/trades organizations
 - Educational faculties (e.g., for bridging programs)
- Learner pathways to achieving learning and employment-related goals are clear and specific.
- Curriculum developers make and maintain authentic connections with workplaces to understand the stakes and identify authentic tasks.
- Curriculum outcomes and materials/tasks are based on assessment of the language and essential skills needed for success in the target workplace.
- Learners have the opportunity to identify essential skills and language gaps, and to develop goals to meet those gaps.
- Occupational and language training supports learners in achieving their individual goals towards successful employability.
- Task-based activities reflect the language and skills required in the target workplace, for instance, through the following:
 - Opportunities to learn *and use* work-related vocabulary
 - Customized lesson plans on specific work-based training
 - Use of authentic workplace documents (e.g., incident reports, emails, application forms); materials (e.g., WHMIS and SDA toolkits); and equipment (e.g., cash registers, weighing scales, computer, trades tools)
 - Occupation-specific role-plays and simulations
- Learners have the opportunity to experience authentic workplaces (e.g., through field trips, work placements, volunteer opportunities, and/or virtual tours).
- Learners encounter people in their targeted occupations (e.g., through resource sharing, guest speakers, informational interviews, field trips, career mentoring, job shadowing, and volunteer experience).
- When possible, learners have the opportunity to gain recognized workplace training and/or credentials (e.g., WHMIS, first aid & CPR, workplace safety, MS Excel, professional certificates, etc.) in a supported language environment.
- The program provides the following training supports as needed:
 - Appropriate learning spaces for specific training needs (e.g., trades laboratory, kitchen space, etc.)
 - Relevant equipment, training materials, and supplies such as:
 - Cash register machines
 - Portable kitchen cart/storage
 - Training supplies storage
 - Cubby bin/stackable bins
 - Diaper changing tables
 - Housekeeping and cleaning tools

