PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
TOOLKIT

A Guide to Implementing and Managing Community-Based Adult ESOL Classes and Programs

MCAEL
Coalition for a Connected Community

Contents

The Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL) is very pleased to offer this Program Administrator Toolkit as the latest addition to our series of practical publications related to adult ESOL programs. It is part of MCAEL's ongoing effort to support and enable adult ESOL provider organizations and instructors to provide quality, learner-oriented instruction, based on proven best practices. This toolkit draws on the expertise of our staff, partners, and practitioners in the field to provide a practical guidebook for community-based adult ESOL programs and staff.

Kathy Stevens Executive Director

Our intention in publishing the Program Administrator Toolkit is to fill a gap in the resources available—it is designed to be a user-friendly reference manual that covers all aspects of implementing and managing an adult ESOL class or program. We know that many ESOL program managers have not received training specifically as administrators—most are instructors first, and training on program administration is limited in TESOL training programs.

We have made an effort to make this toolkit relevant and useful for all ESOL programs, no matter whether you are just starting up or have been providing ESOL classes for years. You will find in these pages examples of best practices and possible solutions to common challenges faced by programs at all stages of development, drawing upon the rich experience of adult ESOL provider organizations in Montgomery County, Maryland. These

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programs range in size from an enrollment of tens to hundreds and include structured managed enrollment classes as well as informal drop-in conversation classes. We hope in this way that you, the reader, will find examples that resonate with your own program.

Through our annual series of provider meetings, we know that program managers gain a lot by sharing experiences on common challenges, whether they be student retention or skills assessment. The online version of this toolkit will be updated periodically with additional provider examples.

ADULT ESOL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS IN THE MCAEL NETWORK (AUGUST 2018).

Through our annual series of provider meetings, we know that program managers gain a lot by sharing experiences on common challenges, whether they be student retention or skills assessment

This toolkit is designed as a reference, so as such, each chapter on a specific topic can stand alone. It is not necessarily meant to be read from cover to cover.

We are fortunate to have enlisted Alex Galen, ESOL and Literacy Program Coordinator at Montgomery College, to help us draft this toolkit. His background as a former instructor and experience as a seasoned program administrator made him the perfect choice to assist us with this task. Our sincerest thanks to Alex, to all the program administrators who made contributions here, and to those who served on the Toolkit Review Committee, who spent hours reviewing various drafts.

If you'd like to find out more about MCAEL, our network of providers, and our community of learners, we welcome you to peruse our website: www.mcael.org,

Happy reading!

Kathy Stevens, Executive Director

✱ Fundamental Considerations

Some Basic Principles of Adult Learning

What do we know about adult learners that we can use to guide adult ESOL programs?

▶ **There is a lot of research that has been done about how adults learn best that can be useful for you in leading and managing your program.**

Understanding some general concepts of how adults learn is an important place to start when thinking about how to establish or improve an adult ESOL program. Of course, the students in your program will always be different individuals with their own personalities and goals for being there, but there are some commonalities in how most adults learn in these contexts. Awareness of commonalities can help you, your staff and instructors, the students and other stakeholders in the program all be on the same page.

A few basic tenets of adult learning to be considered are seen in the table on the right.

How adults learn best

What we know about adult learners	What this means for adult ESOL programs
▶ **Adults are goal oriented.**	As you create your outcomes for the program, build in flexibility to allow instructors to focus on students' own goals. Use tools to find out what those goals are either before or at the beginning of class.
▶ **Adults expect what they learn to be relevant to them to help them complete tasks and deal with issues in their lives.**	This tells you some things not to do. For example, don't simply explain abstract grammar concepts and tell students to "make sentences." You'll want your instructors to contextualize the language so they can complete tasks around their goals like speaking with their child's teacher, going to the doctor, or going back to school.
▶ **Adults come to classes with vast life experience.**	Encourage your instructors to have students work together. They will often learn more from each other than from instructors.
▶ **Adults have busy lives with multiple priorities.**	Consider this when scheduling your classes and deciding what type of program you will have. Help instructors to manage expectations about what students will do outside class.
▶ **Adults expect to be treated with respect.**	Be sure you, your staff, and instructors understand and consistently maintain courteous and polite attitudes and behavior toward students. It is also important for your instructors to keep this in mind in their classroom management to build teacher-learner rapport.
▶ **Adults work well through collaboration and tasks to complete.**	Work with instructors to help them maximize student to student interaction.
▶ **Adults are very practical and want to apply what they learn.**	You'll want to get instructors to let students practice what they learn.
▶ **Adults have varying learning styles.**	Help your instructors to learn more about engaging learners using visual, auditory and kinesthetic styles.
▶ **Adults want to see the benefit of what they are doing.**	Set basic guidelines for classes like writing objectives on the board and **exit tickets** so students can talk about and be aware of what they learned and still have questions about.

What makes for a successful ESOL class for adults?"

Patty Larson, Independent Consultant

Patty, who has taught and managed programs for Prince George's Community College, Baltimore City Community College, and MCAEL, reflects upon her experience with adult education:

"It's not any one element, but a combination of factors that leads to learning gains, including:

- an engaged and supportive Program Manager;

- an instructor trained in learner-driven approaches, who is skilled in developing practical lessons to address learners' specific goals and needs;

It's not any one element, but a combination of factors that leads to learning gains.

- an understanding of who your learners are— their degree of socio-economic stability, any hardship or trauma they've experienced (if shared), their age, etc.—all factors that can enhance or hinder learner progress;

- establishing and monitoring progress indicators; and

- conducting regular check-ins with learners to determine whether their needs are being met."

■ How can I learn more about adult learning principles?

Books

Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice, Sharan B. Merriam and Laura L. Bierema. Jossey-Bass, 2013.

Brief Guide for Teaching Adult Learners, Cheryl Torok Fleming and J. Bradley Garner. Triangle Publishing, 2009.

How to Teach Adults: Plan Your Class, *Teach Your Students, Change the World*, Dan Spalding. Expanded edition, John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2014.
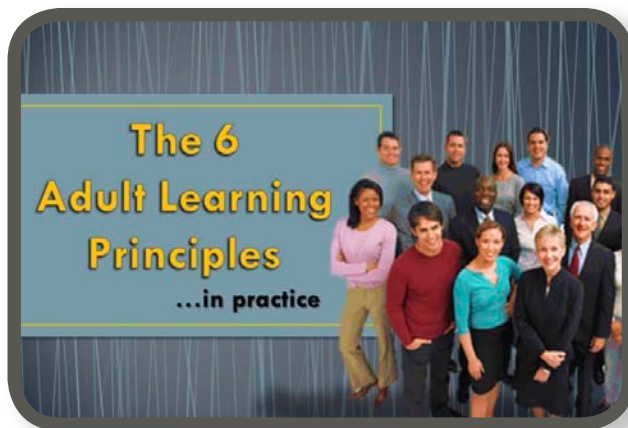
Videos

The six adult learning principles
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLJ7cRwKI-I

Adult Learning Theory
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkyYY1xTB7U

Websites

A Dozen Things You Need to Know about Adult Learning
https://tomprof.stanford.edu/posting/1529

Malcolm Knowles, informal adult education, self-direction and andragogy
http://infed.org/mobi/malcolm-knowles-informal-adult-education-self-direction-and-andragogy/

Transformative Learning
http://www.instructionaldesign.org/theories/transformative-learning/

Self-Directed Learning: A Four-Step Process
https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/tips-students/self-directed-learning/self-directed-learning-four-step-process

Mission Development

Why is it important to be clear on my mission? (Beyond "teaching English")

▸ **Your mission states your basic principles for what your program aspires to be, and it will guide the rest of your goals in the program as well as the locations, times, etc. of your classes.**

For your program mission, the question to start with is a basic one: what is it you want your program to accomplish? These are a few examples, but you (and your team) can certainly come up with more! Is it to provide free classes to help immigrant students to prepare for jobs? Or specific jobs, like childcare? Do you want to focus on basic communication, conversational skills? Or help them with reading? Or all the skills in speaking, reading, writing, and listening? Who do you want to serve? How does it fit into the mission of your larger organization (if you have one)? How will it meet the needs of the community?

- The statement is usually just a sentence or two, shows your passion, and may all be in the present simple tense.

- Below are some examples of mission statements from community-based ESOL programs within the MCAEL network:

The Montgomery College Adult ESOL & Literacy Grant Program seeks to provide lifelong learning opportunities to adults who are in need of language and literacy skills in order to fulfill their roles as family members, workers, and active community participants. We strive to provide the best quality education possible to all learners, and will do this regardless of race, religion, marital status, disability, sexual preference, or national origin. Our goal is to help our learners help themselves by accomplishing whatever objectives they set for themselves.

Community Reach's Language Outreach Program (LOP) provides English Language and Literacy classes to non-English speaking adult residents of Montgomery County. LOP's goal is to aid our learners' successful daily living in the community and to improve employment and educational prospects. This supports Community Reach's overall mission of helping our clients achieve and maintain self-sufficiency.

The Chinese Culture and Community Service Center (CCACC) Adult English Literacy Program is designed to help Chinese immigrants become more self-reliant and confident, and to better integrate into American society.

Drop-in vs. Managed Enrollment

What is the difference between the two main types of classes?

▶ **Adult ESOL classes can be divided into two main types: drop-in classes and those with managed enrollment.**

Depending upon your organization or program's mission and target learner population, one type of enrollment may be more relevant and appropriate than the other. See the table on the right for benefits and drawbacks of each type of enrollment to help you evaluate what would be most appropriate for your classes/program.

- **Drop-in classes** (or rolling enrollment) allow students into classes at any point during the session, and students are not necessarily expected to attend every class period. A drop-in class may be particularly appropriate for learners who do not have the time, or are not ready otherwise, to take a more structured class.

- **For managed enrollment courses** there are set beginning and end dates and students must register and enter at the beginning of the session. Instructors usually track their attendance and performance.

Benefits and drawbacks of each type of enrollment

Drop-in enrollment

Benefits	Drawbacks
▸ Students can join, drop out or take a break anytime—easy for busy schedules.	Requires ongoing assessment for placement (if you have multiple levels).
▸ Classes are self-contained—many textbooks are designed for these types of classes.	Not many opportunities to review or build on what students learned in past classes or students spend a lot of time "catching up."
▸ If you don't have a regular teacher, a new one can jump in anytime since the lessons are not connected.	Difficult for instructor to build rapport and trust with students because there isn't time.
▸ Students can "stop out," meaning they can stop coming for a period of time when work, family, etc. get in the way, and then return when they can.	Students may not get to know each other. Difficult to focus on student goals because you don't see them long. Each class you won't know if you will have too many or too few students to run the class.

Managed Enrollment

Benefits	Drawbacks
▸ Same students each class so lots of opportunity for review and building on what they have learned.	Not everyone can commit to long term regular schedule.
▸ Lots of opportunity to assess what students have learned.	If students miss registration, they have to wait or go to another program.
▸ Instructors develop rapport.	Students may "stop out" but not feel that they can return.
▸ Students become comfortable with each other and will have an easier time with collaboration.	If too many students drop out, you may have to cancel the class.
▸ Higher learning gains than drop-in.	
▸ Easier to focus on student goals since you have time to cover different areas for all students.	

Ana A. Brito Foundation

Marta Brito Perez, President

English Literacy Program

ESOL INSTRUCTION BEGAN: 1985

The Ana A Brito Foundation was founded in 2014 to support the growth of existing English and computer classes at Epworth United Methodist Church in Gaithersburg.

2017–18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 1 **CLASS LEVELS:** 5

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 159 unique/260 duplicated*

"In 1985 the Language and Computer program started as an informal program and has evolved into an important dimension of services upon which the local immigrant community relies. To respond to continued learner demand, we increased the number of ESOL levels, and added computer classes and support services over the years. We have also added more structure to the ESOL classes, to better enable students to reach their goals, whether it be communicating in English better at school, with doctors, or at their place of work.

Students starting mid-semester take an informal bridge class that follows the basic curriculum.

An ongoing challenge to the program and the ability of students to advance to higher levels has been the inconsistency of attendance. The program began as an informal drop-in program with no strict attendance policy. In 2015 the foundation was able to transition to managed enrollment with two entry points during the school year, fall and spring. For those students who wished to start ESOL learning mid-semester, the program added an informal bridge class that followed the basic class curriculum, which they could attend until the beginning of the next semester. While there are still those who are not able to consistently attend class, those who do attend regularly are able to make remarkable progress and are more likely to achieve the goals they have set for themselves.

On occasion, if a student comes in the middle of the semester, we may place them in the immediate level below where they test so that they can start taking classes and don't have to wait a full semester before starting."

See page 62 for explanation of enrollment types.

DROP-IN VS. MANAGED ENROLLMENT:
Must a program be one or the other?

No. Some programs are set up as managed enrollment to help learners make steady progress. But rather than make students wait until the next session, programs will test students as they show up and let them enter mid-session. George B. Thomas, Learning Academy (GBTLA) has chosen to have rolling, or open, admission for its English classes for parents of children who attend its Saturday School programs at public schools in Montgomery County. For GBTLA, offering parents the opportunity to improve their English skills is an important part of encouraging and preparing them to become more engaged in their children's education within the Montgomery County Public Schools. Rolling admission allows the program to support any parents who are willing to learn but may have other commitments that do not enable them to attend regularly.

For other organizations, drop-in classes are the most appropriate for specific learner populations they serve. For example, CASA has classes for day laborers waiting for work that are drop-in classes, since day laborers cannot be expected to attend on a consistent basis. (See Notes from the Field below). CASA also runs a Life Skills ESOL program that has managed enrollment. Still other organizations, like Community Reach (see Notes from the Field below), have a main program that is managed enrollment, and also have a drop-in class (in many cases a conversation class) where students can join anytime and stay until the next registration date for the managed enrollment class.

Some programs are established as drop-in and then develop into managed enrollment programs. The Ana A. Brito Foundation had been supporting adult ESOL classes at Epworth United Methodist Church for a number of years before deciding to transition its program to a managed enrollment program in order to better assist their learners meet their personal goals.

A Conversation with CASA
(formerly CASA de Maryland)

✳ **CASA has been offering drop-in classes for a number of years at their sites for day-labor workers to improve their English while they wait for possible positions. Community Education Manager Shannon Wilk and ESOL Coordinator Rebecca Cusic offer some suggestions for what makes their program a success.**

How do teachers teach these classes?

"Drop-in classes need to be self-contained, meaning they need to be individual classes, rather than a continual series of classes that can build on each other. You never know if you will have students from previous classes or have new students coming in."

Does that mean that drop-in classes should just be random topics each time?

"Some programs have set plans they can do based on what students identify as their goals at the beginning of a class. What has worked well for the CASA classes has been to have weekly themes. While each class is a separate class, it all relates to one theme. That way students who weren't there in the last class won't be lost and students who were can continue to learn within the same topic. In a traditional language class, the lesson on Tuesday would be a continuation of the lesson from Monday. As learners

While each class is separate, it all relates to one theme.

attended classes over the course of the session, each week the course content would become progressively more complex.

With the drop-in ESOL classes, our teachers have no guarantee that the students who attended on Monday will also be attending on Tuesday. Therefore, the lesson for Tuesday must be designed in a way so that those who didn't attend class on Monday can benefit as much as those who did AND those who did attend on Monday should not feel as though the Tuesday lesson is redundant or completely unconnected to what they learned before. The teacher will pick a theme for the week but then break down the theme into smaller parts. Themes are also repeated but with different approaches so that those who may have attended the first time this material was covered will either reinforce this knowledge or be able to learn something different about it."

CASA Workforce ESOL

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 1995

CASA offers these classes at Welcome Centers in Rockville, Silver Spring and Wheaton, along with other vocational training opportunities and services.

2017-18 DATA
CLASS SITES: 3 **CLASS LEVELS:** 2
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 269 unique/ 307 duplicated

Can you give an example?

"Sure. It could be any number of themes, but since we are working with day laborers, the theme for the week might be workplace safety. On Monday the students could be learning how to read the labels on cleaning supplies. On Tuesday, the students could be learning to identify unsafe workplace situations and the vocabulary to communicate those dangers to their employer or co-workers. On Wednesday, the students could be learning what type of safety equipment is needed at different jobs and calculating a budget to purchase the materials so that they are prepared to take on such jobs or request certain equipment from an employer. An individual could participate in all three or only one of these lessons and learn something immediately applicable to the workplace without redundancy."

How do you prepare instructors for these classes?

"It is important to set the expectations: no homework, no review. They need to focus on the skills students can learn within the single class period. Consider each class an 'island of skills.' The supervisor also needs to watch to be sure instructors don't revert to teaching the same lesson again and again, since those students who are coming back will get bored quickly. Instructors should also be aware that educational levels of students will vary, so incorporating reading and writing can be great, but the lesson should work as well for students who may not have those skills."

How do instructors prepare for the class?

"Over time, we created folders of materials related to the theme and put them online so instructors can access them. Having them online also allows the collection of materials to be dynamic as you see what

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works and doesn't. It is better to have lessons that do not require a lot of copies since you never know how many students will show up. Instructors also need to have a 'bag of tricks.' Realia, word cards, interactive activities are all 'tricks' that instructors need to have because you may discover in the class that the students have

Instructors need to have a "bag of tricks."

higher or lower skills than you expected. You will also want to have follow-up activities students can do outside of class to give them work to do independently, have ways available to improve even if they can't come back, and feel encouraged to return. This is a way for students to continue learning independently—which is different than giving 'homework'."

How do you find out if students are successful? What kind of data can you use to see if they have learned?

"To help build the teacher's lessons and report on learning gains in a data-driven manner, we have developed the pre/posttests. The student takes the test (pretest) at the start of class so that the teacher can understand existing student knowledge and identify information gaps to focus the lesson on. Then at the end of the class, the students take the same assessment again (posttest) to see if they now have a greater understanding of the day's theme. Exit tickets work well, too, to encourage students by asking about the confidence they feel about using what they have learned. (That can also inspire them to come back next time!)"

See Resources, p. 78 for full size document.

A Conversation with Community Reach

✳ **Cecilia Rojas, Program Manager of the Language Outreach Program (LOP) for Community Reach, explains** an innovative drop-in conversation group approach started in 2016 to enhance their larger LOP managed-enrollment ESOL program.

What was the reason for adding these conversation groups?

"Not all of our learners are able to take classes with a set schedule, so we offer a weekday and a weekend drop-in conversation group. The informal drop-

Informal meetings encourage participation by learners whose schedules do not permit a formal commitment.

in nature of the meetings encourages participation by learners whose schedules do not permit a more intense, formal

commitment. In addition, successful participation can lead to participation in more formal English language instruction available through LOP. It is a natural, comfortable, and unintimidating transition. We also offer 'semester-break' conversation groups between regular semesters to offer students a way to continue learning.

Childcare is provided for all group participants, removing the need for childcare as a barrier to participation."

How are the classes conducted?

"Learners are assessed orally to determine their level of language skills and their needs, enabling instructors to tailor curriculum/conversation topics to the group's needs and interests. Instructors bring in resource books and additional materials based on learners' interests to encourage conversation."

Are students assessed for progress?

"Because of the informal drop-in nature of these class sessions, there aren't formal,

individualized pre- and post-English language skill assessments. However, we conduct learner satisfaction surveys at the end of each session, which provides a self-reported assessment of language skills improvement. Also, at the end of each session, we conduct the same informal oral assessment given at the beginning of each session for an informal indication of skills development."

Community Reach Conversation Groups

PROGRAM BEGAN: 2016

CMR partners with local nonprofit Interfaith Works to offer onsite drop-in conversation classes at the Interfaith Clothing Center, among other sites.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 4   **CLASS LEVELS:** 2

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 150 unique/ 155 duplicated

Location and Timing of Classes

What considerations are there when deciding where, when, and how long a class meets?

▶ **Pay attention to the location and timing of your class(es), and the length of your sessions, since these can be critical to attracting and retaining learners.**

This is important to focus on whether you are starting up a class or are looking to expand your well-established program. Often programs make adjustments to class locations and timing from year to year, to better meet the needs of their learner populations, which may change over time. Programs will also want to be sensitive to different cultural norms or needs.

■ How do I decide what the best location is for my class?

This will mainly stem from the mission of your program as well as the size of your budget, here are some considerations:

- Close to community you wish to serve
- Accessible by public transportation
- Cost (if a program can find free space, they can use limited program funds for other things such as classroom materials, but if the space is not appropriate or convenient for learners, this may not be a wise saving)
- Easy entry to building for instructors/program staff as well as learners
- Well-lit if evening class
- Size of room(s)
- Availability of whiteboards, AV equipment, other necessary facilities (such as childcare area)
- Ability to arrange far enough in advance

■ What do I need to think about when determining when and for how long the class will meet?

Time of day to offer class

- Dependent upon learner population—best known through learner survey
- Evening or weekend classes work best for those who work during the day, but public transportation options may be more limited at these times

Length of class period/hours per week

- What are realistic expectations for your learners?
- A greater exposure to English will help the learners to make gains. Classes that meet more than once a week provide more opportunity to practice English skills; for some learners, in class may be their only time to practice.

Length of session

- Managed enrollment classes—standard of providing at least 120 hours of instruction time in a year
- Related to how many hours per week class is offered
- Some programs have found that shorter sessions are better for learner retention, and have adjusted their program structure accordingly to offer more hours of class over fewer weeks. Learners may find it easier to stick with a shorter, more intensive session, and are able to have a feeling of accomplishment in a shorter amount of time.
- The length of each session varies widely among providers in the MCAEL network. For managed enrollment classes, some are as short as 8 weeks, some as long as 20 weeks. Most are in the 12-16 week range.

Number of sessions a year

- Dependent upon program budget, other services/classes the organization offers, learner base

> ▶ **Among MCAEL providers, the hours of instruction per week ranges from 1 to 9 hours.**
> **Some drop-in conversation classes meet only once a week for one hour**
> **Some managed enrollment classes meet for three hours three times a week**

Starting a New Class or Program

What do I need to think about and do to get a class/program going?

▶ In this chapter you will find two tools that can be used to plan your new class or program. One is in the form of a planning chart delineating necessary tasks, the other provides a framework of key questions that should be answered as you do your planning. Other chapters in this toolkit address the individual topics referred to in these tools.

This chapter is specifically geared for those who are thinking about or are embarking upon starting a new adult ESOL class or program. While there is useful information throughout this toolkit for class or program startup, we provide here some advice from organizations that recently began programs, as well as some tools to use that can help you get started and make sure you are thinking of all the things that need to be done to get started. It may be an obvious point, but a well-planned and well-thought-out program, based on a good understanding of your community's needs and those of your potential learners, will more likely be successful. It may take up to a few months to get all the elements set up, and you will need enough lead time to do outreach to potential learners.

Planning chart for new ESOL class/program with sample responses

What needs to be done	How it will be done	Who will do it	When it will be done (date)	How you know it is complete
▶ A needs analysis of the area	Check to see what the ESOL population is in the area, what programs are already offered and what services they provide. Consider if there are other service providers in the vicinity that you could collaborate with to offer complementary programs	Program director/ administrator	By end of January	Report on the needs
▶ Location for class	Find location convenient for students and ideally with nearby public transportation, determine number of students for the space and equipment available and needed	Program director/ administrator, person responsible for the buildings used	February	Memo of Understanding (MOU), contract
▶ Schedule for class	Decide on days, times, length, time of year, number of sessions, etc	Program director/ administrator, person responsible for the buildings used	by mid-March	Yearly or semester calendar
▶ Plan for outreach	Determine who you want to reach, how you will do outreach	Program director/ administrator, social media/outreach coordinator	by end of March	Flyers, website, social media, yearly timeline for when to send out updates
▶ Materials to be used	Decide on teaching materials, supplies	Program director/ administrator, instructors	by end of March	List of books, materials, collection of materials
▶ Costs to students	Decide who will pay for books/materials/course fees (if any)	Program director/ administrator, group of potential students	by mid-March	Policy, budget line
▶ Instructors	Decide if you will use volunteers or paid instructors, how they will be paid and how much to pay them	Program director/ administrator	by mid-March	Job description, budget line
▶ Support services	Consider if you should provide childcare or transportation support, based on your expected learner population	Program director/ administrator	by mid-March	Childcare workers or volunteers hired; budget lines for transportation support

What advice would you give to someone starting up an adult ESOL program?

Angelo Knox, Program Director, Thriving Germantown HUB, Family Services, Inc.

ESOL Conversation Class
FIRST OFFERED ESOL CLASS: 2017

Part of a variety of support services for the community around the Captain James E Daly Elementary School in Germantown.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 1 / CLASS LEVELS: 1

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 41 unique/62 duplicated

■ Recruitment

Programs should be prepared to go where their target population is even if it means going out of their comfort zone. Being willing to visit other events to distribute information to participants is vital. It helps to put a face to your program and starts the process of building trust. In addition, if time allows, programs should be prepared to register someone on the spot. This helps to secure seats and show the participants that you are serious about your services.

■ Orientation

The format of orientation should be more of a "meet and greet" session instead of a lecture. Although you will be going over important

> *The format of orientation should be more of a "meet and greet" session instead of a lecture.*

information for your program, it should be a more relaxed informal environment that allows for individuals to be comfortable. This relaxed "meet and greet" could potentially help with retention as individuals may be excited to come to class as this "meet and greet" provides a more welcoming first impression.

■ Survey

Don't be afraid to survey your participants and ask for their opinion. At the end of our session, we were able to survey our participants and found out that they preferred other days during the week. Using this information, we were able to change our class dates to benefit our participants more.

Below is another planning tool, in question/answer format.

Start Guide for ESOL Programs

Published by the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL)

By Heather Ritchie, MCAEL Director of Programs and Services

This document is designed to assist an organization with starting an ESOL class or program at a new location. It provides a framework for discussing the needs, resources and sustainability for an ESOL program. MCAEL encourages users to bring a group of stakeholders together to answer these questions. If the group does not know the answer, use surveys, focus groups or interviews to gather more information before starting a class.

THE NEED/ENVIRONMENT:
Why are you starting this class?

How do you know there is a need?

Are there other ESOL classes nearby? What levels/what type of ESOL classes?

What other resources are nearby?

What do you hope to achieve?

What do you think are the learners' goals? How will you confirm this?

© Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy, 2013

MCAEL Resource: Start Guide for ESOL Programs
See page 79 for full size document.

■ What considerations are there in naming a new class or program?

Once you have a clear sense of your program's mission (see Chapter 2, page 7 on "Mission Development"), what will the name of your program be? Is it simple and easy to remember (and pronounce)? Is it associated with a host institution? Does it make clear what your program does? Does it connect to the mission of the program? The program title will be important in your outreach to potential learners. (See Chapter 7, page 20.)

■ Some program names from the MCAEL network of adult ESOL provider organizations:

- Rockville Senior Center English Program
- Gateways Workforce ESOL Program (Bender JCC of Greater Washington)
- Life Skills ESOL (CASA)
- African Immigrant Vocational ESOL Program (Ethiopian Community Center)
- English Literacy for Disconnected Young Adults (Identity, Inc.)

Do an internet search and see if other programs have similar names so students will be able to find you easily.

Tho Tran, Program Manager, Vietnamese American Services

English Conversation Classes

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 2016
Drop-in conversation classes for Vietnamese Americans; started with 2 classes in Silver Spring, in 2017 expanded to 4 classes in Silver Spring and Germantown.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 3   **CLASS LEVELS AT EACH SITE:** 1

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 64 unique/129 duplicated

■ **Use multiple ways to publicize your program.** Recruitment is incredibly important. While "word-of-mouth" advertising is very effective within communities, also take advantage of:

- **local resources**, such as advertisement on the local radio and television stations.
- **partnerships** with other organizations, including religious organizations, which can help increase word-of-mouth publicity for your classes.
- **websites and Facebook**

■ **Plan an orientation and intake process** that will enable your program to both assess the learners' needs and provide the learners with information about the program. Adults come to ESL literacy programs for many different reasons and purposes. Therefore, in addition to assessing a student's English skills, so that he/she can be placed in the appropriate class, teachers and

Learn about your students' motivations and expectations.

program staff should help the student to describe their motivation and expectations in attending adult education classes, and to set goals to promote success within the program.

■ **Think about the many ways volunteers can help your program.** After finishing our English program, some of our students come back and become our volunteers. When we have events, we request that they help us in fundraising and support, for example, selling or cooking food at our events. They also help us to distribute leaflets to nail salons, Vietnamese restaurants, and markets.

Program Standards

Program standards can help you to ensure you have everything you need in the program when you are getting set up. They also can help you to review what you are providing to various stakeholders (those who have a connection to your program) as you evaluate how your program is doing.

Program standards provide useful reference points for best practices that programs can aspire to achieve. At start-up, your class or program will not meet (or need to meet) all standards, but over time, you can choose to strengthen different aspects of your class or program, in a continuous improvement model using program standards as guidelines. The TESOL Standards book below contains a helpful self-evaluation form.

What are examples of program standards?

▶ **These describe aspects of an adult ESOL program that can demonstrate that it is able to support student learning.**

■ Examples of program standards

TESOL Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs
http://sites.tesol.org/Bookstore/ItemDetail?iProduct-Code=034&Category=STANDARDS

The TESOL Standards give programs an idea about what areas should be evaluated to determine the quality of the program. An in-depth discussion of what each standard means is provided, as well as ways to determine if the standard is met. It also contains clear guidelines for a program to do a self-evaluation on the standards and examples of different kinds of programs that have done that review. It demonstrates how you can score your program using a variety of measures for each standard and evidence you can use to back up your assertions. The TESOL Standards include standards for:

1 Program Structure, Administration, and Planning

2 Curriculum and Instructional Materials

3 Instruction

4 Learner Recruitment, Intake, and Orientation

5 Learner Retention and Transition

6 Assessment and Learner Gains

7 Employment Conditions and Staffing

8 Professional Development and Staff Evaluation

9 Support Services

Maryland Department of Labor Licensing & Regulation (DLLR) Adult ESL Quality Program Standards:
https://www.dllr.state.md.us/gedmd/eslstandards.doc

These DLLR Standards address almost the same program aspects as the TESOL program standards above. Some of these are connected to specific requirements for federally funded programs, but there are clear guidelines for setting up an Adult ESOL program and then later determining how the program is doing. The DLLR Standards cover these areas:

1 Program Structure, Administration and Planning

2 Curriculum

3 Instruction

4 Recruitment, Intake and Orientation

5 Retention and Transition

6 Assessment, Evaluation and Educational Gains

7 Staffing, Professional Development and Staff Evaluation

8 Support Services

Each section has a number of standards and ways to measure if the standard is met.

✱ Getting students into your program

Messaging, Outreach and Recruitment of Learners

How can I effectively reach potential students?

▶ **Recruiting learners is critical for any class or program, regardless of whether you are just at the launch stage or run a program that has been around for years.**

This chapter covers some important steps in reaching out to those potential learners. Time spent devising an outreach plan is usually well worth it, as having a good plan can have a significant impact on your ability to attract enough learners to your class/program.

■ Step 1: Be sure you have a clear, concise message

- Start with thinking about how to describe your program.

- Consider the goals of the program and who it is for.

- What are your key selling points, your program's strengths and what makes your program unique? It could be the location, style of instruction, child care, other services, access to computers, free books, or even food and coffee!

- If your program is currently running, survey the students to find out what they like best about your program and highlight those areas in your advertising.

- Highlight what you do differently from your "competition" to meet an underserved need. Questions to answer:

  What other organizations are offering ESL in your area?
  What programs do they offer, and on what days and times?
  What can you do that they may not be able to do?
  Are they over capacity?

Are there other times or services you provide?

Are there unmet needs for certain demographics in the community that you can address?

■ Step 2: Know your audience and how best to communicate with them

- Who are you marketing the class to? It could be certain ages or other groups in the community. Consider translating your materials into the primary languages of your targeted audience. Google Translate might be an option for this if the language you are using is simple enough. Flyer translation is also a great task for volunteers.

- How does your targeted audience receive and transmit information? Do they respond to flyers, in-person meetings, phone calls, text messages? Are they online? Are they using email, Facebook, phone apps like WhatsApp?

■ Step 3: Develop an outreach plan

Outreach defined for ESOL class recruitment is how you promote your program to your targeted audience. Whether you are recruiting learners, instructors or volunteers—it is important to understand how these audiences communicate, how they receive and transmit information.

Having an outreach plan is the best way to effectively reach your intended audiences.

OUTREACH PLAN ACTIVITIES

1. Create and distribute flyers that are simple but visually appealing. (See "Tips for Effective Flyers" on page 23.)

2. Set up a list of contacts connected to serving the immigrant population. Email those groups your flyers when you begin your program registration.

3. Create information sessions to let students know about your program. You can talk about what makes your program great, answer any questions and maybe even do a quick demo class!

4. Use data to see if you can make improvements and enhance what is working in terms of outreach. Ask new students how they found out about the program and why they decided to come. Document how many students come—evaluate whether there is a good time or day, for example, to hold registration or orientations.

5. Get feedback about all of this from other stakeholders including community partners, students, instructors,

and your staff. Revise periodically to continually improve your materials.

6. Respond quickly to email and phone calls. Don't lose that potential student.

7. Post flyers in local supermarkets, libraries, laundromats, hospitals, community centers, places of worship, schools, daycare centers, etc.

8. Start a door-knocking campaign (see the case study on page 22).

9. Don't forget your best "customers" are students who have already been in your program. Getting them to continue or return is the best way to keep your numbers up. Send postcards, texts or emails—or make calls—to students who leave. There are automated calling and texting programs that will help facilitate contacting former or prospective students. Design lessons to encourage them to *friend* your site on Facebook or follow you on Twitter and Private Message (Direct Message) them to remind them to come back.

10. Advertise in native language newspapers, TV, and/or radio.

11. Finally, "word of mouth" remains the most effective form of outreach. Be sure your students know when you have registration and ask them if they are able to promote your program! You can give them flyers for the next session before the current session ends and/or send them text messages a few days before your next registration.

Online outreach

Make sure your program information is listed in adult ESOL directories:

- Be sure you are in the MCAEL directory (if in Montgomery County, Maryland) and keep the information up to date.

- Look for other directories, such as ones that government agencies may have set up as resources for immigrants.

Create a webpage connected to your organization

- Include dates for registration and brief information about the strengths of what your program offers. Make sure the webpage works with cell phones! That is often the primary source for the internet for many students in community-based programs.

- Make sure you update your dates as soon as the last ones have passed.

**IMPACT
Silver Spring**

Sara Mussie, Senior Network Builder

English Language Classes

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 2011
IMPACT Silver Spring offers English classes within its framework of building networks and relationships within the community.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 3   **CLASS LEVELS:** 3
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 108 unique/156 duplicated

"During our door-knocking campaigns, we used to knock on each door and our approach was to first identify ourselves as neighbors, introduce ourselves and the organization and why we are doing the door knocking. As you can imagine, this takes a lot of time and manpower, so we began to do what we call 'Soft Door-knocking.'

For the English Language Classes outreach, we started walking in the neighborhood and sharing information with residents and people in the area. We start by going into apartment complexes, talking to people outside the building who are coming in and out of their apartment. We also

We go to apartment complexes, laundromats, small neighborhood cafes, and markets.

ask permission to post the flyers at each building. We go to laundromats, small neighborhood cafes, and markets. We talk to people, inform them about the English classes and other upcoming community events by way of conversation. The key is to make sure to connect with the people on a human level, not just sharing information. We always ask the question 'How are you doing today?' and try to connect and have a conversation. We also conduct 'Coffee Chats' at the TESS center in Long Branch—a satellite for the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). We bring coffee and snacks and start conversations with people while they are waiting to be seen by HHS staff. We try to do a Coffee Chat at least once a month. After the conversation, based on what we hear from the people, we invite them to either the English Class or other IMPACT community events."

- Create a FAQ list as you get questions about your program. This can be a text version or a video.
- Be sure to use clear, simplified English that English language learners can understand.

Use YouTube

- Create a YouTube page with videos about your program. Consider a video that includes a mix of testimonial, students in the class, teacher-student interaction, student to student interaction, and a tour of relevant facilities. Limit the amount of talk and include lots of smiles! Be sure it states/shows where to get more information.

Have a presence on social media

- Use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to post registration information, important dates, pictures of events and classes, quizzes, and links to relevant news to get students to have a reason to return to your page. Make sure the sites are linked to each other. Find out from students what social media they use.

  https://www.facebook.com/MC.AELG/

- Use testimonials from students. Have students talk about what they like, how they learn, and why they would recommend the program to others. With their permission, you can post it together with a picture, and it can go a long way toward giving your program credibility.

- You might also do video interviews with students, or they can interview each other as a class project and post those.

Community Toolbox's "Guidelines for Effective Outreach"

- **Meet people where they are**
- **Listen to your community**
- **Build trust and relationships**
- **Get the word out in a non-stigmatizing manner**
- **Offer service and information in a variety of locations and at non-traditional times, especially after work hours**
- **Make written information friendly and easy to understand**
- **Provide information in the primary language of those who will use the service**
- **Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up!**

  Source: The Community Toolbox
  https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/access-barriers-opportunities/outreach-to-increase-access/main

Tips for Effective Flyers

While other newer methods for outreach, such as texting and social media, are certainly effective ways to reach people who may want to join your classes, a flyer remains a powerful way to find students for your program. On a single document, you can let potential students know who you are, get them excited about the opportunities you offer and provide the details for what they need to do to register for your ESOL classes. However, it is critical that you have a flyer that clearly tells students what they need to know and gets them engaged. Anna DeNicolo has these tips for what to include on flyers:

Design and content

- Clear, simplified English with as few words as possible
- Name of organization
- Name of class and levels offered
- Day and time of class
- Registration date and time
- Cost of class (cash, checks, money orders, credit cards accepted?)
- Start and end date of class
- Phone number for more information
- Website, Facebook, Twitter, or other social media link for more information
- Date flyer was created and/or updated
- Avoid including large blocks of text
- Proofread carefully
- Make sure it prints clearly in black and white

Anna DeNicolo *is Program Manager at the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center*

Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center is a Montgomery County agency that provides information and educational opportunities to immigrants in the county.

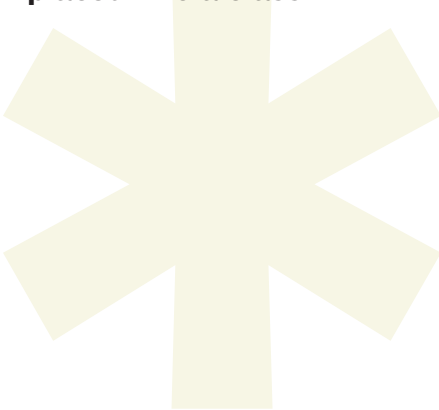**Create flyers in the language of learners you want to attract.**
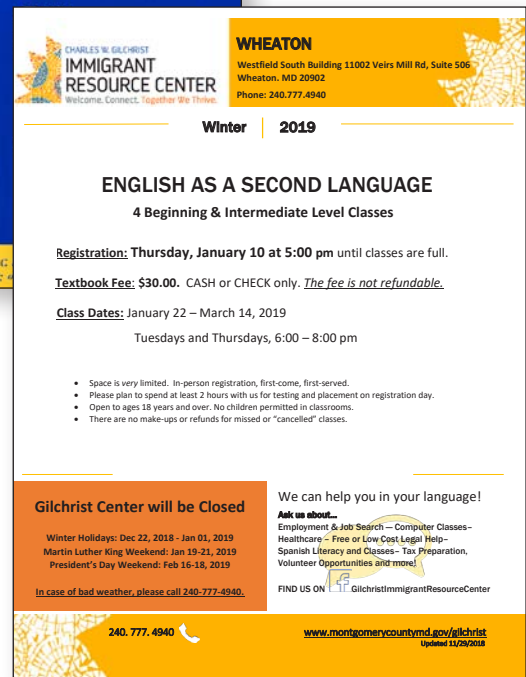
Intake: Registration, Testing, and Orientation

What is intake?

▶ **Intake is all the things that need to be done to get students placed into a class.**

Before you begin class, students need to be registered, tested/assessed, and given an orientation. There are any number of ways to go about each of these three steps, depending upon the size and type of your program.

❶ Registration

Why is this important?

- To enable you to track enrollment numbers.
- To gain an understanding of who your learners are.
- To gather data for program planning and/or for reporting to donors.

What information should be collected from students?

At a minimum:
- name
- address/zip code of residence (address if necessary, but can change; zip code can be used to analyze where learners are coming from)
- phone number
- email
- emergency contact person
- a checklist of goals/reasons students have for taking the class.

Depending upon what other data the program/organization finds useful for its program planning, or is required by funders, you could also ask for:
- employment status (though this could be discouraging for some students)
- educational background

- family status (and children in the home or not)
- ethnicity/national origin
- gender
- year/date of birth (some learners may be hesitant to provide full date of birth information, in which case year of birth will still provide you with data on the age of the learner)

Be mindful of protecting students' personal data. Do you have a secure means of protecting this data?

❷ Skills Assessment

Why is this important?

- To determine which level to place the student in.
- To see whether the learner fits into the classes being offered or needs to be referred to another program.

(See Chapter 12, page 38 on "Assessment for Placement.")

❸ Orientation

Why is this important?

- To let students know the basic policies of the program and what to expect.
- This is also your opportunity to get them excited about joining the program to be sure they come back!

What are some best practices for orientation?

- Be sure you can preemptively answer questions they will likely come with—start with letting them know why they should take your classes. It could be for employment, to go back to school, for other needs such as talking to their child's teacher.
- You'll want to tell them the days/times/dates of the classes and ask them if they are sure they can come during those times.
- You might include a calendar that has days of class and holidays.
- You can include your levels and how students are placed into class.
- If you have an attendance policy, you can inform them.
- You may have specific rules about cell phones, parking, smoking, etc.
- Some programs include other expectations: class participation, communication about any changes, mutual respect, tips for getting the most out of class, expectations for what students should do outside class, textbooks used, disability issues, students' rights and responsibilities.

- Provide information about some of the ways they can overcome obstacles to attending class. You might tell them about any services your organization provides.
- This can also be a good time to tell students to let their friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors know about your classes.
- Printed material that potential students can leave with that has some of the information covered at the orientation and contact information.

There is a lot of information here. Not all of this would need to be included in the orientation. Some programs have a student handbook. For your orientation, less may be more, and you may want to focus on what you determine are the essentials. You can always inform them about the rest once classes start.

■ What are some options for conducting intake?

- one date and do all events (registration, testing, orientation) at once
- multiple dates to do all events on each date
- multiple dates to register and have one date to do orientation and testing
- online registration form inviting students to come to orientation and testing after they complete it

No matter which option above your program utilizes, you will want to have sufficient program staff or volunteers present to assist learners. This will depend on the number of people expected, the type of assessment taking place and the facility. Many programs require some or all of their instructors to be present at intake to conduct testing. It is a good idea to have extra help on hand, i.e. volunteers. Staggering the intake times can also be done to manage the volume. In addition, if you know that a majority of your learners are speakers of a particular language, you may find it helpful to have a bilingual registration form as well as staff/volunteers who can speak this language on hand for intake.

Be prepared to respond to phone calls or in person queries in advance of registration. Answer calls promptly. Alert students if they should plan to come early. Have a system for contacting students who don't get into the class to invite them to the next registration, and/or connect them with other programs if there is no room in yours. (In Montgomery County, you can also connect any students or teachers with the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center, who can help students find other classes, if you are not staffed for referral. This is part of the Center's mandate.)

Catholic Charities and Chinese Culture and Community Services Center

Laura Irwin, Supervisor of the ESOL program at Catholic Charities' Spanish Catholic Center in Gaithersburg, discusses their intake process, which includes an innovative online registration system:

"In order to expedite the registration process, we utilize an online form. We created a form by using a free program called 'Jotform'. The online form requires learners to enter the required information to satisfy our registration process. The responses are sent directly to the Program Supervisor's email address. Once received, the information can be directly recorded into Catholic Charities' database. The use of this form allows us to maintain uniformity in the data collected and ensures all required fields are completed, thus assisting in the compilation of data and the creation of an individual identification for the learners.

Interested participants can contact us to receive a text message to their phones with the link to the registration form. This approach makes it easier for learners to receive specific information about upcoming registration periods and it allows them to be immediately connected via cell phone with the program supervisor. This online system helps to better manage the intake process; we encourage and request new participants to preregister for the placement test. All those who preregister are able to take the placement test on a predetermined day. Any remaining spaces are opened to those students who walk in on the day of testing and registration. If there are not enough spaces for participants, they are referred to another registration day. The online intake form is only the first step of the registration process. On the day of the placement test, learners also

Prospective students receive a text, setting up a connection.

complete the required forms for release of information, rights and responsibilities, financial commitment, and all other required documents for participation in a program through Catholic Charities.

Catholic Charities

Spanish Catholic Center ESOL Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 1993

Based on its learner community's needs, this long-standing program recently adjusted its adult ESOL curriculum to incorporate more opportunities for learners to gain numeracy skills.

2017-18 DATA
CLASS SITES: 3   **CLASS LEVELS:** 5
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 387 (unique)/
861 (duplicated)

We hold an orientation on the first day of classes (both during the week and Saturdays) for all learners together at each of our sites. During this motivational orientation, students are welcomed and encouraged to persevere through graduation. They also receive information on policies and procedures regarding the use of the space and are introduced to all the services provided by the Spanish Catholic Center in Gaithersburg."

Chinese Culture and Community Service Center (CCACC)

CCACC Adult English Literacy Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 1988

CCACC offers English classes at its community center in Gaithersburg, alongside its other classes and services.

2017-18 DATA
CLASS SITES: 1   **CLASS LEVELS:** 5
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 133 unique/
280 duplicated

See Resources, p. 81 for full size document.

Chiao-chiao Liu, Education Director at the Chinese Culture and Community Service Center (CCACC), describes the registration process for CCACC's adult ESOL program below.

"CCACC does not have a set registration day, but interested learners are asked to contact the program in advance to reserve a spot.

For existing/continuing students:

1. They usually just pick up from where they were in their previous classes.

2. They need to let me know which class they want to take to reserve a spot. I have to make sure we have at least six people to open a class.

3. For existing students, their names and information are in our ESOL master database. We also give a pretest in the first class to make sure students are placed in the right place.

For new students:

1. I will talk to the potential students first; based on our conversation (I usually ask them if they have learned English before, if so, for how long, and what textbooks have they used, etc.), I can usually tell their English levels, such as ESOL 1/ESOL 2/ESOL 3... If it's convenient, I will ask them to stop by to fill out the registration form and take a look at our ESOL textbooks.

2. As long as students have reserved a spot, they can also choose to register on the first day of class. I will then add their information to my ESOL database.

We use social media to communicate with students. I send out the new class schedule through social media, and remind students about homework assignments, special activities, schedule changes, etc. in this way."

We use social media to communicate with our students.

* Ensuring Students' Success in Your Program

Recruiting and Retaining Instructors

How do I find good instructors and retain them?

▶ **Know what to include in a job announcement, where to post it, and what interview questions to ask. Putting into place measures to retain instructors once they are on board is helpful in protecting this program "asset", and the investment of time and energy you put into recruiting instructors.**

The first step in the recruitment process is developing a job announcement that draws the attention of the "right" candidates. Here are some tips to get started:

■ What should I put in the job advertisement?

- Pick the job title. "Adult ESOL Instructor" works, but others can too. You might explain a bit more in case the applicant is not familiar with "ESOL."

- Make sure you are selling the job. They are changing lives, helping the community. Think about what your mission is and how this role fits in.

- Describe your organization. Keep it brief but highlight what makes you great! You can also provide links to your social media.

- Use "you" rather than "instructors" or "the successful applicant." Do whatever you can to get them engaged.

- Be clear about what the job entails. It might just be teaching, or you might have other roles you want them to play. Let them know when and where the class is offered and if there is any compensation or if there are any other perks to the job.

- Make sure the requirements and desired qualifications are clearly delineated. Think carefully about what you want the requirements to be. Those who don't have them all will likely not apply.

- Don't forget to tell them *how* to apply. They'll want to send a resume, but maybe a cover letter, too, that describes their interest. Be sure there are an email address, fax number, and physical address, so they have options. And your contact phone number so they can ask any questions (and you can sell them on applying on the phone)!

- Mention flexibility and willingness to work with adults from different cultures.

- And don't go overboard with the description: short, sweet, and eye-catching.

■ Where should I post the ad?

In Maryland, search online for these organizations:
- MCAEL (Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy)

- WATESOL (Washington DC TESOL, but many of the active members are in the DC metro area)

- MDTESOL (Maryland TESOL)

- MAACCE (Maryland Association for Adult, Community and Continuing Education)

- Idealist.org

- Teacher training institutions

You can also see if you might get your ad into newsletters of organizations, including social service agencies and faith-based groups, in your area. Be sure you post it on any social media you have or those of groups in your area.

■ What are some questions I can ask potential instructors?

For everyone:

QUESTION: What do you know about our program?
This is a good way to find out how much they have looked into the program and can allow you to tell them more about what you do. It can also help to focus the interview and tell you if they are really interested in the job.

QUESTION: The class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3–5 p.m. and runs through the end of May. Are you able to commit during that time?
Continuity is a vital part of student retention. If a teacher often needs a sub or leaves before the end of the session, it will have a negative impact on overall student attendance and retention. ESOL students seem to become particularly attached to their teacher.

Here is a sample ad:

Linkages to Learning Adult ESOL Substitute Instructor

Linkages to Learning, a collaboration between Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, and local non-profit organizations, is looking for substitute Instructors for our adult ESOL classes. Classes are held weekdays (morning & evening hours) in Montgomery County Public Schools.

Candidates should have some background in teaching adults, preferably in ESOL, and must have a degree from an accredited college. The pay scale is comparable to those offered by other non-profit agencies.

For consideration, please submit a resume and letter of interest to *name*, *title* at *email address*.

For people who are new to the ESOL field:

QUESTION: Why are you interested in teaching ESOL?
Teaching a class isn't easy. The answer should show some commitment, not just that they want something to do.

QUESTION: Have you ever learned another language? What were some things your instructors did that you would like to do in your class? What are some things you would not do?
This will give you an idea if they know the struggles of your students. We also often teach the way we learned. That can be both helpful and not so much!

If the answer is "yes" to the above question, you can follow up to ask if they learned the language while living in another country or working with those who came from the other culture. Since part of learning English as an immigrant to the U.S. is effectively navigating new systems (i.e., integration), it will be helpful to know if they have done this themselves and how that might impact how they will approach instruction.

QUESTION: What in your experience will help you to do this job?
This can let you know if the candidate has experience in teaching overall or training of adults, and that they can use what they learned in the classroom.

For those who have training and/or experience:

QUESTION: Tell me about your teaching style.
You'll want to know if they have one. Does it focus on students' needs and interests?

QUESTION: Describe a lesson plan you have used.
You can consider if it is organized well, if it has students interacting with each other or if it is mostly the students talking. Ask yourself if this is a lesson you think students would enjoy and benefit from.

QUESTION: What kind of materials do you use in class?
Consider if they go beyond just going through the textbook/workbook. Do they use realia (real objects), other handouts, smartphones? Are they being creative?

QUESTION: What is your favorite thing about teaching ESOL to adults?
You can see if there is any passion for what they do. Teaching English to adults is fun! Their answer should demonstrate that. The hope is that enthusiasm with manifest itself in the classroom.

■ What can be done to retain instructors?

Besides treating them with respect and giving them the opportunity for challenging, exciting work, there are a number of strategies that have been found to be successful:

- Provide a comprehensive orientation about what instructors need to do, how to do it, and what the expectations of the job are.

- Assign new teachers to a mentor instructor who can answer any questions. This will keep new instructors informed and supported and older instructors engaged and feeling valued.

- If possible, provide compensation, preferably at a competitive rate. If you do not have the budget to provide hourly wages, or this does not align with your organization's approach, consider a stipend or gift of some sort.

- Do team building activities, such as a happy hour.

- Be sure there is solid communication and reach out to them in many ways: emails, texts, meetings, an open-door policy.

- Provide opportunities for professional development for instructors. (See the section on that in this toolkit.) If possible, provide compensation. Learning new things will keep things fresh and help them to deal with burnout.

- Talk to the teachers to find out what levels they like to teach or if they like a variety of levels. Talk to them about projects they want to do or innovative practices they are trying and might be interested in sharing with others.

- Offer other roles to instructors if they are interested in doing other things.

- Give praise! Not just a "thanks for your work," but make them feel valued by being specific about what they did well and how it helped the program and the students.

Deciding on Levels and Objectives for Levels (Content Standards)

How do I decide what levels my program should have and what skills students should have at each level?

▶ **ESOL** leveling systems and content standards are important tools for understanding your students' English proficiency levels and establishing what skills should be achieved at each level, respectively. Smaller (or new) programs may only have one or two classes with students of more than one ESOL proficiency level in the class. (A web search on "teaching multi-level ESL classes" will yield a multitude of strategies on helping your instructors teach those types of classes.)

To understand the English level of each of your students, there are a number of different leveling systems; these are the most commonly used:

National Reporting System (NRS) Educational Functional Levels for ESL

https://nrsweb.org/sites/default/files/NRS-TA-January-2018-508.pdf
The level descriptors for ESL are in Appendix B, pages B19-B27.

The NRS system of levels is one that is used by many adult ESOL programs all over the United States. The level descriptions were updated in late 2017. It consists of six levels:

1. Beginning Literacy
2. Low Beginning
3. High Beginning
4. Low Intermediate
5. High Intermediate
6. Advanced

At each level there are outcomes that students should be able to meet to indicate they are ready to move on to the next level. The descriptions are broken down into what students should be able to do in three areas:

1. **Interpretive**: reading and listening in both their daily lives and in academic/work settings

2 **Productive**: speaking and writing in various contexts

3 **Interactive**: the skills needed to understand and create meaningful interactions in various contexts for both oral and written forms

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines

https://www.actfl.org/files/public/
ACTFLProficiencyGuidelines2012_FINAL.pdf

This is another common level system, though more for academic programs. It has a total of 11 levels. It covers what students should be able to do for five main levels and moves from someone with very few skills to the language skills of a "highly articulate, well educated language user." The levels are:

- Novice: Low | Mid | High

- Intermediate: Low | Mid | High

- Advanced: Low | Mid | High

- Superior

- Distinguished

The standards are organized by language skill rather than by level. The language skills covered are speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

■ How can content standards be used and what are some examples?

Once you have determined the level system, you can also look at a variety of standards that can help you decide what students should be able to do at each level.

Content standards describe what students should know or be able to do based on a level system. Within the standards are outcomes that demonstrate the students are able to meet the standards. In addition to telling you what students should know and be able to do, the contents standards and outcomes can also help you and your instructors know what to teach and focus in on and how to assess progress. They can also help you to be able to talk to students and people inside and outside your organization about what you are teaching students.

Maryland Content Standards

https://www.dllr.state.md.us/gedmd/cs/eslcs.doc

These standards are also based on six NRS levels (Literacy—Advanced), though an earlier version.

They start by indicating what oral and written skills students should have when they are place in that level,

as well as the workplace skills they should have.

They then break down what students should be able to do when they are ready to complete the level, regarding:

▪ Listening	▪ Speaking	▪ Pronunciation
▪ Reading	▪ Writing	▪ Grammar

Or if you would like to see what students should be able to do in each language skill area, there is a listing for those. For example, you can see what students should be able to do for reading at each level.

In addition to this there are also skills that can be incorporated into lesson planning regarding:

- Cultural Skills

- Workplace Skills

- Technology Skills (much of this is still relevant, but some is a bit out of date)

- Metacognitive Skills

There are also helpful chapters on:

- Unit Planning
- Lesson Planning

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for Adults

https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/elp-standards-adult-ed.pdf

The ELP standards are designed to take students beyond just life skills to increase the rigor of programs to better prepare them for college and careers. They also form the basis of the levels in the new NRS standards addressed above. There are essentially 10 standards that increase in complexity through five levels. There are standards that focus on *receptive* skills (reading and listening), *productive* skills (writing and speaking) and *linguistic* structures (vocabulary, grammar, and cohesion). There are also standards that are *interactive*, which means they involve using both receptive and productive skills. For example, students may be expected to be able to gather information from various written and digital sources and integrate that information into a short written report.

Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB): ESL for Adults

https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/
english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf

The CLB goes into much more depth and addresses many more areas of language ability than any of the other standards. While breaking down what students should be able to do across 12 levels for reading, listening, speaking, and writing, they also explain the skills students should have

✳ **Cecilia Rojas, Language Outreach Program Director for Community Reach,** on their recent program review to align the curriculum with the targeted class levels and the skills the learners wished to master:

"In 2018 the Language Outreach Program (LOP) formed a workgroup to review the current curriculum and course objectives for each of the levels offered in the program. The workgroup was comprised of new and returning teachers, students, and LOP administrative staff. Revisions were made to all the course objectives with particular emphasis in the development of new assessments for the speaking and listening areas.

- Based on the written and oral feedback we received from our student, teacher, and LOP staff evaluations, we felt that a comprehensive and in-depth review of our curriculum documents, assessments, and resources was warranted to ensure that everything meets the standards and

expectations of MCAEL; that required curriculum components are all present and complete; and finally that the curriculum is appropriate for the targeted level of the language learners.

- LOP is student-focused and we wanted to ensure our curriculum is not only following best practices in the field, but that it also squarely meets the needs and interests of our students. The vast majority of students expressed interest in improving their ability to speak English

Families felt frustrated when unable to participate in their children's parent-teacher conferences.

(communicate) for work, at the doctor's office, at school, and at other places they visit with family. Teachers expressed the need to improve the program's assessments to engage students in their

own learning and progression through the course materials. LOP staff noted the frustration many of the families felt when they are unable to fill out forms, fully participate in their children's parent-teacher conferences, or are unable to speak with their supervisors at work. Since its beginning, LOP has been responsive to the needs of the community it serves and that was the driving force in reviewing the curriculum and making the appropriate/needed improvements."

Community Reach Language Outreach Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 1993

The Language Outreach Program is a family-centered program that provides free childcare and tutoring for its adult ESOL students.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 4   **CLASS LEVELS:** 5

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 285 (unique)/382 (duplicated)

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related to the "communicative competence" model for language learning, incorporating organizational knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, and strategic competence. They further explain what students should be able to do in competency areas such as interacting with others, comprehending/giving directions, and "getting things done." They provide indicators to show the students have attained the various skills and specific classroom tasks that can help students to demonstrate they have achieved those indicators.

■ Are there other resources with more details about what students should be able to do?

CASAS Competencies

https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/curriculum-management-instruction/casas-competencies

CASAS "competencies" form the basis for the CASAS test used by many Adult ESOL programs. They are less focused specifically on language and more on what people need to do with the language, or what they need to be able to talk about. They are broken down into the content areas below.

- Basic Communication
- Community Resources
- Consumer Economics
- Health
- Employment
- Government and Law
- Math
- Learning and Thinking Skills
- Independent Living

The website provides:

- A list of the competencies by content area
- A list of which competencies are appropriate for each NRS level
- CASAS resource QuickSearch which allows you to find resources related to each competency

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) Companion Volume with New Descriptors

https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989

What distinguishes this framework is that it covers language skills of students not included in any others, such as compensating when they don't know what to say, explaining data, communicating online, and taking turns in a conversation.

Selection of Teaching Materials

How do we choose what instructors will use in the classroom?

▶ **Depending upon the size and type of the program, this is a decision that is sometimes made solely by the program manager but is usually a consultation between the program manager and the instructor(s).**

There are several options with regard to sourcing your instructional materials. Carefully considering what materials to use is key to ensuring your instructors can help students learn effectively.

1. Create materials
2. Choose materials online
3. Use a variety of materials from textbooks and activity books
4. Choose a textbook or textbook series
5. Use premade lesson plans
6. Any combination of these!

■ How do I know if these are the right materials for our students? What are some things we should consider when selecting materials?

Below are some checklists that can guide you through choosing materials; the chart to the right is an overview of what these resources cover.

https://www.mcael.org/sites/default/files/textbook_evaluation_checklist1rev7_2_10.pdf

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277795744_Thinking_of_the_textbook_in_the_ESLEFL_classroom/download

https://www.eflmagazine.com/choose-elt-textbook/

Considerations when selecting instructional materials

Essential questions	Reasons why
▶ Are they going to be easy for the instructor/students to use?	You want materials with clear directions and lots of ways that the instructor can use them.
▶ Are the topics going to be relevant to the students' lives/needs/goals?	Remember students want classes that are practical. Materials designed for children, for example, may be available, but not always appropriate for adults.
▶ Are the topics going to be interesting to students?	They should be based on what the students will be interested in. Sometimes materials are chosen for convenience or because the one doing the choosing are interested in them. Stay focused on the students.
▶ Do they have a wide variety of activities?	Student learn in lots of ways. Materials with group/pair work, open-ended questions, etc. should be used. Just having students fill in blanks and review questions in a workbook is not ideal.
▶ Are they culturally sensitive?	Avoid materials that may offend the students.
▶ Do they allow students to talk about their own experience?	This is key for really engaging the students and helping them internalize the new language, so they can use it later. Adults come with vast experience. They want to talk about it and connect it to what they are learning.
▶ Is there a mix of reading/writing/listening/speaking?	Most students want and/or need to improve all their skills. Just focusing on grammar and vocabulary, for example, won't get them very far.
▶ Are they connected with the mission of our program? Are they aligned with the standards I selected?	This helps you to focus in on what you are looking for in your materials—or may suggest some modifications to what you will do as a program.
▶ Are they up-to-date?	Books written more than 10 years ago may be less expensive but may not be relevant to students now in terms of topics and approach.
▶ Are they visually appealing?	Visually appealing is not necessarily crucial, but students will be more eager to use materials that are engaging. Do they have colors and pictures? Are they too cluttered?
▶ Are the materials affordable? Can they be used again by students?	Adult ESOL textbooks can be pricey, but if students can use them in multiple sessions, it may be worth it. Many times, rather than having students pay for commercial products, you can find something similar that is free online. For example, instead of paying for ESOL newspapers, students could use online materials such as Breaking News English or Voice of America.

■ What are some options for materials?

Adult ESOL Textbook Series:

Each of these textbooks has multiple levels that students can progress through. These textbooks have lessons that can build on each other. The texts also can be used for drop-in classes with self-contained units. Many have multi-level workbooks that can be used when you would need to combine classes. They may also have assessment guides.

Future: English for Results, Pearson Education

Stand Out, National Geographic/Cengage

Step Forward, Oxford University Press

Ventures, Cambridge University Press

Side by Side, Pearson

Supplementary resources for students:

Oxford Picture Dictionary, Jayme Adelson-Goldstein and Norma Shapiro. 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Word by Word Basic Picture Dictionary, Steven J. Molinsky & Bill Bliss. 2nd edition, Pearson Education ESL, 2009.

Understanding and Using English Grammar, Betty S. Azar and Stacy A. Hagen. 5th edition, Pearson Education ESL, 2017.

Books full of activities that teachers can use:

Recipes for Tired Teachers: Well-Seasoned Activities for the Esol Classroom, Christopher Sion. Pearson, 1984.

101 Bright Ideas: ESL Activities for All Ages, Claire Marie Ford. 1st Edition, Pearson Education ESL, 1996.

ESL Classroom Activities for Teens and Adults: ESL games, fluency activities and grammar drills for EFL and ESL students, Shelley Ann Vernon. 2nd edition, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012.

Compelling Conversations: Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics—An Engaging ESL Textbook for Advanced Students, Tony Aberson. 2nd edition, BookSurge Publishing, 2007.

Grammar Games: Cognitive, Affective and Drama Activities for EFL Students, Mario Rinvolucri. Revised edition, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Five-Minute Activities: A Resource Book of Short Activities, Penny Ur and Andrew Wright. 23rd edition, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Keep Talking: Communicative Fluency Activities for Language Teaching, Friederike Klippel. Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Games for Language Learning, Andrew Wright, David Betteridge and Michael Buckby. Third Edition Cambridge, University Press, 2006.

Sources for Adult ESOL Lesson Plans:

- Minnesota Literacy Council Curriculum and Lesson Plans
  https://mnliteracy.org/curriculum-lesson-plans

- Seminole State College ESL Lesson plans
  https://www.seminolestate.edu/els/lesson-plans/

- Maryland Department of Labor ESOL Customer Service Training Curriculum
  https://www.dllr.state.md.us/gedmd/customerservice.shtml

- Arlington Public Schools REEP Curriculum (Lesson Planning Activities)
  https://www.apsva.us/reep/eslcurriculum/

- Literacy Activities: Appalachian State University

- Center for Canadian Language Benchmarks (lesson plans are on the lower part of the page)
  https://www.language.ca/publications/english-publications-downloadable/

Christ Espiscopal Church
Task-based Lesson Plan: Home Fire Safety

✳ Below is a sample "task-based" lesson developed by Program Director Mary Belknap and the teachers of the English Conversation Club at Christ Episcopal Church. Developed for use in a drop-in conversation club, this lesson model has the express purpose of enabling learners to come away with the ability to achieve a certain task in English after only one class session.

Talking about Fire Safety in the Home
Purpose: By the end of the session, the students will be able to:

1 Give two pieces of advice about fire safety

2 Give information over the phone about a fire

Round robin topic: 7:00–7:10
Do you know what these images mean? (Smokey, Sparky, stop, drop and roll)

Lesson #1: 7:15-8:15—Fire safety
Preparation for the task (10 minutes)

Review facts and vocabulary on the handout.

Brainstorm: ways to prevent fires at home.

Point out the communicative differences between 'could' (possibility) and 'should' (recommendation). Give examples.

Task—Giving advice about fire prevention (seven minutes to work in pairs).

Divide into groups. Each group develops a list of five actions that will make their house safer from fire. Each group selects their two best ideas to present to the rest of the class.

Presentation: Students present their ideas

Highlight how English works—Expand on the uses of 'advice' verbs (could = uncertainty, politeness and should = advice). Point out that "would" is a polite suggestion that can only be used with 'I' in statement. "I would get rid of newspapers". "I wouldn't use extension cords"..

Lesson #2: 8:15–8:25 (if time)
Talk about the use of the 911 number.

Remind students that it is for emergencies only. Call 411 for non-emergencies.

Task: Tell the class they will work out this following scenario with a partner. Pretend you are calling the 911 Office. The operator already knows the problem and your name, but needs your address. Tell your partner your address. She/he writes it down. You check how accurately your partner understood you.

Wrap-up of the Session 8:30
Quick check (draw student's attention to what they can do now)

What is one thing you are going to do this week to improve fire safety in your home?

STOP!   DROP!   ROLL!

◀ **Round Robin topic: Sparkey the fire dog**

Fire Facts

Fires are fast—it takes less than 5 minutes for thick black smoke to fill a house.

Fires are hot—the floor of a room can reach 100º F within minutes.

Fires are dark—smoke is the greatest danger in a fire. If you wake up at night, you may be unable see anything.

Fire is deadly—On average, 7 people die in home fires every day. Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do.

What is the major cause of home fires? Cooking equipment (stoves, barbecues, etc.) cause the most fires but smoking is number one killer. Smoking materials that fall to the floor or into furniture cushions cause 19% of all deaths.

Vocabulary

Fire escape plan—a map of the interior of your home that shows two ways to get out of every room.

Meeting point—a place outside your home that everyone goes to immediately after you discover a fire.

Crawl—get down on your hands and knees if there is smoke.

Smoke detector—Every bedroom and hall of your home should have one. Replace the detector every 10 years.

CO detector—senses the presence of carbon monoxide, an odorless gas produced by incomplete combustion. Install one next to your furnace and your generator.

Circuit interrupters—an electrical plug that shuts off the power if the electricity is 'leaking out' from an appliance.

Fire extinguisher—a device that puts out fires by preventing air from getting to the fire. Be sure you practice using your fire extinguisher.

Teaching Handout: Fire Safety

Assessment for Placement

How do we decide what levels to put students into?

▸ **There are a number of methods and tools for assessing the skills of your students at the outset of a class.**

The options below range from informal to formal assessment; you will want to choose an option that fits the type of program you have and your organization's staff and budget resources.

General Assessment

- Many programs that are only doing a couple of levels, conversation classes, or drop-in programs just have students self-report to save time. It can be as simple as just asking if they think they are beginning or intermediate or asking how much English they know with appropriate hand gestures.

- Many textbooks have placement tests that will place students based on the levels for their textbooks.

- There are standardized tests that are aligned to the six National Reporting Standards (NRS) levels that can be used as placement tests. These have a cost involved.

  ▸ CASAS test: https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/assessments/appraisals

  ▸ Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Complete Language Assessment System—English: http://tabetest.com/students-2/tabe-class-e/

- Students might also self-assess by filling out a can-do chart, such as this one developed by Family Services, Inc (see Resources, p. 82 for full-size charts):

Can I....   Name: _____   Date: _____

Task	No, I can't 😞	Some 😐	Yes, but not very well 😊	Yes, I can! 😃
Obtain a library card and fill out other simple forms				
Read books, newspapers, magazines weekly in English				
Communicate with my neighbors in English				
Read a bus/metro schedule				
Answer the phone and take messages in English				
Write, read, and send an email				
Give street directions in English				
Read food labels and compare prices				
Communicate basic health/illness information with doctor in English				
Make a medical appointment using English				
Read a prescription bottle label				
Renew a prescription at the pharmacy using English				
Complete a resume in Microsoft Word				
Obtain a job interview				
Talk with my child's teacher in English				
Get involved in neighborhood activities using English				

- Other examples of can-do checklists can be found here: http://www.macmillanstraightforward.com/cef-materials/checklists/

Assessment of Specific Skills

You can also test students to see what they are able to do in the different areas of language. The advantage to this is that you can align it better with the outcomes you have for each of your levels. We have listed some general criteria often used to evaluate these skills. You could also use the content standards in Chapter 11 to set the criteria to help you to decide what you think students should be able to do for each of the levels in your program.

■ Writing Tests

What can students write about?

You can have them write about a variety of topics, but also demonstrate they can do a number of tasks. There are examples below and hundreds of prompts available online.

They can demonstrate how to give instructions:

It can be a question about giving directions (turn right, go straight, etc.) or how to do something. It can also be series of pictures in a sequence that they can explain.

They can describe something:

It could be a picture with a number of things going on, like a picture of a workplace.

You can see what sort of vocabulary they have about a topic:

Make a list of things you do at work.
Describe the things you do when you go to the doctor.

You can give a task that requires they use a particular type of grammar:

Imagine you had a month when you could do anything you wanted. What would you do?

What are some things you haven't done in your life yet that you want to do?

You could have them express a point of view:

What do you think are the best ways to learn English?

They can compare and contrast something:

How is your country different from 100 years ago?
How will it be different 100 years in the future?

They can tell a story:

Tell me the story about how you got your first job.

They can talk about a problem and a solution:

What is a goal you want to reach? What can you do to reach it?

How do I evaluate their writing?

Rubrics give a set of criteria that can be used to evaluate what students produce. A writing rubric can include topics such as:
- Connection between ideas (focus on the topic of the writing)
- Sentence structure (from simple sentences with one clause—one subject and verb, such as "I eat breakfast."—to more complicated compound sentences with multiple clauses, such as "I eat breakfast late each morning because I don't get up early, which makes me late for work.")
- Number of sentences
- Grammar
- Vocabulary choice
- Mechanics: punctuation, spelling, capitalization
- For higher levels: clear topic sentence with supporting ideas

■ Oral Tests

Most of these assessments look at a variety of criteria:

- Related to the topic
- Amount of time spent speaking (one-word answers to a long period of time)
- Appropriate grammar and vocabulary
- Simple/complex language used
- Comprehensible pronunciation
- Fluency (how hesitant is the speech?)
- Interaction (can they maintain the conversation?)
- Compensation strategies (what do they do when they aren't sure how to respond?)
- Prompting (how much extra do you have to say to get them to understand the question or keep talking?)

Most of these tests will go through a series of questions that move from simple to more complex.

These are some examples:

Connect Placement Test
http://old.fltrp.com/download/11011811.pdf

English Unlimited Placement Test
http://shvidko172.narod.ru/olderfiles/1/Oral_Placement_Test.pdf

Cambridge Face2Face Oral Placement Test
http://www.cambridge.org/elt/face2face/resources/placement-test/OralTestQuestionBank.pdf

IECP Penn State Oral Placement Test
https://scholarsphere.psu.edu/concern/generic_works/d217qp592

Other options: You can give them a topic and ask them to talk for one minute. (If you have access to video, you can show them an example.) The questions listed in the "Writing Tests" section are some examples of what you can ask.

Considerations when selecting placement tests

	Standardized Tests (CASAS, etc.)	**Textbook placement test**	**Creating your own placement tests**
▶ **Assesses all four skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking**	Yes	Generally, not equally well	Program determines
▶ **Aligned to levels in your program**	These are aligned to National Reporting System Standard levels (See the chapter on determining levels)	Aligned to textbook series (Book 1, Book 2, etc.)	Yes, you can create assessments specific to your program
▶ **Training needed for those administering the tests**	Most of the tests have required training, which often can be done online, but giving the test is generally a straight-forward process	No required training, but if there is an oral component, it may need some training to standardize evaluation	Depends on what you decide to do, but may need training if you have specific criteria you are using
▶ **Time involved to administer, grade, and decide on levels**	2–3 hours	1–2 hours	Program determines, but can be done quickly
▶ **Cost**	Generally expensive. You must use their materials	Not very expensive. Many series allow you to print these out from CD, website, or their books	Varies on what you decide, but potentially much less expensive than other options
▶ **Flexibility in regard to what is assessed and how**	None—these are set questions in set formats	Not a lot, but many of the text series have test generators that will allow you to choose questions	Total flexibility and you can revise as needed

A Conversation with Linkages to Learning

We discuss with Debi Edick, Coordinator, Family English Literacy Program at Linkages to Learning, changes they made to improve the way they assess students for placement:

To begin with, why did you choose to make the change from what you were doing before?

"When I took over as ESOL coordinator the 'placement' test being used was something the previous coordinator had developed. I wanted a placement test that could be used for any level learner and tested learners on what they would be learning once they started ESOL class. We wanted to make the test comprehensive but not overwhelming, especially for low-level students or students with limited experience in an educational setting."

What do you do in the test? What are the skills that you cover, and how do you assess those skills?

"Our primary textbook for the program, Ventures, has a placement test that focuses on reading and grammar recognition. While it's not perfect, it definitely helps us place learners in the appropriate level of that textbook. Before administering the placement, we conduct a brief interview with potential learners to help determine their speaking and listening skills. Potential learners also fill out a registration form; if we notice they have

trouble with this (can only write in a non-Roman alphabet, don't know how to hold a writing utensil, etc.) we typically forgo the placement test and automatically place them in our basic literacy level.

Those learners who display basic reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are given the placement test. We reiterate that the purpose of the test is to help determine the best class for them and they should not be nervous (although they always are).

The placement test is long, 40 questions, so we typically break it up into two parts. If a learner easily gets through the first 10-13 questions we give them the remainder of the placement test, if not, we stop there so the learner does not become frustrated or upset."

What are the benefits you have seen to these changes?

"Again, the placement test is definitely not perfect. We would like something to measure all four areas of language (reading, writing, speaking, listening) more fully, but the combination of placement test and interviews has definitely helped us to place learners in the appropriate level. We still end up having learners we need to switch to different levels a couple of weeks into the course, but that is happening much less frequently than it used to."

Linkages to Learning Family English Literacy Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 2006

The Linkages to Learning Family English Literacy Program is offered in the evenings at Montgomery County public schools for parents/community members to increase parent/school and civic engagement and parents' ability to support their children's academic success.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 11   **CLASS LEVELS:** 4

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 652 unique 920 duplicated

What are challenges you have had to overcome?

"At sites where we only offer one level, on-site coordinators will sometimes put a learner in a level because that is the only level offered (regardless if the learner actually placed in a lower/higher level). I ask site-staff to refer learners to another Linkages site or contact me, so we can refer the learner to another program where they can be in the correct level. But often the learner wants our location because their child attends that school, so it is a) a very convenient location for them and b) they have a certain comfort level with said location."

■ Listening/Reading Tests

Listening and reading tests often ask students to demonstrate they can do the same sorts of tasks. Questions look at whether students can:

- Figure out the main idea
- Identify important details
- Answer inference questions
- Guess the meaning of unknown words
- Identify referents in reference words, such as he, it, them, etc.
- Decide what might come next
- Say where they might hear/read the passage

Are there other options?

Some programs have tried a placement test students can do before they come to register for the program.

Brookline Adult and Community Education ESL Placement Test
http://www.brooklineadulted.org/esl-placement-test/

What many programs will do is a combination of these types of tests. For example, many of the standardized and textbook placement tests may adequately assess reading, listening, grammar, and vocabulary, but not assess speaking well or at all. So, in addition to using those tests, programs may design (or find online) a speaking assessment to place students.

Determining Students' Goals

Why is it important to find out the goals of students?

▶ **As we mentioned in the chapter on the basics of adult learning, adults are typically goal driven. If your instructors can be sure the classes are focused on the students' reasons for learning English, you will have an easier time keeping them coming to class.**

Learning about students' goals will also help you create a welcoming environment by asking students to talk about their own needs, and respecting and responding to their goals. Helping teachers and students get to know each other will help students feel more comfortable and therefore learn more and be more likely to continue with the program.

- -

■ What do we want to ask?

- You might start with skill areas that they think are most important to them: speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar, pronunciation. You can include other areas like conversational English or academic reading.

- You can also focus on reasons they may have for learning English such as to go back to school, achieve their GED, get a job, speak to their child's teacher, or talk with a doctor.

- If your program uses textbooks and/or has a curriculum in place, you may want to customize your questions regarding student goals to the program. For example, you would not want to ask about a student's writing goals if you will not be doing any writing instruction.

A Conversation with the Literacy Council of Montgomery County (LCMC)

Ahu Moser, Director of Academic Programming at LCMC, breaks down the goal-setting process for their ESL Classroom Program.

What was the reason behind creating this process?

"In the past, we had a goal sheet for students to fill out on the first day of the class. It had five goals in total, and we asked students to choose as many goals as they wanted. However, we determined we should not ask students to choose as many goals as possible because our evaluation of goal sheets at the end of the year showed us that choosing too many of the goals made students less focused."

So what did you do?

"Our leadership team met to streamline the goal process. The new process and the goal sheet allow staff and instructors to encourage students to reach their goals in a more effective and efficient way.

We have three main pathways for our students. These pathways are based on ultimate end-goals for the student:

1. Education: for students who want to go to college and/or get advanced vocational training
2. Economic: for students who need family-sustaining employment
3. Everyday Living: for students who just want to navigate the culture better"

When does the goal setting process start?

"During the intake process, students indicate on the registration forms which of these is the main driver for coming to us. We know that students might have more than one of these end-goals driving their decision to study, but our aim is to get them to focus on the one that is the most important to them and to then help them create a path towards that goal made up of smaller targets that we call 'Squish Goals.' We call them Squish Goals because they are not goals that are always captured by hard metrics, but they are goals that will push the student towards their chosen pathway.

We also believe in the importance of explaining to students during the orientation what each goal means and represents. Bilingual staff assists at the registration site to help students with low English language skills."

What role do these goals play in the classroom?

"Once this information is gathered at intake, students are given specific goal sheets (Economic, Educational or Everyday Living) upon entering the classroom program. The goals align with the track the student is on. We use this data to better serve our learners by connecting them with resources to accomplish their goals and to help us as we create new programming."

Literacy Council of Montgomery County ESL Classroom Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL CLASSES: 1963

In addition to its Classroom program, LCMC runs a tutor program that matches volunteer tutors with learners.

2017–18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 7   Class levels: 4

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 1071 unique/ 1136 duplicated

How are the instructors involved?

"All instructors are provided with lesson plans to implement goal planning. Within the first six hours of instruction, students are required to select two achievable Squish Goals pertaining to the pathway they selected during the intake process. This data is used by instructors to create personalized and flexible instruction for students.

We also utilize Midpoint Progress Reports (MPRs). They allow instructors to identify students' strengths and weaknesses related to their goals and are used as a supplement to help students achieve their stated goals. We believe that MPRs will allow students to have a more active role in reaching their goals, which has the added benefit of directly affecting student retention rates."

Some other options are:

- What their past experience with learning English is.

  How long it has been since they last studied English, how long they studied, where they studied (in school, on their own, online, etc.)

- What their highest level of education in their own country is. This can give you an idea about goals they may have related to improving their literacy skills. It can also indicate methods instructors will use to help them meet their goals if they have limited literacy or little experience within an interactive (or any) classroom.

- What their perceived strengths are in English.

- How they feel about learning English. The idea is to learn more about how much confidence they feel when using English, learning it, and being in a classroom setting.

- If there is something they need to learn that is time sensitive. That may be a priority.

- Whether there is something very specific that they want to learn. They might want to learn English for a specific type of work. If class time can't be dedicated to it, then possibly extra work outside class can be given. Or if for example, they are looking to pass the TOEFL test, it might be better to refer them to a program that can do that.

- What supports they have to ensure they can stay in class. For example, do they have someone who can watch their children?

What advice do you have about student goal-setting?

Anna DeNicolo, Program Manager of the Gilchrist Immigration Resource Center

ESOL Classes

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 2001

Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center is a Montgomery County agency that provides information and educational opportunities to immigrants in the county.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 4   **CLASS LEVELS:** 4

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 292 unique/385 duplicated

"It's helpful for provider organizations to bear in mind that language skill levels, cultural factors, education levels, and other factors can impact communication with students and make it difficult to get useful answers about student goals that you can use in program planning."

Be sensitive to factors that could hinder identifying goals

"Different strategies should be used for students at a pre-literacy or basic level vs. intermediate or advanced levels. Care should be taken regarding gender and religion—for example, some female students might feel uncomfortable answering questions about their goals to a male teacher or with a spouse present. Students with little formal schooling may struggle with different types of assessments. Visual learners might respond

Some students will be shy speaking about goals in front of the class

better to written approaches while auditory learners might do better with a different approach. Some students will be shy and uncomfortable answering questions about their goals in front of the class. Some may not even have a clear understanding of what their goals are."

Consider one-on-one goal setting

"Students may be more comfortable once there have been some "getting to know you" exercises or one-on-one interviews with the instructor, as opposed to answering questions in front of the entire class at the beginning of the program. Keep in mind that some of your students may not have been in a classroom in a very long time."

■ How can we learn about student goals?

The simplest way is to just ask. The question of why they want to take an ESOL class will typically get puzzled looks and the answer "to learn English," which doesn't help much. Following up with general questions like "Why do you want to learn English?" may cause similar confusion. More effective questions are:

"When and where do you use English in your life?"

"What do you have the most difficulty with in English?"

You may want more detail, however, and to have your teachers be more specific.

- For higher-level students a survey will work, or if you are using a textbook without a set curriculum, students can rank the various units.

- You can do mind mapping and other charts to dig deeper into what they need. This website has some good examples of mind maps:

Top 10 Interesting Mind Map Examples for Students
https://www.edrawsoft.com/mindmap-examples-for-students.php

REEP
https://www.apsva.us/reep/eslcurriculum/
Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP) has a number of tools ready to use in the "Instructional Planning" section of their curriculum for adults webpage.

- For lower-level students, pictures of topics can work well. Students can ID pictures on a paper, or some instructors will post the pictures around the room and students can go to the one that is their first, and then second choice. For examples of goal questionnaires (including one with pictures), see MCAEL's Instructor Toolkit, Appendix A, p. 36, at: https://www.mcael.org/sites/default/files/mcael.instructortoolkit_fin.pdf

- For some of its classes, Family Services utilizes a "can do" form that assesses skills (like that featured in Chapter 12) as the basis for helping students identify their goals related specifically to these life skills. (See Resources, p. 82 for can-do form with goals selection.)

■ When should we ask about student goals?

This can be done during orientation, during the first class or a mix of both. It could also be done on students' phones using surveys (such as Google Forms) anytime in the process.

It is also important to get feedback along the way and at the end. Instructors can do exit tickets to see how well students see their goals being met. As administrators, you can also create focus groups for students, instructors, or other stakeholders to get feedback about areas of your curriculum and how well the needs of the students are being met.

Assessment for Learner Gains

How do we know if our students are making progress during the class and/or are ready to move to the next level at the end of the class?

▶ **Assessment for progress can be done at different points during the class, and there are a number of ways you can go about this.**

Many programs find it useful to give students a test at the beginning of the term (a pretest) and at the end of a term (a posttest) in order to see if students have made progress during the session. You will want to work with your instructors to have them do ongoing assessment, evaluating students in a variety of ways throughout the term to give instructors a lot of information about how the class is going and whether the students have met the outcomes set by the class.

Here are different approaches you can take (or you can use a combination of any of these):

- Textbook assessments
- Standardized tests
- Tests created by instructors/program
- Informal assessments

■ Why use textbook assessments?

Most of the textbook series have chapter and/or unit tests in their teacher's guides to give you a measure of how the students are doing in relation to the outcomes of the text. Some of them also have separate

A Conversation with Montgomery College

Montgomery College Adult ESOL and Literacy Grant (AELG) Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL CLASSES: 2006

The AELG program at Montgomery College offers adult ESOL classes, contextualized/vocational ESOL, and adult literacy year-round across Montgomery County.

2017–18 DATA
CLASS SITES: 15
CLASS LEVELS: 6
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 4,984 unique/9,420 duplicated

We start with the CASAS scores. If they are not close to the next level, they stay in the same level.

Margaret Shrager, Intake and Assessment Specialist in the Adult ESOL and Literacy Grant (AELG) program at Montgomery College, discusses an approach to the challenges of using a standardized test to figure out whether a student should pass or not.

What is the challenge with using standardized tests to decide if students should pass the class?

"Using standardized tests such as CASAS or TABE as the pretest and posttest to determine whether or not a student should move up to the next level can be challenging. They are aligned to National Reporting System (NRS) levels, which we use in the program, and are generally reliable. But they may not always give a complete picture of how well the student met all the outcomes of the level. For example, on the posttest day, the student may have been tired, may not take tests well, or may just not be used to the format of this test based on their educational background. Additionally, the tests only measure certain skills—in our case, listening and reading. Productive skills are not measured at all on these tests, which is an important factor to consider when placing students."

So what do you do?

"We use listening and reading CASAS tests at AELG and follow all regulations and CASAS guidelines related to reporting the scores and completion rates as mandated by our funders. However, for internal decisions related to what class to put them in for subsequent sessions, we have some flexibility.

We always start with the CASAS scores. If the listening and reading scores are not close to the scores they need to move to the next level, they will stay in the same level. However, if one of the test scores demonstrates they should move up, and the other is close to the move-up score, instructors can make a recommendation for the student to move to the next level based on other assessments they have done in class. For example, if the student is in a high beginning class and has a reading posttest score that puts them solidly in the low intermediate range and a listening score that is a couple of points short of the low intermediate cutoff, the instructor will indicate on their intake form what level they think the student should be in next and why. It is only a recommendation, though. I make all final decisions and will look at other factors, such as whether this was the first time the student has taken the level and how they did on tests in previous classes, before deciding which level is appropriate for the student."

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assessment guides you can use. They may also have online resources where instructors can create tests and choose the questions they want to use.

These tests can be used as pre/post tests and ongoing assessments.

Instructors can also use workbooks or the online practice activities associated with the textbook series to do ongoing assessment.

■ Why use standardized assessments?

There are a variety of standardized assessments used by adult education ESOL programs that can give an objective picture of how students are doing that can also be consistent across the program. These can be used as placement tests as well as pretests and posttests. These each have both paper and online tests. All of the ones to the right align with NRS levels (see Chapter 10, p.31). They all have costs involved.

CASAS Test

This is the most common one used across the country. They offer both listening and reading multiple-choice tests. Students can take a pretest and posttest.
https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/assessments/life-and-work-reading

https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/assessments/life-and-work-listening

TABE Complete Language Assessment System—English (TABE CLAS-E)

This test includes more skills than CASAS with tests on reading, listening, writing, and an optional speaking test. It can also be used as a pre and posttest.
http://tabetest.com/students-2/tabe-class-e/

BEST Plus

This test has listening and speaking and involves extensive training for those who administer it.
http://www.cal.org/aea/bp/

■ Why use instructor-created assessments?

You may have outcomes for your courses that are not addressed in book tests or standardized assessments. In addition, if your program focuses on student goals, you may want to create your own assessments to find out if students have met the outcomes they have set out for themselves. Your program or instructors can create their own larger pre/post tests or tests for particular units based around materials covered in the class.

There are a number of resources online to create assessments students can do, which can be tailored to outcomes you have in your course. Examples include:

QUIZLET: Create quizzes that students can take on their own

KAHOOT: Done in class, a quick and fun way to see if students understood concepts in a multiple-choice format

GOOGLE FORMS: Used to test in a variety of ways and formats

■ Why use informal assessments?

You can use these to do ongoing assessment over the course of the class. And they can be a better measure of progress when working with learners who are not "good test takers" when assessed in a formal setting or who have limited experience in a formal education setting and therefore weaker test-taking skills.

Some of these may already be created or may be put together by the instructor or program:

- Performance samples—such as writing samples, worksheets, audio (recorded on their phones), projects
- Informal reading inventory (these give you a "grade Level" for what they can do); this is an example: http://wps. ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/2688/2753469/Richek_ AppD.pdf
- Learner self-evaluation (can-do charts, questions about confidence, exit tickets)
- Learning plans and logs (what they want to learn and whether or not they did)
- Computer-generated assessments—such as by topic or subject area (there are lots of things that can be done online)
- Teacher-designed quizzes
- Interviews and teacher observations (teachers can keep track of what they observe in a log)
- Journals (students write at home about a variety of topics and can get feedback from instructors)
- In-class writing assessments

✳ *PRACTICE EXAMPLE*

Bender JCC of Greater Washington

Stacy Katz-Olivera,
Adult Program Coordinator

Gateway Seniors ESOL Program

FIRST OFFERED GATEWAY SENIORS ESOL CLASSES: 1993
Bender JCC runs one of a few programs in the county that are mainly geared toward seniors.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 1   **CLASS LEVELS:** 4
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 64 unique/124 duplicated

Stacy discusses some of the challenges they have with assessing and promoting students in their Gateways ESOL program for seniors:

"We often encounter a stumbling block with our students over the topic of assessments or evaluations. Just the idea of knowing that those things are part of our program frightens them. We are lucky to have an instructor who spends extra time with the students, just talking with them. Asking questions about the program, but in a way that does not come across as anything other than small talk. The students have taken to her and they have become comfortable speaking with her more freely about the program and their progress. As for promoting them to the next level, it is really on a case-by-case basis.

We are lucky to have an instructor who spends extra time with the students, just talking with them.

As my students do NOT like change, I will suggest they move to the next level, but the reality is they are going to stay with their teacher and grow with them; otherwise, they move on to a Citizenship Class. We have some students who have been with the same teacher for over 15 years. Not an ideal situation but that is who my students are."

ONGOING SELF-ASSESSMENTS

Exit Tickets

One way to do ongoing self-assessments is to do daily exit tickets in which instructors ask students to give feedback on the instruction in the class. It gives the instructor immediate input on what went well and what may need to be reviewed or taught differently in future classes. There are a variety of things you can ask about:

Students' general feeling about the class:

• What did you like best about today's class?

• What was the most useful/interesting/exciting thing you learned today?

Checking to see if they learned what your outcome was:

• Write down one thing you have done that no one else in the class has done.

• Write three body parts you learned today.

• What do you think is the most challenging part of writing a resume?

Seeing how they feel about how you conducted the class:

• How did you feel about the pair work to check your answers?

Finding out what didn't go as well:

• Tell me a question you have about the lesson.

• I am still not sure I understand…

Deciding what comes next:

• I would like to learn more about…

• In future lessons, I would like to learn about…

At the end of each class, instructors can just write one of these on the board, on small cards, as a handout, or students can do it online:

https://www.teachthought.com/technology/smart-tools-for-digital-exit-slips/

* Keeping Students in Your Program

Retention and Building a Community of Learners

How can we do a better job at retaining students?

▶ **There are a number of things that both instructors can do and program managers can do. Although you may not have control over some of the reasons students stop coming to class, a proactive approach to retaining students will likely have results. (See the next two chapters on Transition and Support Services for additional ideas for learner retention.)**

Adult learners have a multitude of obligations, so even well-established programs can have difficulty keeping students coming to class. Very few adult ESOL classes have a 100% retention rate. If events outside your control happen, such as their job schedule changes or a new family obligation arises, there may not be a lot you can do to keep them in the class they started. Nevertheless, many students stop coming even when their life is not getting in the way of attending class. This chapter discusses ways we can avoid losing those students.

■ What tips can I give instructors to help student retention?

There are simple things teachers can do to show that they care:

- Learn students' names and show interest in their lives, interests, goals, experience, and culture.

- Make sure students know they should talk to the teacher if they think they have to drop the class. The instructors should be aware of what resources are available to students to help them overcome barriers.

- Create a learning environment that is a safe one. Students should be able to come to a place where they can try out new things and make mistakes without concern about the risks to their self-esteem or judgment. Find ways to praise success in the class.

Rockville Senior Center

Amoke Alakoye, MHS, MSM, ESOL program coordinator for the Rockville Senior Center English Program, and instructor at Community Reach, suggests a few ways an instructor can create a welcoming environment in the classroom, to better retain students.

"In addition to the usual warm and exciting welcome of the first day of class, I work to intentionally maintain that environment throughout the semester. My goal is to have a comfortable, respectful/safe, nurturing, familiar yet fun and dynamic learning space."

Respectful/safe: "I teach adults; more than half of the learners are working outside of their homes. Most of them come straight from work and a couple leave my class and go to their shift. So in addition to being respectful to their person, I am mindful to be respectful to their time. The safe part of this component manifests itself in the control of the classroom. This is a safe area to try things one may be unsure of, a safe place to volunteer answers, to offer ideas because we have some established rules. One of the rules is we do not talk or have side conversations when another learner or I am speaking."

Familiar: "I provide homeostasis, which is a state of balance, in the classroom by having some routines. For example, I have a warm-up exercise on the board at the start of every class which learners are expected to copy into their notebooks as soon as they arrive. Once class begins, I read the warm-up and they repeat. After week three, I begin calling upon random learners to be the professor and use my pointer to lead the reading and reciting. As the weeks progress, I use the warm-up in different ways, but keep the learner role intact."

Fun and Dynamic: "While my classroom has rules of conduct, routine, and lesson plans we also have humor and laughter. For instance, when I begin omitting words, misspelling words, writing the wrong parts

Students get a kick out of the fact that the teacher can make such blatant mistakes.

of the date, or crazy weather patterns in the warm-up, students usually get a big kick out of the fact that the teacher can make such blatant mistakes or that I think they will not notice the mistakes. My humor is almost always directed at myself with something I have done or observed, or I point at something societal that is relatable to them."

Building community in the classroom: "I use name tents as one of the tools in building community. Early in the semester, I leave the name tents at the front of the classroom and allow learners to take their names and sit

where they choose. I observe their choices and watch that dynamic during the class. Despite where people sit, I often mix up the pairs and groups for various activities. This makes it easier to assign seats later in the semester. When I want to assign seats, I place the name tents before the learners arrive. Usually, by the third or fourth class, there has been so much interaction between learners because of repetitive introductions, interviews and pairings they begin to demonstrate caring for one another."

Recognizing and rewarding progress and persistence: "I recognize and support the learning in my classroom often and randomly. That is, of course, I recognize folks when they get the big wins, but I also recognize them when they are not expecting it with the little wins."

Rockville Senior Center English Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 1991

The Rockville Senior Center had informal English classes until 2008, when a new program manager began building it into a more structured program based on best practices.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 1   **CLASS LEVELS:** 4
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 145 unique/ 163 duplicated

- Recognize differences in your students without stereotyping and treat everyone fairly. Be careful not to play favorites or just focus on the students in the front row or the ones who are the most vocal.

- Students should do lots of group and pair work to keep them engaged. Listening to the teacher and watching other students answer questions one by one gets pretty dull. And switching the partners and groups up is an easy way to keep the class feeling fresh.

- Have students set goals—both long and short term. Remind them throughout the class how what is being done in class and the outcomes of the lesson will help them meet those goals.

- Have students talk about whether they met those outcomes in class so that they leave aware that the class taught them something and is helping them reach their goals every time.

- Have students monitor their progress so they can see it. They can fill in charts, write progress journals or do portfolios so they have something concrete to know they are moving forward.

- Do lessons connected to time management and organization.

- Instructors can also do lessons on the local community to encourage students to want to learn English to be more involved.

- Watch videos from successful students or have guest speakers come in who can help students see where they are going and that they can be successful in meeting their goals.

Spanish Catholic Center

Laura Irwin, Supervisor of the Spanish Catholic Center ESOL program for Catholic Charities in Gaithersburg, discusses steps their program has taken to better retain students:

"Our retention efforts can be overwhelmed by outside forces, particularly employment. The majority of learners who withdraw from the class are those who find themselves dealing with issues of schedule changes, part-time employment opportunities, commuting issues to and from work, and unemployment. These are some ways we have found to keep students coming:

- One way we encourage students to stay, and stay for more than one session, is through our 'cohort' system. Learners stay with the same instructor for two academic cycles. This allows them to complete the necessary work within one full level, builds a cohort experience, and encourages continuous enrollment. The learners become advocates for their classmates, and they find comfort in seeing familiar faces in the classroom.

- Some students may drop if they find the class too easy or difficult. To avoid this, we offer learners the equivalent of a college model for a 'drop/add' period. During this period, learners have the opportunity to attend their assigned class/level (based on the results of their placement test). However, if within the first 10 days of class they find that the level does not really match their skills, they can request to transfer to another level. It can be higher, or it can be lower. Offering the learners this type of control over their learning experience has proven to be very positive. It is empowering for learners and they advocate for themselves in the learning process.

- To keep students in class who may be finding it challenging, our 'Academic Achievement' program provides learners with support outside of class where they receive individualized instruction and can fully participate in their assigned level with ease. The program gives students the necessary skills to work individually and in their own class.

To avoid dropouts, we offer the equivalent of a college model for a 'drop/add' period.

- The program supervisor works with instructors to monitor attendance and contacts students who miss class. For the class that meets only one day (Saturday), we contact learners immediately following the missed class. For the weekday students, we call after a consistent absence (two days of missing class). It is through this follow-up that we are able to receive anecdotal data on employment issues (changes in schedule), family and health concerns, and all other challenges that prevent them from attending class regularly. Depending on the student's need we connect them to several resources within the agency. The response to the follow-up calls has been very positive. Learners are encouraged to return to class, or they are able to communicate the challenges and needs they may be facing."

Spanish Catholic Center ESOL Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 1993

Based on its learner community's needs, this long-standing program recently adjusted its adult ESOL curriculum to incorporate more opportunities for learners to gain numeracy skills.

2017-18 DATA
**CLASS SITES:** 3   **CLASS LEVELS:** 5
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 387 unique/ 861 duplicated

Learner Persistence

18 MCAEL grant recipients reported on persistence for the year 2017–18, defined as the percentage of learners who attended at least 70% of classes in one session. This chart shows the wide range of rates reported; the average was 61%. The highest persistence rates were reported by programs for seniors. Without these, the average rate falls to 57%. Along with other measures of learner progress, providers keep track of how well learners are able to "persist" in their studies, rather than the program's ability to "retain" learners.

2017–18 Learner Persistence Rates

Provider Organizations
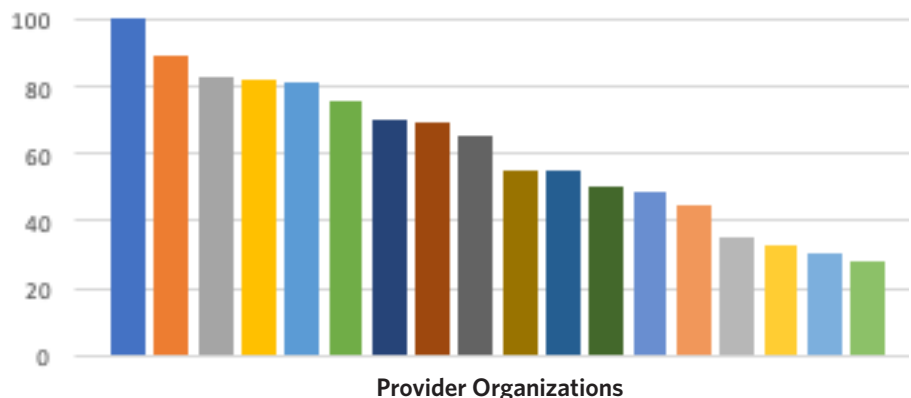
■ What can we do in our program to keep students?

- Call/text students who have missed a few classes to encourage them to return.

- Have materials available that will help them overcome the barriers to attending. Have a ready list of referrals to local organizations based upon common barriers (employment, legal, health, etc.).

- Have students pay a bit of money. They can pay a materials fee or even buy their books. That money can often help since nobody likes "losing" money.

- Be sure your orientation is clear about the program's objectives, when the class meets, and what the expectations are.

- Make sure you know the students' names.

- Consider focus groups to let them tell you how things are going and what they want more of. This can help them to feel ownership in their program.

- Use the feedback gathered and check your data. If times, the number of hours, or days are not working for students, consider changing them.

- Help them identify what the barriers to coming to class are.

■ What do I do if the student has to leave?

Adult students with their many obligations may find they can't keep coming. That doesn't mean they won't return at a later date. Adults will often "stop out," essentially meaning they may have to take a break but will come back when their situation changes. There are things you can do to help to ensure they return, though.

- Make sure in your orientation and at the beginning of class students are told they should talk to their instructor if they can't come anymore.

- Talk to them about returning when they have ways to overcome that barrier.

- Make sure they know when and where to return.

- You can suggest other places with alternate schedules they can go to until they can come back to you.

- Give them contact information and collect theirs—you could text them registration dates or post on their social media feeds. Whatever you can do to make it as easy as possible to come back, you'll want to do!

- Give them ways to do self-study—having things available on your social media that students can go to are a good way to keep them engaged with you even though they can't come to class.

KEEPING STUDENTS COMING: What is a Community of Learners?

Common definitions indicate that these are practices that ensure students feel as though they are members of something and that they are having their needs met while making emotional connections with others. They are provided with support from the program and from fellow students. There is also an expectation that students will participate in determining what they do and how they do it.

How does it help us to keep students?

Students stick with the program because they feel like they belong and have some say in what and how they learn.

How do we build a Community of Learners?

- Within the class, students can work on long-term group projects.

- Give lots of opportunities for students to provide feedback and give suggestions for ways to improve the program.

- Have a buddy system between classes, so students can talk to people in other classes.

- Having whole-site "fairs" can work to have students work with others on their site. It can be a mock job fair with role play interviews, resume reviews, etc. You can also do education/transition fairs with students in pairs visiting stations to talk with people about various options. You can do something similar with other services. It can also be a cultural fair, with students making presentations to give to others in other classes.

- Celebrate holidays as a whole site. For example, you can have classes create door decorations for Valentine's Day and then go around to talk about what they see. Determine the best ones to celebrate based on some criteria.

Transition Services

Why should we provide transition support?

▶ **Adult education is goal-oriented. Assisting learners with their goals will keep students motivated and can contribute to a higher retention level.**

For lesson plans related to transition, see *Integrating Career Awareness in the ABE and ESOL Classroom: Curriculum Guide* (Martha Oesch and Carol Bower, https://www.collegetransition.org/career-pathways/publications/ica-curriculum-guide/).

Adult learners come into your ESOL class or program with a goal in mind for why they want to learn English (with varying degrees of clarity), but not always the wherewithal to determine a specific path, or the knowledge of how to go about achieving their goal. Identifying and sharing locally-available resources geared toward your specific learner community—whether the goal is a more advanced English class, a GED preparation or Adult Basic Education (ABE) program, post-secondary education, job training, or employment—is part of helping learners to work toward their personal and professional goals.

■ How can you offer transition support?

- Make available resource lists of relevant organizations and agencies, preferably already collated by other agencies (for example, lists of resources pulled together by the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center).
- Link with local organizations providing GED and ABE programs and job training opportunities, and disseminate information on these programs.

Family Discovery Center

✳ **Shari Waddy, Program Manager, Family Discovery Center (FDC), Family Services, Inc. talks about her program's transitional services:**

"The Family Discovery Center schedules field trips, guest speakers, and offers experiential educational outings that provide students with information and resources in the community. These resources help them transition from ESOL classes to continuing their education, securing employment, or accessing support services for themselves and their families.

Some field trips help transition our participants from the program to further their education. For example, we take field trips to Montgomery College and Ana G. Mendez University to give our participants

Guest speakers also aid our participants in transitioning out of the program.

the opportunity to see different education options in the area. On these field trips, participants learn about admission requirements, fees, coursework, and any additional information that is necessary to aid them on their educational track. Guest speakers also aid our participants in transitioning out of the program. Presentations from representatives of Montgomery College or Montgomery County Educational Opportunity Center allow our participants an opportunity to ask specific questions regarding furthering their education.

In order to assist our students in finding employment, FDC schedules field trips to Worksource Montgomery

or schedules guest speakers from Career Catchers. Business owners have also given presentations, which provided those participants who would like to start their own business valuable insight into how that can be accomplished. Additionally, FDC participants complete an employment readiness program as a part of their ESOL classes. During this program, participants

Participants create a resume and practice their job interview skills.

complete a career assessment and practice completing a job application in print and online. Participants also create a resume and practice their job interview skills. Our students have also participated in field trips to job fairs and attended a presentation on how to apply for county government jobs. By providing participants with these valuable opportunities, we are preparing them for the next step and arming them with the tools necessary to transition from our program to a career or college.

Family Services Inc. Family Discovery Center ESOL

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 1996

The Family Discovery Center offers family literacy programming for families with children from infancy to three years of age.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 1   **CLASS LEVELS:** 2
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 48 unique/103 duplicates

Finally, the FDC service coordinator connects with students regularly and provides case management to those experiencing personal hardships. The service coordinator also completes a transition plan with participants exiting the program that includes providing information and resources on the following topics: Career, Education, Health/Mental Health, Support Systems, Child Development, Finances, and Relationships."

- Organize field trips that allow your learners to learn more about educational, workforce development, or employment services.

- Have on hand information on other ESOL programs nearby that may have classes that are more advanced, or more appropriate for a particular learner.

- One-on-one counseling.

- Invite speakers to your class to talk about educational, job training, or career opportunities.

- Work with local community colleges to learn about workforce ESOL programs that may have low cost or even free coursework which can both prepare students with the language they need in specific occupational fields and give them certifications in high demand fields.

Support Services

Why should we consider providing non-ESOL support services to our learners?

▶ **While providing support services can entail extra cost for your program, such services can attract learners to your program, and help retain them— by removing barriers to coming to class and/or assisting them with other needs.**

Support services can be provided directly by your program, your organization, partnering with other organizations, or through referrals to other organizations or agencies.

■ What sort of support services are most commonly provided?

Lack of access to affordable, reliable, and safe childcare and transportation to class are two of the major factors that can prevent adults from attending class. In response, some adult ESOL programs provide childcare during class hours at no cost to learners; these programs either hire paid childcare workers or engage volunteers from their community or their congregation.

As for assisting learners to get to class, some programs whose organizations have the infrastructure actually provide transportation to class, but more often, programs provide taxi vouchers, subway passes/cards, or bus tokens to learners who need assistance.

Identity, Inc.

* **Ana Dudamel, Program Manager, discusses how Identity's ESOL classes fit in with the other support services it provides to disconnected youth (aged 15-25) to help them reach their educational, work, and life goals:**

"We reach at-risk youth facing significant challenges related to poverty, immigration status, trauma, substance abuse, and/or mental health issues. Lack of English-language skills is an additional obstacle in connecting to school, employment, and community supports. Identity's two Youth Opportunity Centers (YOCs) provide workforce development and educational counseling; mental health services; and referrals to county safety-net services such as food, clothing, health services, and legal services. Each learner is assigned a Case Manager and, when needed, a Workforce Development Specialist who assess client needs through intake surveys and work with them to create individual education and employment plans. Case managers check in with learners twice a month, tracking progress and encouraging participation in ESOL and other YOC programs. Students receive additional supports through their Case Managers, such as mental health and substance abuse counseling at Identity.

Our ESOL classes maximize learners' opportunity to experience success, thereby building learners' positive associations with learning English. And, the English communication skills they

Lack of English skills is an obstacle in connecting to school, employment, and community supports.

gain will motivate them to continue their education at the YOCs, which are focused on advancing educational attainment and employability of disconnected youth. YOC workforce development services help youth realize meaningful gains in workforce development competencies such as communication skills, conflict resolution skills, financial literacy, computer literacy, and executive functioning. In FY19, ESOL students will participate in the YOCs' Internship Program, whereby two students from the program will be offered a four- to six-week paid internship at Identity. Basic literacy gains in English provide youth with a foundation for participation in these programs, YOC GED instruction and applied academics, and other community ESOL classes."

Identity, Inc. English for Disconnected Youth

FIRST OFFERED ESOL CLASSES: 2014

Identity, Inc. offers ESOL classes 3 times a week in Gaithersburg and Takoma Park specifically for at-risk young adults.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 2 **CLASS LEVELS:** 1
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 55 unique/ 83 duplicated

Seneca Creek Community Church

Yvonne Ellis, ESOL Program Manager

ESOL Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 2011
Seneca Creek Community Church holds year-round classes on Saturday mornings in Gaithersburg.

2017–18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 1   **CLASS LEVELS:** 7

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 155 unique/313 duplicated

"The mission of Seneca Creek Community Church's (SCCC's) ESOL Program is to provide opportunities for all individuals in the community to succeed through improved English language skills, assist participants to build confidence and participation in their community, and increase the social and financial well-being of adult ESOL learners and their families.

SCCC takes a holistic family approach to its ESOL Program; it runs a Child Enrichment Program that provides free childcare and tutoring for children while their parents are in class. It partners with the Montgomery County Public Schools to offer free lunches to the children, and established a tutoring program with the assistance of a nonprofit agency. In addition,

SCCC takes a holistic family approach to its ESOL Program, which provides free childcare and tutoring for children.

the SCCC ESOL Program makes referrals to Worksource Montgomery and Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center to utilize available resources for job search and readiness, citizenship classes, and basic computer classes. It also connects learners to the Neighbors 4 Neighbors Network (a forum affiliated with the church at which community members can discuss needs and learn about various community resources), and other nonprofit agencies to address other non-ESOL identified needs."

MCAEL

Addressing Barriers to Learning

As part of its mission to increase adult access to English instruction, MCAEL grant funding can be used by adult ESOL providers to provide childcare and transportation support. Five out of 25 2018-19 grant recipients provide transportation assistance, 11 out of the 25 offer childcare.

Grant recipients provide assistance to learners

Transportation assistance

Childcare
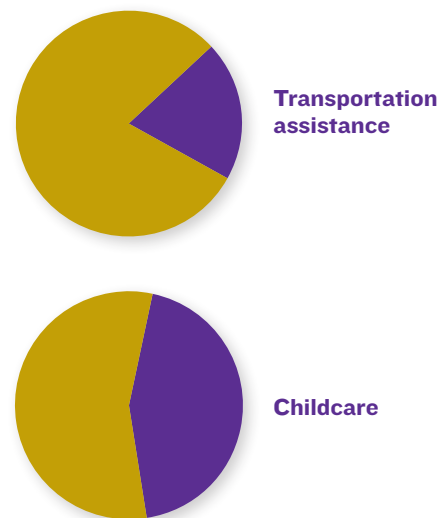
Here are two helpful resources for learners in need of services:

- The **Maryland Community Services Locator** is an interactive online directory that provides information on health and human services across the state—https://211md.org/. Information can also be accessed by dialing 211. Phone service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—translation is available for 180 different languages.

- **FindHello** is a free app (available at your favorite app store) designed for refugees, immigrants and asylees to help them find needed services across the United States, including those related to employment, healthcare, immigrant rights and laws, scholarships and education, ESOL classes, children and youth services, and citizenship and immigration information.

✱ Behind the Scenes

Data Management

Why record data?

▶ **Data can let you know how your program is doing to give you areas to highlight for your stakeholders and to focus on for program improvement.**

You can collect many different types of information about your students, their progress, and your classes. These include quantitative data such as the number of students registered for each class and attendance rates, as well as qualitative data such as responses on a questionnaire about why your students are studying English, or what they liked best about their class. Your funders will likely require you to report on some specific data. See the chart at the right for examples.

■ What kind of data can I gather?

Quantitative	Numbers, percentages, etc.
Qualitative	Questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, etc.

Significance of data types

Different types of data can tell you different things about your program.

What kind of data can we collect?	What questions can we ask about what we find?
▶ **Number of students who register for the program**	Are our numbers going up or down? Is there anything we can see that might tell us why?
▶ **Number of students who actually come the first day**	What barriers do I need to help them overcome? How can we change the orientation to get them more excited and engaged so they come back? Why didn't they come back?
▶ **Number of students who finish the class**	What are the reasons why students finished/didn't finish?
▶ **Numbers of students in each level**	Are there any levels that you always/sometimes/never get to run? Do you need to recruit more at that level? Should you just offer more classes at the other levels?
▶ **Number of students who passed/didn't pass the class**	What outcomes still need to be met? What can we do to improve our instruction? Are our assessments testing what they need to?
▶ **Number of students who return for the next session**	Why do/don't they return?
▶ **Total duplicated enrollment**	How many seats did we offer? How many did we plan to offer and what is the difference? How full are our classes?
▶ **Total unduplicated enrollment**	How many actual people did we serve?
▶ **Numbers based on demographic information you collected**	What percentage of males/females? What percentage have jobs? What percentage have children? What percentage have one goal or another?
▶ **Student survey on how students found out about your program**	What is working for our outreach? What isn't working?
▶ **Focus groups on aspects of the program, for example, whether the program is helping students meet their goals**	What do the students think of our program—what can we do more/less of?
▶ **Instructor surveys**	What improvements do they think can be done? How do they feel about what we are doing?
▶ **Student surveys on class satisfaction**	Are there any improvements we can make to individual classes? Are there teachers who might mentor other instructors or topics on which we might provide professional development?

IMPACT Silver Spring

Sara Mussie, Senior Network Builder

English Language Classes

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 2011
IMPACT Silver Spring offers English classes within its framework of building networks and relationships within the community.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 3   **CLASS LEVELS:** 3

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 108 unique/156 duplicated

"On registration day, we ask for information that is needed for MCAEL requirements (date of birth, gender, country of origin, zip code, purpose for taking the class) and information that is useful for IMPACT on the registration form.

We invite as many volunteers as possible to help. During registration, after the learners take the assessment test and the instructors and volunteers determine which level they are, we give them the registration form that is translated into Spanish as well, to fill out all the information. We ask volunteers to assist if necessary.

> *We ask volunteers to assist the people who speak their same language.*

But at the end, I am the one who checks if everything has been filled out and enters it into our data system. Collecting this data has multiple values for IMPACT; it helps us know:

- the location of the people we serve;

- if they have children and how many they have, so we can provide adequate childcare (we even went further and started asking people for their children's name, age, and grade if they plan to bring them to the class); and

- how many languages are spoken in the class. As we identify volunteers, we ask if they could assist the people who speak the same language."

ENROLLMENT DATA

What is the difference between unduplicated and duplicated?

As explained in the chart (on page 61), you can learn different things about your program by looking at the unduplicated (or unique) vs. duplicated number of students enrolled.

Unduplicated: the number of actual students who took one or more classes in your program over a period of time, e.g., one year. You may have a student who took three classes with you, but you would only count her/him once. S/he would count as one unduplicated student. The reason for counting this is to find out how many people you served over multiple sessions.

Duplicated: total number of class seats filled in a period of time. You are just counting the total number of enrollments in all the classes. The student above who took three classes would be counted as three duplicated students. The goal here is to find out how many of your classroom seats were filled over multiple sessions.

For example, in session 1, you have a class with 20 students. At this point, after your first session, you have 20 unduplicated and 20 duplicated students.

In session 2, 10 students from session 1 come back and you have 15 new students, so that class has 25 students.

At this point, after two sessions, you would have 35 unduplicated students and 45 duplicated students.

Linkages to Learning

Debi Edick, Coordinator, Family English Literacy Program at Linkages to Learning discusses the information her program collects, how she collects it, and what they do with it.

"On-site staff is responsible for collecting data and submitting it to me (attendance, intake interviews, pre-test scores, learner demographics, posttest scores, and exit interviews).

- **Attendance**: instructors submit attendance to the Community School Coordinator (CSC), who then enters attendance into our electronic spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is formatted to give me total hours offered, total hours attended, number persisted, etc.

- **Intake interviews**: The CSC or instructor sits with the learner to find out learner goals. We have six objectives listed and ask the learner which 'objective' is something they cannot currently do that they want to be able to do, or progress toward doing, by the end of class: *1) read, write, send email, letter or text in English; 2) communicate basic health information; 3) communicate in English with supervisor, coworkers, customers; 4) communicate with child's teacher without a translator; 5) practice English with children/grandchildren and 6) write an excuse note for child.*

At the end of the semester, we sit down with the learner to see if they met their goals.

We also ask them for their personal goals, which tend to be "to communicate better" and "to get a job/better job."
The CSC's send me the Intake/Exit form (with only the "intake" portion completed) and I enter all responses on a spreadsheet. At the end of the semester, the CSC or instructor sits down with the learner and asks the learner if they met those goals. The CSC then sends me the completed Intake/Exit form and I enter the exit interview responses.

- **Pretest scores:** I developed a pretest that mirrors the Ventures posttest, so we are comparing apples to apples. Instructors administer a pretest to learners to determine learner strengths/weaknesses.

- **Posttest scores**: We consider passing to be 75% or better on the Ventures posttest.

- **Learner Demographics**: Each CSC sends me the Learner Demographic spreadsheet for their site (all data requested on the spreadsheet is on our registration form). I then merge all the individual spreadsheets to a master

I add new learners to the original spreadsheet thus showing us the number of unique learners served.

spreadsheet. In the spring semester, CSCs send me a spreadsheet listing only those learners who are new in the spring. I then add those new learners to the original spreadsheet thus showing us the number of unique learners served.

I use the data to report to our funders, but I also use it to look at attendance and persistence trends from one fiscal year to

Linkages to Learning Family English Literacy Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 2006

This program is offered in the evenings at Montgomery County public schools for parents/community members to increase parent/school and civic engagement and parents' ability to support their children's academic success.

2017–18 DATA
CLASS SITES: 11   **CLASS LEVELS:** 4
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 652 unique/920 duplicated

the next. I am always trying to determine what leads to a class's success or shortcomings. I look at comparison data based on time class is offered (morning vs. evening), instructors, location, etc. For example, this year I had one instructor who taught two classes; I have observed said instructor many times and find them to be a great teacher. However, both of this instructor's classes had some of the lowest attendance, persistence, and passing rates in FY18. I will use this information when determining whether to ask the instructor back or not."

Administrative Structure, Staff Support, Logistics

Who is going to do all the tasks?

▶ **Depending on how large the program is, you may be the one who does it all: recruiting, testing, placing, and teaching students, then evaluating the results.**

You can also find staff or volunteers who can be trained (or may even come in with the skills) to do these tasks. (See next chapter on volunteers, page 66.) Instructors can take on many of these roles.

■ What are some of the jobs my program may have?

Program Director

Responsible for the overall mission of the program, ensuring compliance with various policies or laws, proposing and maintaining budgets, coordinating with host institutions and outside agencies, and scheduling.

Site Coordinator

If you have more than one location where you are holding classes it can be useful to have a site coordinator at each site who can assist instructors, contact students who are absent, and in general, help students and instructors at the sites. They can also make sure doors are unlocked, resolve any issues with the classrooms and just make sure everything within the location is working well.

Data Coordinator

This person can put together reports that will let you know how you are doing in all things data. (See Chapter 18, page 60, in this toolkit.)

Testing Coordinator

You can have someone who arranges a pretest and posttest, and who can work with instructors on formal and informal assessments.

Intake Coordinator

This person can handle registering students. They can work with the team who does your orientation and placement tests and then put the students in classes. For drop-in courses, this may be the person who works with students before the class to figure out their level.

Instructional Support Coordinator

This person coordinates professional development, training and observing instructors. They can answer questions instructors have about instruction and provide support to instructors who need it. This person can also provide advising to students about what they can do outside class to learn independently.

Curriculum Coordinator

This may be a short-term position to put together or lead a team to create the curriculum or may be longer term to continue to develop the curriculum and create lesson plans. This person can also maintain physical or online collections of resources.

Transition Coordinator

Most students have goals outside of simply learning English. This individual works with students to move on to other English-language programs or college. They can work with students with employment issues. They may work individually with students, hold workshops, or do presentations in classes.

Retention Coordinator

This person can work with all the things listed in the retention and referrals to support services section of this toolkit.

Outreach Coordinator

This would be the person who would make flyers, communicate with those who can distribute them for you or promote your program, and update your social media.
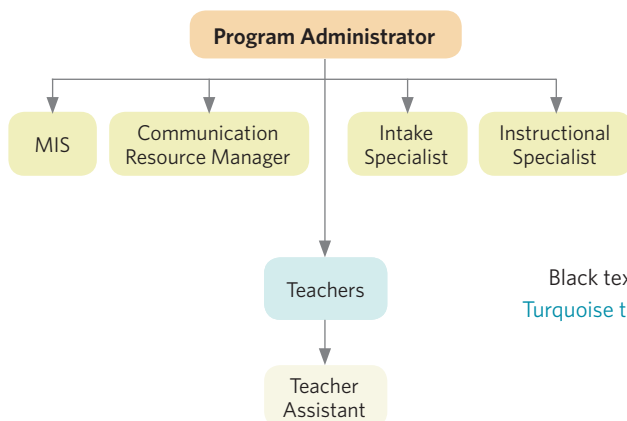
Administrative Aides/Resource Center Coordinator

This person might look after tasks such as responding to phone calls, ensuring that supplies are kept replenished, and collecting and tracking other resources that instructors can use, such as:

- instructor texts/teaching materials
- CD players
- laptops/tablets
- projectors
- markers/erasers/pens
- whiteboards/flipcharts

SAMPLE ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

Literacy Council of Montgomery County

Program Administrator
- MIS
- Communication Resource Manager
- Intake Specialist
- Instructional Specialist
  - Teachers
    - Teacher Assistant

Black text = paid staff
Turquoise text = volunteers

Covenant Life Church

ESOL Program Director / Program Coordinator
- Administrative Assistant 3 hours / week
- Administrative Support 10–20 hours / semester
  - 15 Teachers
    - Teaching Assistants 1–3 per classroom
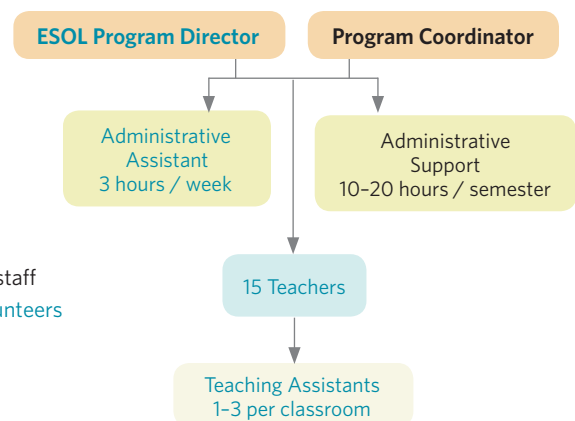
Working with Volunteers

Why volunteers?

▸ **Volunteers can be great resources who can expand your organization's capacity by serving as teaching assistants, helping with administrative or outreach tasks, and helping with registration and orientation. A successful volunteer program requires careful planning, procedures, screening, support and supervision, and recognition.**

(See Chapter 9, p 28 for information on finding and working with instructors who are volunteer.)

Before looking for volunteers, consider what you need help with, and whether you have the capacity to supervise the volunteer. How many hours per week/month would the volunteer be needed, when and where? How much training would the volunteer require? Do you have a clear idea about what you need volunteers to do, space for them to work, and the ability to oversee the work?

Once you have considered these factors, and believe you are ready to engage volunteers, these are procedures you can develop to prepare.

1 A volunteer form to collect contact information, availability, emergency contact, experience (or require a resume).

2 A way to keep track of applicants and keep their personal information safe.

3 A system for tracking their hours (this will help you recognize their contributions and can be included in your own reporting.

■ How can I find the right volunteers for my program?

The first step to finding a volunteer that fits well with your program is to develop a clear job description that includes the expected responsibilities, when you would like them to work (or if the work hours are flexible), and the skills needed.

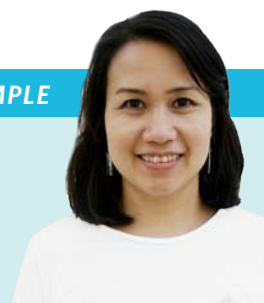Then you need to advertise the opening:

- Use your social media. Include video testimonials with how much they enjoyed it and the importance of the mission of the program for students' lives.

- If your host organization does a newsletter or other promotional information, you could advertise there.

- Use the MCAEL website: http://www.mcael.org/find-job-volunteer

- Put a listing on the Montgomery County Volunteer Center: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter/

- Post an announcement on Idealist.org, MAACE, WATESOL, and send to local TESOL training programs.

Once you receive responses to your ad:

- Be ready to respond to volunteer inquiries quickly with a thank you and to inform them about next steps.

- It is a good idea to take time for interviewing and screening applicants. A desire to help is a great place to start but may not be a sufficient reason for a program to accept someone as a volunteer. Especially for classroom assistants, but with any volunteer, remember that this person will be interacting with your students and staff. In addition to skills and availability, you may want talk to them about other qualities needed to be effective in your program. The program manager will know the values and mission of the program, and there are other questions you may want to be able to answer. Are they culturally competent? Patient? What is their experience with the community you work with? Many people are very eager to help, but you will want to ensure they don't inadvertently cause more harm than good by losing patience with students; viewing them with pity; failing to recognize the life experience, skills, and capacities of students; or condescending to them.

- These and other topics can be part of an orientation you provide to new volunteers, particularly those you want have working in classrooms. Other topics can include, principles of adult education, expectations and

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work standards, common misconceptions, and program policies and procedures relevant to what they will be doing, such as for liability and harassment. You may also want them to do a background check, which you can go over during that time.

■ How can they help in the classroom?

Volunteers can serve as teaching assistants, doing a variety of tasks in the classroom to help out the instructor and facilitate instruction. Some ideas include:

- Working with individuals or small groups

- Distributing and collecting materials

- Sharing personal experiences

- Making teaching materials

- Assisting with attendance and absentees

- Providing feedback to the teacher

Before assigning an assistant to a class, discuss with it the instructor. Some teachers may not initially be comfortable or accustomed to having an assistant.

Be sure to talk to or train instructors on how to effectively use volunteers well. This article, "Using Volunteers in your ESL Classroom: Suggestions for Newer Teachers", has a lot of good ideas for how you can help instructors to make best use of their teaching assistants. http://iteslj.org/Articles/Singleton-Volunteers.html

■ What are other ways volunteers can help with our program?

Volunteers can work alone or in teams on other tasks, assisting paid staff:

- Provide input on program planning, for an outside perspective.

- Do data entry or analysis of attendance or evaluations, make photocopies, help with registration.

- Conduct outreach: create and disseminate flyers; send outreach emails; respond to emails and calls; update social media. Since they will be the face of the program, make sure they are extremely well trained and supervised, and consider reviewing communications before they are released.

- Support student persistence: email/text/call students who have been absent; work with individual students to come up with ways to overcome obstacles to attending classes; just listen to students! You will want to provide supervision to be sure they are empathetic and use culturally competent communication with students.

- Tutor students one-to-one, helping students with individual needs in literacy or other specific areas not addressed in classes or students with immediate needs. You will want to be cautious with doing this at offsite locations to be sure volunteers are trained

How to keep volunteers engaged

Strategy	Why it works
▶ **Talk to them about what they most want to do.**	Many may come in because they want to be challenged, engage in personal growth, or learn something new.
▶ **Keep them busy with purposeful tasks.**	Most of them won't be there because they want to just "hang out." And while menial tasks can be one aspect of what they do, they will stay engaged longer if it is clear what they are doing has an important purpose within the organization.
▶ **Listen to their ideas.**	Many of these are adults with vast life experiences who both have good ideas and often want to be heard as having something to contribute.
▶ **Pay your volunteers with praise for a job well done.**	Appreciation can go a long way toward keeping people motivated.
▶ **Motivate them with reminders of how much their work is helping the students, and be specific about how their contribution has helped.**	Most of the volunteers will have selected your organization because they believe in what you are doing for the students.
▶ **Train them well.**	A clear understanding of what they need to do will keep them from getting frustrated and deciding not to return.
▶ **Have volunteers work together, create a sense of community.**	Many volunteers get involved for the social aspects of the work.
▶ **Maintain clear and quick communication with them.**	They are volunteering because they want to do something now.
▶ **Be aware of how much they are interested in doing. Make sure you are clear from the beginning how much time the tasks will take.**	Burnout can cause volunteers to leave. Requiring more than they want to do may work at first, but you may lose them soon.
▶ **Be careful to be clear that you are not giving them a task because you don't want/like to do it yourself.**	That is the ultimate de-motivator. If you are saying the work is not interesting, they may believe you.

to avoid and potentially deal with inappropriate situations. Tutoring programs should have clear guidelines in place regarding where tutoring can happen. Screen tutors carefully and provide training and guidance both regarding not only language instruction but also cultural competency.

• Facilitate drop-in conversation classes, particularly if they have experience in training, facilitation, or teaching.

Shannon Wilk de Benitez, Community Education Manager

Life Skills ESOL Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 1995

CASA provides ESOL services rooted in the principals of popular education and utilizes its own curriculum that combines traditional textbook resources with an online library of supplementals that addresses the unique needs of its learner population, many of whom are low-income immigrants from Latin America and West Africa.

2017-18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 3   **CLASS LEVELS:** 5

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 704 unique/1,276 duplicated

"CASA utilizes volunteers in several capacities to support its administrative and outreach needs. Bilingual volunteers conduct reminder calls and street outreach in the days leading up to each registration. In some cases, these bilingual volunteers are native speakers, but in other cases, they are language students themselves who are interested in practicing their new skills. Others run off copies of program materials, organize supplies, and help with clerical tasks. They tally survey results and spot check student enrollment information to ensure the accuracy of program data. Sometimes volunteers are retirees looking to give back to their community in their free time. Other times volunteers can be ESOL students themselves or high school and college interns seeking to gain experience working behind the scenes of an adult education or immigrant-serving program. Those who are looking to gain instructional experience serve as volunteer TAs, supporting teachers with larger classes or a high percentage of low-literacy learners.

No matter what the assignment, it is important that all volunteers participate in a screening process so as to ensure that their interests and skills are connected to tasks that will create a mutually beneficial and fulfilling experience. When placing a volunteer within a large-scale ESOL program, it is also very important to remember that volunteers should be used to support existing programming and not as a substitute or alternative to permanent staffing, which is vital to the long-term quality and sustainability of the program."

■ What should we do to supervise and support volunteers effectively?

Since volunteers are not getting paid a salary, you need to do your best to pay them by offering them a great experience and a way to use their talents. Volunteers need to be welcomed warmly every day, have clear assignments, know who to report to and ask questions of, and have the resources they need to do the work assignments. In addition:

- All volunteers appreciate quick responses to their questions, and clear thanks from all staff.

- If it's possible to provide volunteers with professional opportunities, training, or gatherings with other volunteers, this will be much appreciated. Often serving as a reference in a job search or for a program of study is another way you can support your volunteers. See your volunteers as your customers, and they will keep giving back.

- At the same time, you must ensure that your staff and students are receiving the best support possible. Be ready to provide extra support and training as necessary. Sometimes it is necessary to conclude a volunteer's work with your program.

- Keep track of your volunteers' hours, and offer recognition in some way—certificates, thank you letters, celebrations, etc.

✱ Improving Skills

Professional Development for Instructors

Why professional development?

▶ Professional development can help to improve instruction, motivate your instructors to stay in the field as they learn new things, and develop team spirit among your instructors if done face-to-face.

For many instructors of adult ESOL classes the work is parttime, and perhaps in addition to a day job. Professional development is important to maintain the quality of instruction that will lead to learning gains. If an organization provides these opportunities for its instructors, it may help with retaining them as well.

■ What topics do programs often cover?

- Ways to effectively teach reading/writing/listening/speaking/vocabulary/grammar/pronunciation
- Teaching multi-level classes
- Using visuals in class
- Student to student interaction/collaborative learning
- Task-based instruction
- Lesson planning
- Summative/formative assessment
- Using mobile phones in instruction
- Principles of adult learning

■ What sorts of methods of professional development can we offer?

- Presentation or workshop (face-to-face)
- Lecture followed by breakout sessions with different groups for application (for example, do a presentation on lesson planning, and then break instructors into groups who teach different language levels to collaboratively create one)
- Webinar in real time with a facilitator (using YouTube Live or Google Groups, for example)
- Online course/workshop
- Peer observations
- Observations by administrators followed by feedback
- Series of observations with follow up
- Series of workshops on a particular topic
- Self-directed learning modules (reading and responding)
- Reading circles—read something relevant and talk with others either face to face or online
- Research on a topic of interest
- Case studies with discussion
- Writing materials for other teachers to use: lesson plans, curriculum, handouts, etc.
- Any combination of these!

■ Where can I find professional development activities for instructors?

- Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL): conferences/face-to-face workshops/reading
- Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS): online/reading
- Washington DC TESOL (WATESOL): conferences/face-to-face workshops
- Maryland TESOL (MDTESOL): conferences/face-to-face workshops
- Maryland Association for Adult, Community and Continuing Education (MAACCE): conferences
- Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE): conferences/online/reading
- Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators (IPDAE): online/reading

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✳ PROVIDER TIP

What advice do you have on professional development for teachers?

Stacey Fannon, ESOL Program Manager at the Briggs Center for Faith and Action

ESOL Program
FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 1998
The addition of a part-time program manager in 2016 has enabled the Briggs Center to focus on program improvement, including professional development for its all volunteer instructor team.

2017–18 DATA
CLASS SITES: 2   **LEVELS:** 6
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 239 unique/476 duplicated

"The program manager should continuously look for professional development opportunities for the instructors. The most useful opportunities are inexpensive (or free), close by, interactive, and taught by experienced instructors. The number of our instructors that participated in MCAEL's free trainings increased from the previous year, because I asked all instructors to subscribe to the MCAEL listserv, which is how MCAEL announces its trainings. MCAEL sends out an announcement

Sharing of resources improves communication, builds community, and increases morale and learner gains.

on the day registration opens for workshops. I also immediately forward the email to all my instructors urging them to register. Also, more instructors (especially our new instructors seeking additional teacher training) now use free online training such as YouTube videos and Coursera courses. I ask all instructors to share resources with me so that I can recommend them to the other instructors. This sharing of resources improves communication, builds community, and increases morale and learner gains."

Ana A. Brito Foundation

Marta Brito Perez, Foundation President

English Literacy Program

ESOL INSTRUCTION BEGAN: 1985

The Ana A Brito Foundation was founded in 2014 to support the growth of existing English and computer classes at Epworth United Methodist Church in Gaithersburg.

2017–18 DATA

CLASS SITES: 1   **CLASS LEVELS:** 5

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 159 unique/ 260 duplicated

"It is sometimes a challenge for our volunteer teachers to attend professional development training offered by MCAEL or other sources because of their many obligations, but the program found a solution in hiring an ESOL consultant who is serving as a teaching advisor and professional development facilitator. To improve on the methodology, she encourages teacher participation in professional development (MCAEL-sponsored training, self-training) and peer-teaching after receiving the training.

Teacher meetings are often where new programmatic ideas are born.

With our ESOL specialist's support, teachers have been able to integrate best practices and respond to student evaluations/requests. The teachers have sought more practical and relevant material for their students via internet resources, including the Ventures website, and then share with one another. The teachers very much like and benefit from the ESOL specialist teacher meetings where they can share accomplishments, discuss issues, and ask questions of colleagues or the ESOL Specialist. These meetings are often where new programmatic ideas are born."

■ My instructors are busy. How can they be encouraged to participate?

Survey the instructors: find out what they are interested in learning about, the preferred method of delivery and times they can participate. They are more likely to come if they are the ones who say they want it.

Observe your teachers: what are areas of strength? What areas are overall weak points? Consider if you can provide professional development to focus on areas that are challenging for instructors. Engage your strong instructors by having them lead the session.

Have guest experts conduct it. It may cost a bit of money, but they will come with unique perspectives and can draw teachers in just because of the novelty.

Do joint professional development trainings with other organizations. These are cost effective, and the opportunity to network with others can encourage instructors to come. It is also an opportunity to hear what other programs are doing with shared challenges.

■ What can I do to make sure that the professional development does any good?

Research is pretty clear that simply attending a professional development session on its own doesn't do a lot to change what happens in the classroom. However, there are some things you can do to encourage it:

1 Have part of the professional development be to reflect on how they will include what they learned in their instruction.

2 After the workshop, have instructors write about how they will include or have included what they learned in their instruction.

3 Have instructors show how it was included in a lesson plan.

4 Have a follow-up workshop to talk about how instructors incorporated what they learned into classes. This might work best as they can hear what other instructors did as well as see what worked and address how to overcome challenges together.

Rosa Goyes at the Covenant Life Church ESOL Program talks to us about benefits of professional development offered by MCAEL.

Your instructors have participated in professional development offered by MCAEL. These trainings are at their main site and are open to providers throughout Montgomery County. What benefits have you seen from attendance in these workshops?

"Many CLC ESOL volunteers embraced training opportunities that MCAEL has provided with enthusiasm. As a result, they gained significant confidence and improved greatly in their teaching abilities, and it has contributed substantially to the program's success.

CLC volunteers...gained significant confidence and improved greatly in their teaching abilities..

For example, classroom teachers have expressed enthusiasm for the Color Vowel and Pronunciation trainings that were offered by MCAEL. These were new concepts for our teachers, and some teachers made great changes to their classroom teaching methods in response to these seminars. This has benefited the students and made English concepts more accessible to them.

We have also seen increased confidence and commitment from our volunteer instructors because of access to training and their association with the MCAEL community of ESOL providers. Several teachers have expressed an interest in pursuing advanced training in the topics offered by MCAEL.

They also appreciated the opportunity to meet like-minded volunteers and educators from other ESOL programs and have gained an appreciation for being part of a larger English literacy community."

MCAEL also arranged for trainers to come out to your location to conduct the two-day training called "More Learning, Less Teaching," designed to help ESOL instructors gain practical skills needed to work effectively with adult learners. Why did you choose to do this?

"I had taken the More Learning, Less Teaching training years prior and benefited from the hands-on, practical and comprehensive training."

What was the impact of the training on your program?

"Our volunteers told us how much they felt they had learned and the ideas/tools the training gave them to use in their classes. We saw how they implemented some

Covenant Life Church ESOL Program

FIRST OFFERED ESOL INSTRUCTION: 2002

Covenant Life Church offers English classes on two weekday evenings at a local public school in Gaithersburg; all instructors are volunteers.

2017–18 DATA
CLASS SITES: 1   **LEVELS:** 6
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 222 unique/ 325 duplicated

Better trained teachers improve the quality of the classes and yields higher retention in volunteers and students.

of the activities in their classrooms. This also helped our volunteers get to know MCAEL, and more of our volunteers have participated in the different workshops offered since then. Like we have expressed in the past—better trained teachers feel more confident in their classrooms which improves the quality of the classes and also yields higher retention in volunteers and students. We would love to be the hosts of another training!"

■ What if instructors want to go further? Are there TESOL certificates they can get?

Sure! There are a number in the DC area, designed to work for a variety of schedules. Search for these to get further details.

- Montgomery College TESOL Training Institute
- Georgetown University Teaching English as a Foreign Language Certificate
- American University Graduate Certificate in TESOL
- LADO International College TEFL Certificate Program
- International Language Institute TESOL/TEFL Certification Program
- Teaching House CELTA Certificate
- Oxford Seminars

Many local universities also offer master's degree programs in TESOL.

Resources for Administrative Self-Improvement, Leadership Training

Why professional development for me?

▶ **We can all improve the way we do things. You can take a course or a short program or do some reading.**

There is not a huge amount out there connected to managing ESOL programs, but below are a few resources:

■ Short programs

TESOL ELT Leadership Management Certificate Program: Offered periodically.

https://www.tesol.org/attend-and-learn/certificate-leadership-programs/
elt-leadership-management-certificate-program

School of International Training's International Diploma in Language Teaching Management: Offered sporadically. Well regarded, but you would want to contact them for details.

https://graduate.sit.edu/academics/degree-and-certificate-programs/language-teacher-training/international-diploma-in-language-teaching-management-idltm/

Nonprofit Leadership Boot Camp, Montgomery College: Not specifically connected to ESL, but addresses many of the challenges individuals in this field face.

http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/nonprofittraining.html

■ Online professional development

Check out these links:
This offers details on a wide variety of areas related to program management:

http://www.litworks.org/resources/online-literacy-resources/managing-a-literacy-program/

This site is rich with information useful for managing your program. Great ideas for areas of professional development:
http://www.cal.org/adultesl/resources/digests/managing-programs-for-adults-learning-english.php

This includes a few professional development areas for managers:
http://www.thepdexchange.ca/skills/
language-program-management

This organization provides readings and other areas related to adult education. A bit broader focus than just adult ESOL, but good to give you a picture of where adult education is and where things are going:

https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/federal-policy/
adult-basic-education

Peer Exchange and Learning

Sharing experiences, insights and ideas with peers in the adult ESOL field is invaluable. Attending meetings and conferences organized by your local TESOL branch can be very helpful. But even if your budget doesn't allow this, sharing notes with other adult ESOL programs in the area can be extremely useful, particularly since program administration training options are limited. While you may worry that others may see you as "competition," most program managers are willing to share information about their programs.

Over the years, program managers in the MCAEL provider network have consistently ranked networking opportunities as one of the most valued aspects of MCAEL's work. As a coalition, one of MCAEL's main roles is to convene an annual series of six provider meetings, which bring together program administrators of many different types of programs together for learning opportunities and information sharing. These meetings usually focus on TESOL standard areas such as assessment, learner retention, and selection of teaching materials. More recently, at the recommendation of MCAEL's Provider Advisory Group, meetings have also addressed topics related to supporting adult ESOL learner communities such as citizenship and immigration, and the GED. As program managers work to improve their programs from session to session, they share their learning with peers in the network, and all programs benefit and build upon each others' work.

✳ Resources

CASA

Name_____

┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ **Workforce __Beginner__ Pre/Post-Test** │
│ **Supply List and Budget** │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘

Directions: Look at the work supplies. Write whether you need each for a ***landscaping*** job, a ***cleaning*** job, or a ***construction*** job.

_____cleaning_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

Directions: Write the approximate cost of each tool.

Tool/ Material	Price
1. drill	$60
2. hardhat	$
3. cleaning gloves	$
4. pruners	$

Score: _____ / 11

Start Guide for ESOL Programs

Published by the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL)

By Heather Ritchie, MCAEL Director of Programs and Services

This document is designed to assist an organization with starting an ESOL class or program at a new location. It provides a framework for discussing the needs, resources and sustainability for an ESOL program. MCAEL encourages users to bring a group of stakeholders together to answer these questions. If the group does not know the answer, use surveys, focus groups or interviews to gather more information before starting a class.

THE NEED/ENVIRONMENT:
Why are you starting this class?

How do you know there is a need?

Are there other ESOL classes nearby? What levels/what type of ESOL classes?

What other resources are nearby?

What do you hope to achieve?

What do you think are the learners' goals? How will you confirm this?

© Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy, 2013

HOW WILL IT BE DONE:

1) Who will attend the class? How will they learn about it? Who will teach the class – individual or team?	
2) When/What time of day will the class meet? How often will the classes meet? For how long each meeting? For how long – weeks/months?	
3) Where will you meet? How many people will the space hold? What are the tools in the space (chairs, tables, white boards etc?)	
4) What materials will you use/need? Will the organization pay for them? Will the organization charge for the class?	

What is the timeline for your class - start to end?
(e.g. Volunteers will participate in Instructor Training....Classes will start.)
March: …… April: ….. May ……June

How will you sustain the program?
- Who will lead the program?

- What is the plan if that person leaves?

- Where will funding be found for the program?

美京華人活動中心

Chinese Culture and Community Service Center, Inc. (CCACC)

成人英語課程報名表 Adult ESOL Class Registration Form

學生證號碼   美京華人活動中心會員證號碼   新生請勾此格
Student ID#_____   **CCACC Member#** _____   **New Student please check this BOX** ☐

英文姓名 (姓)   (名)   出生國
Name (Last) _____ **(First)** _____   **Country of Birth** _____

中文姓名   姓別   出生年份
Chinese Name _____   **Sex** _____   **Date of Birth** _____

住址   城市   州   郵遞區號
Address _____ **City** _____ **State** ____ **Zip Code** _____

電話 (住宅)   (工作)   (手機)   電子郵件
Telephone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Cell)_____ **Email** _____

緊急聯絡人姓名   聯絡人電話
Emergency Contact Person _____ **Telephone** _____

報名課程   初級英語1   初級英語2   中級英語   日常會話   基礎發音班   公民入籍

	初級英語1 **ESOL I**	初級英語2 **ESOL II**	中級英語 **ESOL III**	日常會話 **Conversation**	基礎發音班 **Pronunciation**	公民入籍 **Citizenship**
Class registered	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

學歷: 大專以上   大專   高中
Education: **Advanced Degree** ☐   **Bachelor Degree** ☐   **High School** ☐

工作經驗 (現在和過去)
Working Experience (current and past):

_____

_____

_____

Primary Learning Goal (choose no more than two) 學習英文的目的 (不超過兩項):

教育   家庭   工作   考公民   日常生活
Education _____   **Family** _____   **Working** _____   **Citizenship** _____   **Daily Living** _____

填表人簽名   分班考試成績
Signature _____   **Placement Test Score** _____

填表日期   報名班級   註冊費/書本費/講義費
Date_____ **Class** _____ **Registration/Book Fee** _____

Ver. 08/27/2018

Can I....

Name: _____ Date: _____

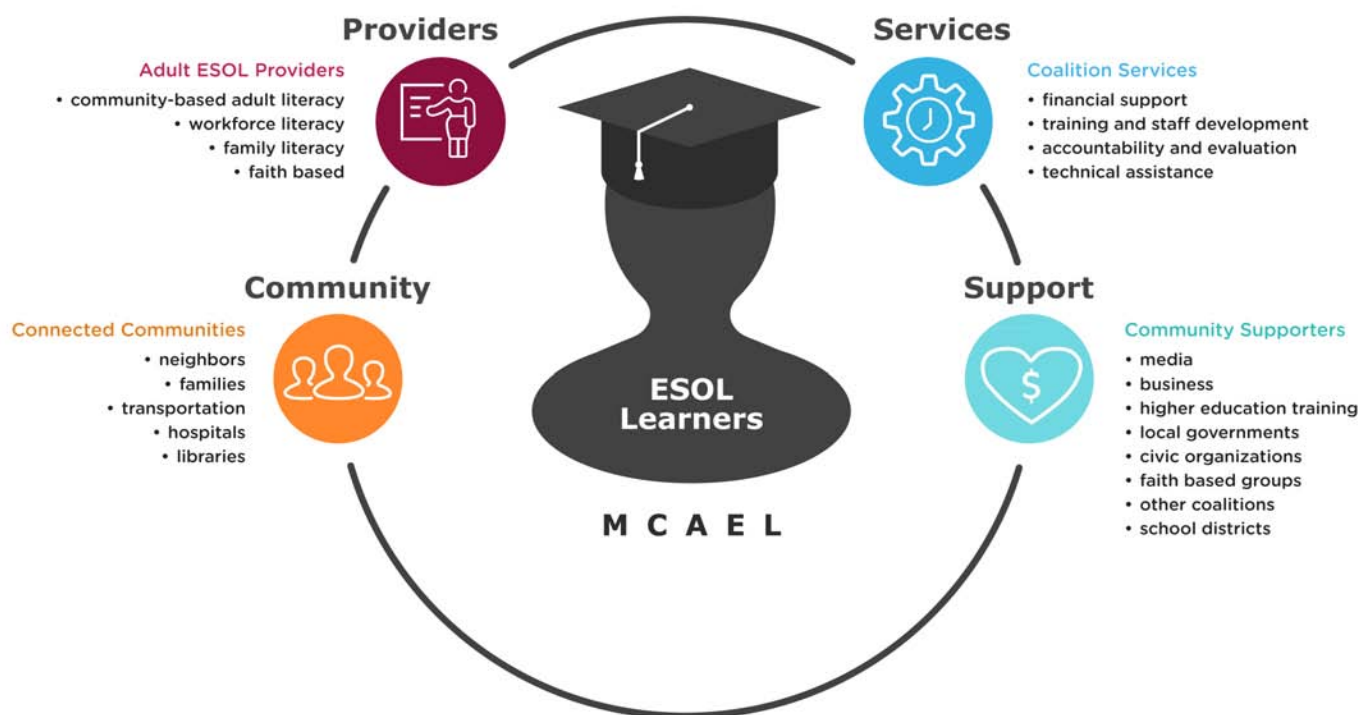| Task	No, I can't ☹	Some ☺	Yes, but not very well ☺	Yes, I can! ☺
Obtain a library card and fill out other simple forms				
Read books, newspapers, magazines weekly in English				
Communicate with my neighbors in English				
Read a bus/metro schedule				
Answer the phone and take messages in English				
Write, read, and send an email				
Give street directions in English				
Read food labels and compare prices				
Communicate basic health/illness information with doctor in English				
Make a medical appointment using English				
Read a prescription bottle label				
Renew a prescription at the pharmacy using English				
Complete a resume in Microsoft Word				
Obtain a job interview				
Talk with my child's teacher in English				
Get involved in neighborhood activities using English				

Name: _____

My goals for this session are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Choose 3 areas of English you want to improve the most. Put a ✓ next to them.

_____ Vocabulary

_____ Grammar (sentence structure, word order, verb tenses, parts of speech, etc)

_____ Listening Comprehension

_____ Speaking Confidence

_____ Reading Skills

_____ Writing Skills (writing paragraphs and stories)

_____ Pronunciation

Providers

Adult ESOL Providers
- community-based adult literacy
- workforce literacy
- family literacy
- faith based

Services

Coalition Services
- financial support
- training and staff development
- accountability and evaluation
- technical assistance

Community

Connected Communities
- neighbors
- families
- transportation
- hospitals
- libraries

Support

Community Supporters
- media
- business
- higher education training
- local governments
- civic organizations
- faith based groups
- other coalitions
- school districts

ESOL Learners

M C A E L

The Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy strengthens the countywide adult English literacy network to support a thriving community and effective workforce.

Founded in 2005, MCAEL has established itself as a backbone organization for a robust network of English language instruction programs. By strengthening knowledge, skills, and access to information for staff and instructors, adult learners are better able to access employment, earn family-sustaining wages, help their children with homework, or achieve citizenship, benefitting the community at large. Now entering its fourteenth year, MCAEL is a leading model in the county for collaborative, asset building work. Our comprehensive services directly impact 70+ adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs, with over 900 program staff and instructors, reaching more than 15,000 adult learners annually across Montgomery County.