Instructional Observation Consultant

Reports to: Programs Manager
Status: Independent Contractor, Part-Time As Needed, November 2026 – May 2027

Mission Statement

The Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy supports and connects adult English language learners, instructors, and programs to advance individual and community success.

About MCAEL

MCAEL is a leading nonprofit in Montgomery County, which traces its beginnings to 2002 when the Montgomery County Council, adult English literacy service providers, and community stakeholders worked together to address the growing demand for programs and services. MCAEL incorporated as an independent nonprofit organization in 2006 and received its 501(c)(3) tax status in 2008. The organization continues to grow and enjoys an excellent reputation in the county and with its partners.

MCAEL strengthens the community by advancing a coalition of organizations dedicated to enabling all Montgomery County residents to achieve their full potential by improving their English language skills. MCAEL is the hub of the coalition, bringing English language service providers together to learn and share and driving a system of continuous improvement for the coalition—approximately 60 programs serving about 11,000 adult learners each year.

MCAEL's main programs and activities include:

- Training and professional development, at no cost, for instructors and program administrators in Montgomery County.
- Centralized data collection and analysis.
- Advocacy on behalf of the coalition.
- A directory of adult English classes throughout Montgomery County.
- Public engagement around the issue of adult English language learning.

Consultancy Overview

MCAEL is seeking an experienced adult ESOL instructor to serve as an **Instructional Observation Consultant**. The consultant will conduct classroom observations of MCAEL-funded programs and provide constructive, strengths-based feedback on instructional

practices, learner engagement, classroom environment, and the alignment of instruction with learners' needs and proficiency levels.

Through this work, MCAEL seeks to strengthen the quality of adult ESOL instruction across its grant partner network by providing instructors with meaningful, practitioner-informed feedback. Grant-funded classes are held at sites throughout Montgomery County.

The consultant's observations will help MCAEL:

- Recognize and share effective instructional practices.
- Identify professional development and capacity-building needs.
- Support instructors in strengthening learner engagement and instructional practice.
- Better understand the instructional experiences of learners across the MCAEL network.
- Advance MCAEL's broader goal of continuous improvement among its coalition of adult English language programs.

The consultant will bring the perspective of an experienced ESOL practitioner to MCAEL's grants monitoring process. While MCAEL staff will focus on program implementation, grant requirements, reporting, and other programmatic considerations, the consultant will focus specifically on **instructional quality and the learner experience in the classroom**.

This consultancy is intended to support professional learning and continuous improvement. The consultant will not evaluate instructors for employment purposes and will not make funding or compliance determinations.

It is essential that the consultant maintain professional confidentiality regarding instructors, learners, and program information.

Primary Responsibilities

1. **Conduct classroom observations of both in-person and online ESOL classes** – observations will be timed around MCAEL site visits or at the request of grant partners.

- Review basic class information provided by the program, including instructional level, curriculum or materials being used, and lesson/topic being taught.
- Select classes to observe; if a program has multiple class modes (in-person, online, and/or hybrid) observe classes in at least two modes.
- Observations should be approximately 60-90 minutes of instruction without disrupting the class or learner experience.

The consultant will use their professional ESOL experience to identify areas in which the instructor is doing well and areas which need improvement. These include:

- Whether instruction is appropriate for the learners' proficiency level.
- Whether the lesson and activities appear aligned with learner needs.
- The clarity and organization of instruction.

- Learner engagement and participation.
- Use of curriculum, supplemental materials, and other instructional resources.

MCAEL will provide a more detailed list in a draft checklist, which the consultant will review and edit. The consultant is not expected to assess every area during every observation. Feedback should focus on practices that are observable during the visit and most relevant to the class and learners.

The consultant will:

- Complete MCAEL's Class Observation Form for each observation, noting observed instructional practices, learner engagement and participation and suggestions or recommended follow-up.
- Debrief with the MCAEL staff member following observation of a program's classes, as appropriate, communicating significant instructional observations or concerns.

2. **Provide constructive feedback to the instructor and/or program** which:

- Identifies specific instructional strengths.
- Recognizes effective strategies or practices.
- Identifies opportunities for instructional growth, when appropriate.
- Provides practical and realistic suggestions for strengthening instruction.
- Uses specific examples from the observed lesson whenever possible.
- Is respectful, supportive, and appropriate for a professional learning context.

Feedback should be *strengths-based and developmental rather than evaluative or punitive*.

3**. Support Continuous Improvement**

The consultant will help MCAEL identify instructional strengths and potential professional development needs across its grant partner network.

When appropriate, the consultant may:

- Identify professional development topics that could benefit the instructor or program.
- Recommend resources or instructional strategies.
- Identify potential needs for additional support or Program Development Assistance.
- Share effective instructional practices that may be useful across the MCAEL network.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have:

- 5+ years experience teaching adult ESOL/English language learners.
- Experience teaching learners across multiple proficiency levels.
- Strong knowledge of adult ESOL instructional practices and principles.
- Experience using learner-centered instructional approaches.
- Strong understanding of learner engagement and classroom management.
- Ability to recognize effective instructional practices and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ability to provide constructive feedback in a supportive and nonjudgmental manner.
- Experience observing, mentoring, coaching, or providing professional development to other instructors is strongly preferred.
- Experience with online or hybrid ESOL instruction is preferred.

Professional Approach

The consultant should approach each observation as a **peer learning and professional development opportunity**. The goal is not to identify everything an instructor could improve, but to provide useful feedback that helps instructors recognize what they are doing well and identify realistic ways to strengthen their practice.

The consultant should:

- Focus on observable instructional practices rather than personal characteristics.
- Distinguish between personal teaching preferences and evidence-based instructional recommendations.
- Consider the context of the program, learners, class level, and instructional format.
- Avoid making broad judgments based on a single observation.
- Respect the instructor's expertise and experience.
- Center learner experience and engagement in the observation.
- Provide feedback that is practical, specific, and actionable.

Contractor Relationship

This is a part-time, as-needed independent contractor opportunity. The consultant will be responsible for completing assigned observations, submitting observation documentation, and conducting follow-up meetings within a timeframe established by MCAEL and the consultant.

MCAEL will provide the consultant with:

- The classroom observation form and draft guidelines.

- Relevant information about the program and its classes.
- Expectations for the observation and feedback process.
- Contact information for the appropriate MCAEL staff member.

Estimated Commitment

It is estimated that the consultant will be asked to complete 4-5 observations a month. Each observation is expected to require approximately 2-3 hours (including preparation, observation, provision of feedback, documentation, and travel as applicable).

The anticipated number of observations will vary based on MCAEL's needs and available funding.

Compensation

Compensation will be provided at $40/hr per observation, based on actual time spent for each observation. Time spent on preparation, observation, and feedback will be compensated, and mileage will be reimbursed for travel to and from class.

To Apply

Interested candidates are asked to e-mail a cover letter and resume to program@mcael.org. **Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.** Resumes sent without a cover letter will not be considered. Please refer to "Instructional Observation Consultant" in the subject line. Please be prepared to provide references upon request. Applications will be reviewed upon receipt.