

ATESL Best Practices Checklist for 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion

2SLGBTQ+ learners and staff are safe, welcomed, included, protected, and supported.

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)

99. Program policies and practices ensure the safety of 2SLGBTQ+ learners and staff, and protect their rights and freedoms.

- Program policies and practices acknowledge that both learners and staff have the following rights and freedoms:
 - To be addressed by the names/pronouns of their choice
 - To privacy of information related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression
 - To talk about and express their sexual orientation and gender identity (e.g., through choices in clothing, hair styles)
 - To be free from discrimination, bullying, and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression
 - To establish and join voluntary student organizations such as Gay-Straight Alliances (or Gender-Sexuality Alliances) and participate in events that foster 2SLGBTQ+ awareness
 - To see themselves reflected in course content, posters, messaging, advertisements, etc.
- Program policies outline clear anti-bullying expectations and zero tolerance for violence and discrimination towards sexual and gender minorities.
- Instances of discrimination, bullying, and violence targeting 2SLGBTQ+ learners or staff are taken seriously, investigated, and dealt with according to clear processes.
- The program ensures the staff's protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- The program considers individuals from the 2SLGBTQ+ community in the hiring and promotion processes equally without bias.
- The program makes it safe for sexual and gender minority teachers to be as authentic/out/open as they wish to be.

100. The program develops and promotes a culture of respect and acceptance for learners and staff, with explicit reference to sexual and gender minorities.

- Program policies, course outlines, student guidebooks, and diversity statements include an explicit statement of welcome to all learners, including sexual- and gender-diverse learners.
- Program policies, course outlines, student guidebooks, and diversity statements demonstrate clear anti-bullying expectations and zero tolerance for violence and discrimination towards sexual and gender minorities.
- Forms, waivers, and other communications directed to learners are gender-neutral and avoid heteronormative or binary/cisnormative assumptions.
- There is a visible message of support leading to inclusion posted on websites and in hallways, information boards, designated walls, classrooms, etc.
- 2SLGBTQ+ learners have access to school facilities such as washrooms, locker rooms, and change rooms that align with their gender identity.

101. The program supports staff in their ongoing professional development related to 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion.

- Onboarding training includes an orientation to program expectations regarding inclusive culture and practices, with explicit reference to the rights, support, safety, and inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.
- Workshops and training, offered by 2SLGBTQ+ individuals/support groups/educators, are provided that address some of the following:
 - The history of the 2SLGBTQ+ community in Canada
 - The equal rights and freedoms of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in Canadian law
 - Appropriate language to use
 - Stories of 2SLGBTQ+ immigrant and refugee learners
 - Promotion of self-awareness of one’s own assumptions and biases
 - Promotion of empathy, perspective taking and nonjudgmental approaches to difference, especially with regard to the 2SLGBTQ+ community
 - Increasing the capacity of educators to model and encourage the use of inclusive language, perspective taking, and nonjudgmental approaches to difference, etc.
 - Identifying and presenting appropriate learning resources with 2SLGBTQ+ content
 - Increasing the capacity of instructors to design learning materials and activities that address 2SLGBTQ+ content
 - Providing support for 2SLGBTQ+ instructors to navigate their own approach to 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion
- Instructors are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues to explore ways to promote 2SLGBTQ+ allyship and to seek input and mentoring from willing 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.
- The program does not presume that their 2SLGBTQ+ staff represent the voice of all sexual and gender minorities; neither does it put undue burdens on their 2SLGBTQ+ staff to educate others.

102. Supports are provided for 2SLGBTQ+ learners.

- The program provides support to 2SLGBTQ+ learners or connects them with agencies that can provide that support (e.g., support groups, employment counselling, and immigration services).
- Services for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals are offered with full acceptance of sexual and gender diversity (i.e., without bias or judgment).
- Schools have a crisis response policy or clear processes to follow to address 2SLGBTQ+ learners’ concerns.
- The program supports 2SLGBTQ+ learners in efforts to initiate discussions of 2SLGBTQ+ topics and student-led initiatives, such as Gay–Straight Alliances (or Gender–Sexuality Alliances).
- The school community provides diverse and meaningful ways for 2SLGBTQ+ learners to participate in community-building activities, such as volunteering, advocacy opportunities, peer networks, and mentoring/being mentored.

103. Steps are taken to foster safety and ensure learners are welcomed and respected in the classroom, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

- Instructors teach with the assumption that there are 2SLGBTQ+ learners in their classes who are not visible or out; that is, they recognize that some learners may never choose to be visible or out.
- Clear expectations are set out for respectful interactions and inclusion of all learners in the class, with explicit mention of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- Homophobic and transphobic comments are confronted and addressed according to clear policies and guidelines.
- Instructors use and model appropriate and respectful language when referring to members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.
- Instructors use language that includes everyone in the class, and they avoid language that assumes everyone in the class is straight or cisgender, for example:
 - By using inclusive terms like “parents,” “grandparents,” “folks,” “couple,” “partner,” “students.”
 - By stating and asking for preferred pronouns.
 - By using the 3rd person singular “they” to avoid assumptions about gender.
 - By replacing binary forms of address such as “Hello, ladies/gentlemen” with greetings such as “Hello, everyone.”
- Instructors avoid dividing learners into groups based on gender identity.
- Classroom activities that involve families and holidays (Family Day, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day) are undertaken in a way that welcomes and includes 2SLGBTQ+ learners and their families (i.e., heteronormative or binary expectations are avoided).
- Messages of support for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals are visible and explained in the classroom (e.g., rainbow sticker, trans flag or other symbols recognizing minority sexual and gender identities).
- 2SLGBTQ+ learners see themselves mirrored in the content and curriculum of the class; that is, 2SLGBTQ+ lives are apparent in visuals, examples, illustrations of families, activities, role-play options, etc.

104. 2SLGBTQ+ content is embedded in class content and curriculum.

- 2SLGBTQ+ equal rights are included in discussions about human rights and laws in Canada.
- Variations in gender identity, gender expression, and family are normalized and come up naturally in all areas of learning, for example:
 - Relevant curriculum themes (health, employment rights, government, Canada’s history, family, education)
 - Examples and illustrations of families, partners, marriages
 - Activities (e.g., role-play options, reading/listening comprehension activities)
 - Language skills and instruction (e.g., reading critically to identify stereotypes; editing a passage to make it more inclusive; a grammar lesson on inclusive pronouns)
- Materials that include 2SLGBTQ+ perspectives, histories, stories, and contributions to the community are incorporated into class content.
- Instructors take care to include stories of 2SLGBTQ+ success, so 2SLGBTQ+ students see aspirational representation, and other students do not associate 2SLGBTQ+ with only struggle and adversity.
- A wide spectrum of 2SLGBTQ+ identities are included to portray the vast diversity within the community.

105. Instruction includes learning activities which promote empathy and the ability to interact with 2SLGBTQ+ content and individuals in a respectful manner.

- Learners are exposed to and learn appropriate language to use when referring to members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.
- 2SLGBTQ+ resource speakers/staff/students are invited to share their stories, challenges, and successes in life.
- An intersectional approach is taken, with a focus on the intersection of minority sexual orientations and gender identities with other marginalized identities (e.g., immigration, language status, ethnicity, race).
- Learners encounter 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, or stories of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, with whom they can relate on other dimensions (e.g., 2SLGBTQ+ immigrants and refugees, students, parents, job seekers, members of a profession they wish to join, etc.).
- A safe and brave space is fostered and modelled where learners can share their stories, speak their truths, explore their own and other’s attitudes, and ask questions in an appropriate and respectful manner.