

ATESL Best Practices: Post-Presentation Survey Report

Submitted to ATESL January 31, 2020

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Introduction

In order to ensure effective dissemination and uptake of the ATESL Best Practices Project, the best practices team (primarily the best practices consultant) conducted roll-out presentations orienting attendees to the best practices. Between October 2021 and January, 2022, 20 presentations on the ATESL Best Practices were given to a total of 359 participants:

- Two presentations at the ATESL 2021 Conference and one to the ATESL Advocacy committee
- Three presentations to ATESL Locals (Calgary, Edmonton, Southern Alberta)
- One presentation for Tutela
- Thirteen presentations to various ESL-providers

Some of the presentations were general and introduced participants to the whole best practices resource; other presentations were more specific, and focused on one or more sections of the best practices.¹

After each presentation, attendees were invited to respond to a post-presentation survey. Forty-five percent of the attendees (160 respondents) completed the post-presentation survey. This report summarizes the results of that survey.

Post-Presentation Survey Results

Respondent demographics

Most of the respondents described themselves as EAL/ESL instructors of adults (61%), while 15% were program administrators/managers, 15% were curriculum/course/materials developers, 9% were teacher trainers, and 10% were ESL tutors.²

Sixty-two percent of survey respondents worked in LINC contexts and 24% in adult EAL/ESL programs that were not LINC. Other contexts that were identified include EAL literacy (14%), post-secondary institutions (12%), English for specific occupations (8%), workplaces (9%), volunteer programs (7%) non-traditional classrooms (3%), and K-12 settings (2%).³

These demographics are similar to the needs assessment survey demographics, with a slightly higher proportion from non-LINC ESL contexts responding, and a smaller proportion of ESL literacy instructors. Clearly, the ATESL Best Practices roll-out presentations reached a broad range of ESL providers, with a particularly large segment of LINC providers, which is the audience that the ATESL Best Practices was designed for.

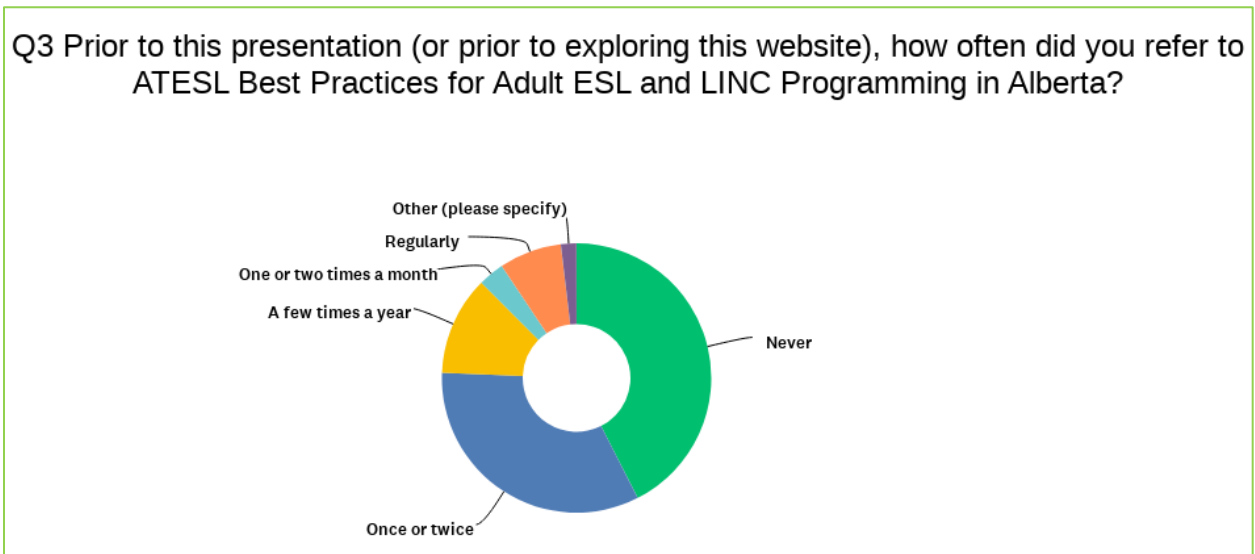
¹ Additional Best Practices presentations are scheduled for February 2022, but this report only addresses feedback from those presented between October 2021 and January 2022.

² An additional 20% listed "other", including 8 LINC instructors, 7 volunteer/site/program coordinators, and others in a variety of roles including volunteers in church-based programs, counselors, job coaches, assistants.

³ An additional 10% listed "other", and this included employment training, mental health education EFL language school, immigrant serving agencies, CLARC, CLIC, settlement, tutoring, and umbrella organizations.

Familiarity with the 2009 Best Practices

In order to get a sense of how familiar participants were with the 2009 ATESL Best Practices, respondents were asked how often they had referred to the ATESL Best Practices prior to the presentation they were attending. As you can see from the following chart, the largest group of respondents had **never** referred to the best practices (43%), while 33% had only referred to it once or twice. Twelve percent referred to the best practices a few times a year, 3% referred to it once or twice a month, and 8% referred to it regularly.



This response differs from the responses on the needs assessment survey. In that survey, more of the respondents indicated familiarity with the best practices (with 38% being somewhat familiar and 37% being very or extremely familiar). That is, the roll-out presentations attracted a larger proportion of people who had never referred to the ATESL Best Practices, or who had only referred to it once or twice, indicating that the dissemination efforts have been successful in expanding awareness of the ATESL Best Practices beyond the smaller segment of people who regularly used the ATESL best practices.

Intention to use the Best Practices

Respondents were given a series of statements regarding how they planned to make use of the best practices. They were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each of five **"I plan to use the Best Practices to ___"** statements.

As is clear from the table below, respondents clearly intend to make use of the ATESL Best Practices:

- 99% plan to use the best practices to reflect on practices related to inclusion.
- 98% plan to use the best practices to reflect on their own professional practice.
- 97% plan to use the best practices website to access resources for the classroom.
- 96% plan to use the best practices to access PD resources.
- 92% plan to use the best practices to reflect on and enhance their use of technology in the classroom.

Based on this introduction to ATESL's Best Practices for Adult EAL and LINC Programming in Alberta, please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements: I plan to use the Best Practices to...

Answered: 160 Skipped: 0

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
reflect on professional practice.	58.75% 94	39.38% 63	1.25% 2	0.00% 0	0.63% 1	160	3.58
reflect on inclusion and equity.	55.35% 88	43.40% 69	0.63% 1	0.00% 0	0.63% 1	159	3.55
enhance technology in the classroom.	47.17% 75	44.65% 71	5.03% 8	0.00% 0	3.14% 5	159	3.44
access classroom resources.	67.92% 108	29.56% 47	0.63% 1	0.00% 0	1.89% 3	159	3.69
access PD resources.	55.00% 88	40.63% 65	2.50% 4	0.00% 0	1.88% 3	160	3.54
I'm not likely to make use of the Best Practices website/documents.	10.26% 16	8.33% 13	19.87% 31	45.51% 71	16.03% 25	156	1.80

Thirty-three attendees left "other comments" related to how they plan to make use of the website/documents. Twelve of those comments were on the theme of *sharing the best practices with other instructors*, for instance, when mentoring instructors, training teachers, and giving advice. Twelve other comments indicated that respondents were *planning on exploring the resources*. Other comments mentioned using the best practices to *reflect on their teaching practice*, for *curriculum development*, or for other specific needs, while two comments identified the *vignettes* as specifically of interest.

The following is a sampling of the comments:

- Mine the resources :)
- I am really looking forward to the Resources for Classroom and also Tool and Apps. Thank you for doing the sifting process to include only really useful resources, tools and apps. This is what takes SO much time. I really appreciate it. Sadly, we are not funded for the time we spend (that it actually takes) and you have done a great service doing the review and sifting.
- I will be looking at the vignettes to see what issues others have encountered and how they solved those issues. There are also a number of assessment resources that I plan to review to understand how to improve my own assessments for both LINC and EAL programs. I will be reviewing the Inclusion section to find appropriate ways of addressing those issues in a classroom setting. Because the material was so well structured in terms of accessibility with clear indicators of what the material would be, I found so much that tweaked my interest. As I mentioned in Herly's

presentation, these resources could be used to create in-house PD session or added to new instructor orientations.

- I am also the LEAD Teacher so I will be sharing this in our next PD session
- I might honestly recommend this source to anyone working as a language teacher; the practices are comprehensive and I reckon any teacher would benefit from thinking about things like inclusion, accessibility, etc.
- I plan to use it to share with instructors, use it for specific PD sessions, refer instructors to sections that may be specifically useful to them ie work based/literacy. the challenge will be to know what is in it. The workshop was a handy introduction. I will need more motivation on getting to know the document. Envious of the knowledge Herly has about it.

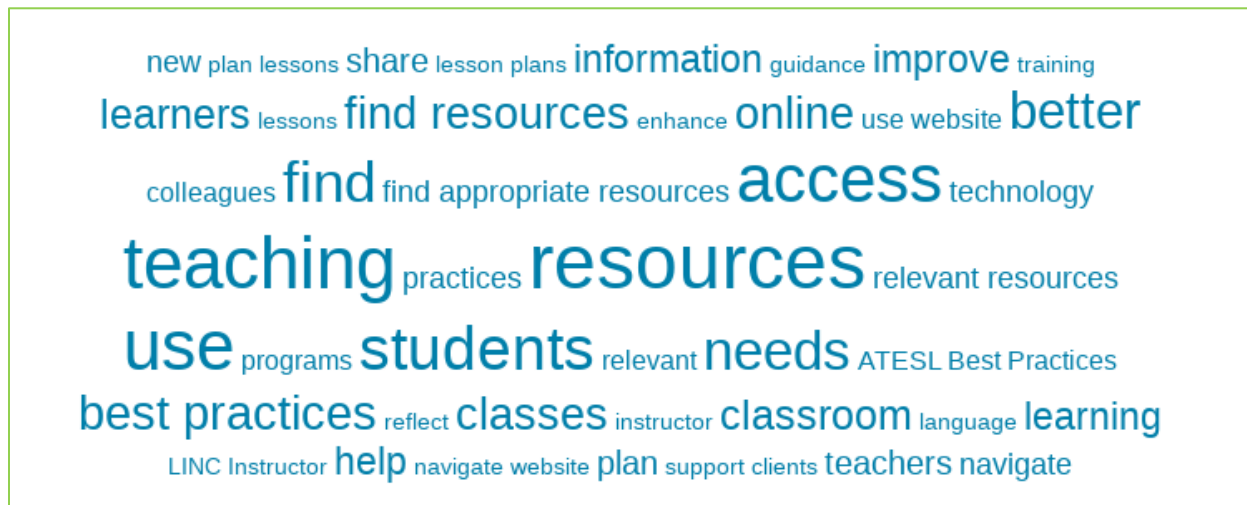
Clearly, although 75% of respondents had never referred to the ATESL Best Practices, or had only referred to it once or twice, they now see great value in the website and documents and have clear plans to make use of them in the future.

Increased confidence

Survey respondents were asked to complete the following sentence:

“As a result of this introduction to the ATESL Best Practices, I am more confident in my ability to ____.”

The 153 responses to this question indicate that even a short introduction to the best practices was of use in building participant confidence in their abilities to provide language instruction, support their learners, and find resources. The word cloud below highlights the 44 most commonly mentioned words in the answer to this question:



Sixty of the comments mentioned an increased confidence in finding, accessing, and/or using resources. In some cases, this was specific to a particular area (e.g., resources to support online instruction, to support literacy learners, to teach about Indigenous issues, etc.). Clearly, the ATESL best practices website presentation increased instructors’ confidence in their ability to find the resources that they needed to support their instruction and their learners.

Another common theme (mentioned by 46 respondents) was increased confidence in their ability to plan instruction, teach, and/or help learners improve their language abilities. Some mentioned increased confidence planning inclusive lessons and lessons on Indigenization; others mentioned increased confidence in using technology, adapting resources for online learning, and improving learners' digital skills. Related to this, 14 comments mentioned an increased confidence in their ability to support their learners and meet their learners' needs.

Twenty comments identified increased confidence in learning about good practices in their profession and/or reflecting on their own practices or becoming better teachers.

Twelve responses addressed inclusion, for instance, identifying increased confidence in being inclusive and equitable when teaching, in having difficult conversations, in creating space to talk about racism, and in teaching learners about Indigenous cultures in Canada.

Twelve respondents mentioned increased confidence as they trained or mentored instructors or volunteer instructors, and one person mentioned increased confidence in writing proposals with reference to the Best Practices.

Eighteen respondents mentioned increased confidence in being able to navigate and use the ATESL Best Practices document or website.

Clearly, teachers and other attendees left the ATESL Best practices presentations with a sense of increased confidence in their ability to find resources, plan instruction, teach, train/mentor/share, support learners, be inclusive and equitable, and use the best practices website.

Website navigation

Survey respondents were asked to rank the ease of navigating the website on a scale of 0 (Difficult/not intuitive) to 100 (very easy/intuitive), and the average response was **87**. That is, most respondents found the ATESL best practices website easy and intuitive to use.

Likelihood of recommending the best practices

Participants were also asked how likely they would be to recommend the ATESL best practices to other EAL practitioners on a scale of 0 (not likely) to 100 (very likely), and the average response was **92**.

Usefulness of specific components

Not all respondents had opportunity to explore a specific section of the best practices, but the 146 respondents who did so were asked to indicate the usefulness of eight components of the best practices. As is clear from the table below, every component was deemed to be useful or somewhat useful by 87-97% of respondents, with a large majority of respondents deeming each of the components to be **very useful**.

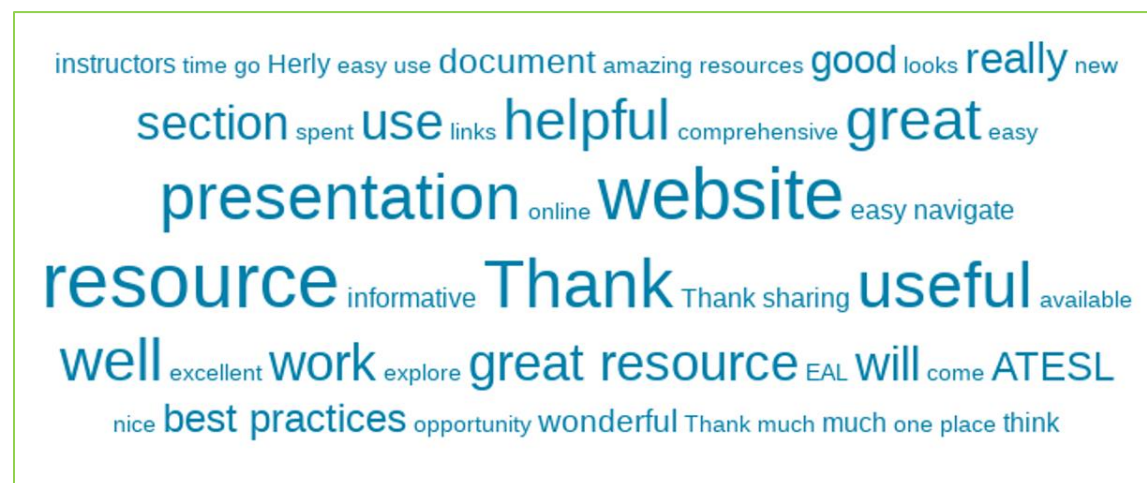
How useful are each of the following?

Answered: 146 Skipped: 14

	VERY USEFUL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	NOT USEFUL	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Statements of best practice	80.14% 113	17.02% 24	2.13% 3	0.71% 1	141	2.79
Indicators (bulleted lists clarifying the best practice statements)	78.01% 110	18.44% 26	2.13% 3	1.42% 2	141	2.77
Vignettes	81.12% 116	13.99% 20	2.10% 3	2.80% 4	143	2.81
Further Reading and Professional Development Resources	73.05% 103	21.99% 31	0.71% 1	4.26% 6	141	2.76
Resources for the Classroom	88.97% 129	8.28% 12	0.00% 0	2.76% 4	145	2.91
Community Resources	73.43% 105	18.18% 26	0.70% 1	7.69% 11	143	2.79
Tools and Apps	73.43% 105	18.18% 26	0.70% 1	7.69% 11	143	2.79
Glosses	61.43% 86	25.71% 36	3.57% 5	9.29% 13	140	2.64

Other Comments

At the end of the survey, 120 of the 160 respondents left comments in a "Please share any other comments" space. The word cloud below highlights the 45 most common words in those comments:



Ninety-six of the comments expressed appreciation for the ATESL Best Practices resource, and/or identified aspects of that website that respondents particularly looked forward to using. Here is a selection of some of those comments:

- "Very well designed website for EAL instructors to use. Checklist version is a useful and considerate feature."
- "I am glad that this website is available to us as it will make teaching a little easier with having these appropriate and updated material accessible."
- "Thank you so much for completing and sharing this invaluable resource."
- "It is very detailed and looks useful. I really like the websites and online tools that we can use in our classes."
- "What a fabulous resource and a great end result of what was clearly a labor of love. I can't wait to dive into some of the resource sections!"
- "I'm looking forward to looking through the document and using it. Thank you for putting together such a useful document that appears to be easy to use."
- "The best practices are explained really simple and more meaningful way."
- "This is incredibly well organized and easy to use. It's so nice to have an updated version that's more reflective of the needs of the profession now."
- "The site is easy to navigate, and it has a logical flow visually speaking. I especially liked the resources for classroom section, like for example the "Tar Heel Reader."
- "The website is user-friendly and easy to navigate. Having all these resources in one place is very helpful."
- "I'm so appreciative of the work that ATESL has put into this incredible resource, many thanks!"
- "A wonderful discovery for me as an instructor working with diverse groups."
- "A comprehensive resource. Well done!"
- "Love it! Very useful and the new platform makes it really handy to get resources."
- "Wonderful resource that has been well organized and prepared. Love the references to the CLBs."
- "It was a great opportunity for me to explore this amazing website, which I am gonna use next frequently."
- "Great presentation and it was nice to be able to navigate the website and get a preview."
- "Very useful and easy to navigate links."
- "The people who worked on this website should be commended. This resource is well needed at this time."
- Awesome resource. Thank you for compiling everything in one place.

Eleven respondents specifically expressed that they appreciated and enjoyed the presentation. Here is a selection of those comments:

- "It was very helpful to have a live online presentation of this resource. Guiding people through the resources is great marketing."
- "We greatly appreciate having Herly come to our Volunteer training session. It gave our volunteers an opportunity to see the Best Practices that are in place in the province of Alberta for English language learners."
- "Herly's presentation was very well done - she answered our questions and was encouraging of our church-based programming. Thanks Herly!"

Eight of the comments included suggestions, with 4 people making suggestions regarding the website navigation, one person requesting a search bar, two people requesting pictures, and one person suggesting a wording change. These are suggestions that we will consider. It may be that the Pressbook version will be useful for some of those who find navigating

the website to be challenging and would prefer to read the document in more of a book-like format (the Pressbook Version was not available at the time of the presentation).

Five of the comments addressed the possibility of additional, ongoing, or more specific presentations related to the ATESL Best Practices. This is indeed something that ATESL is considering. When the 2009 version of ATESL Best Practices was originally rolled out, there was a similar sense of enthusiasm and excitement about the new resource. However, by 2020/21, fewer people were aware of the 2009 resource, and it is likely that many who had joined the profession late in the 2010-2020 decade did not know of the ATESL Best Practices, or did not see a use for them in their practice.⁴

Conclusion

In summary, the ATESL Best Practices roll-out presentations reached their target audience: a broad range of ESL providers in a broad range of roles and contexts, with a particularly large segment of LINC providers. Results of the post-presentation survey indicate that although a large portion of respondents were initially unfamiliar with the ATESL Best Practices, the experience of being oriented to the ATESL Best Practices website has increased their confidence in their ability to provide principled EAL instruction, find resources, mentor and train teachers, support their colleagues, include Indigenous content, ensure their learners are included and supported, and more. By and large, respondents find the website easy to use and intuitive, and feel strongly enough about its value to share it with other EAL professionals. There is clearly great enthusiasm about the new ATESL Best Practices website and excitement about its potential. Participants fully intend to further explore and make use of the best practices to reflect on their practices, foster inclusion, access classroom resources, and both access and provide professional development.

With the ATESL Best Practices Project, ATESL is able to provide a freely accessible resource that is of great use and value, not only to their 650 or so members, but to the broader population of EAL providers in Alberta and in Canada. Ongoing and recurring professional development related to the ATESL Best Practices is recommended so that awareness of and enthusiasm for this resource does not fade over the next few years.

⁴ Indeed, a number of people who responded to the needs assessment survey (sent out in the initial stages of the project) were prompted to look up the ATESL Best Practices for the first time, and mentioned that they wished they had known that it existed.