

ESL Rural Routes news

"I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework."

- Lily Tomlin

"Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one learned in school."

- Albert Einstein

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Is it time for an ESL needs assessment in your community?

Communities are constantly changing, and the needs of your ELLs may also be shifting. In 2004, Rural Routes team members were involved in creating the document, *A Needs Assessment Tool for ESL Programming*. This is a valuable "go to" document, both for experienced coordinators and those who are new to the role. Conducting a needs assessment will help you connect with those newcomers who you know are out there and would benefit from your program, but have not shown up.

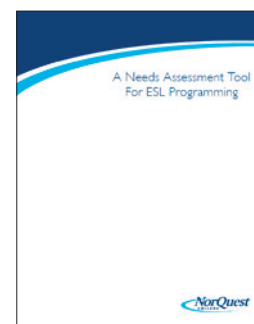
The Needs Assessment Tool is designed to assist rural community program coordinators and interested rural community members with determining the need for English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.

It walks users through the necessary steps to find out the following information:

- Whether a significant number of non-English speaking immigrants are living in the community
- Whether the immigrants are receptive to ESL training
- What type of training would be most appropriate

Conducting an ESL needs assessment is more complex than other types of needs assessments. Because the target group does not speak

English, you will not likely be able to reach them through the usual means of communication (i.e., radio, television, and newspaper). This resource outlines methods to overcome these obstacles, and includes sample tools to use in conducting the needs assessment.



A Needs Assessment Tool for ESL Programming is available for download at <http://www.norquest.ca/pdf/edresources/NeedsAssessmentToolAug2004.pdf>

How to teach the grammar your learners need, and have fun doing it!

Introduction to Teaching Grammar – NorQuest Packaged Workshop

This three-hour workshop offers a quick look at teaching grammar. The focus is on beginning ESL learners (CLB 1 to 3), but the strategies presented may be used with more advanced learners.

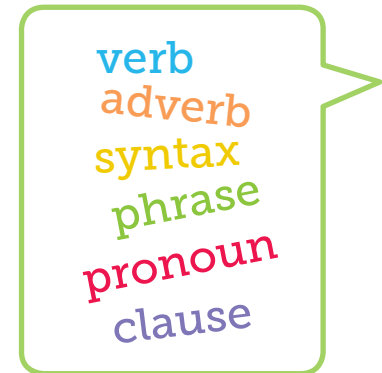
The objective of the workshop is to provide teachers and tutors with strategies that will help them teach the grammar that learners need, and have fun doing it.

English grammar includes all the rules and forms that govern how we speak and write. Some teachers focus almost entirely on these rules and forms, believing that students learn best through rote memorization. While students need to learn the rules and forms of grammar, memorization is not an effective method for teaching grammar. It results in learners who may be capable of earning excellent marks in exercises and tests, but may still be unable to use grammar correctly in everyday speaking and writing.

On the other hand, some teachers do not teach grammar. They assume that learners will absorb grammar rules through communication activities. They believe that since children learn their first language without grammar instruction, ESL students will learn grammar in the same way. However, we know that adults learn differently than children.

How then can an ESL teacher or tutor teach grammar effectively? The answer is to balance the teaching methods.

Grammar does involve a lot of rules and forms, but there are ways to make teaching grammar fun. Your goal with learners is to enable them to use the grammar points that you are teaching for communicative purposes.



This packaged workshop, developed by Rural Routes, reviews some principles of grammar and includes lots of transferable strategies for teaching grammar. To ensure that it is user friendly, it was piloted by Red Deer Public Library, Kneehill Adult Learning Society, and Provost Adult Learning. It will be posted on the NorQuest website next Fall, and will be available as a free download. You may also invite one of the NorQuest Rural Routes consultants to present the workshop free of charge to your organization.

LearningLinks



You may be familiar with LearningLinks Resource Centre as a unique library dedicated to literacy, learning difficulties, and attention issues. However, did you know they also carry resources pertaining to ESL and workplace essential skills?

Their goal is to make LearningLinks a go-to centre for excellence: a clearing house for information, expertise, and resources around the above topics—not only in Alberta, but nationwide. To achieve this goal, LearningLinks would like to be able to share what others are doing in these fields. If you have information or resources that would be useful to others, please contact LearningLinks. They would like to be able to add your knowledge to the resources offered on this website.

Have you made use of their Travelling Trunks? These are collections of materials (including books, journals, reports, kits, CDs, videos, and DVDs) used to support teaching, learning, marketing, and professional development activities. They offer Travelling Trunks focused on ESL and also on workplace and essential skills. Or, they will customize a trunk specifically to your program needs. Travelling Trunks cover the following topics:

- Plain language
- Violence and learning
- Learning disabilities
- Literacy awareness
- Family literacy
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Workplace and essential skills
- Aboriginal literacy
- Tutor training
- Professional development

Contact **Laura Godfrey**, Manager, LearningLinks Resource Centre.

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www.learninglinkslibrary.ca

Building a Curriculum

Community programs are expanding to accommodate immigrant populations in rural communities. Because this population growth is expected to continue, you may decide that it is time to create a foundational curriculum for your program. The following are a few core questions you will need to ask of those involved:

1. What is a curriculum?
2. Who are the learners and what kind of program are we building? (ESL vs. ESL Literacy)
3. What outcomes do we want our learners to achieve?
4. What themes will best meet the needs of our learners?
5. What assessment methods will we use, and how will assessment be integrated into our program and classes?
6. What resources are available to us that match the outcomes we have determined to be essential?
7. What final information is required, and how will we collect and present it? (report cards, portfolios, student program files)

Remember, Rural Routes consultants have a variety of experiences and are willing and able to offer support as you begin to look at your curricular needs.

A Helpful List of Alberta Developed Resources

The following resources have been developed within Alberta with Alberta learners and communities in mind. All are available as free downloads except for the ESL Literacy Network – a website designated to supporting learners with an ESL literacy profile. Follow the links below.

Resource	Website
Common Ground: Guide to English in the Workplace	www.norquest.ca/cfe/intercultural/proj_commonground.asp
A Needs Assessment Tool for ESL Programming	www.norquest.ca/corporate/edresources/index.htm#eslnat
ESL Literacy Network	www.esl-literacy.com
ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities	http://www.norquest.ca/corporate/edresources/eslruralroutes.htm
Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook	http://www.esl-literacy.com/node/767
Roots and Connections	www.norquest.ca/cfe/intercultural/proj_RESL2.asp
Rural Routes – Multi-Level ESL Lesson Plans, Levels 2 and 4	http://www.norquest.ca/corporate/edresources/eslruralroutes.htm
Rural Routes – Multi-Level ESL Lesson Plans, Level 6	http://www.norquest.ca/corporate/edresources/eslruralroutes.htm
Rural Routes Newsletters	http://www.norquest.ca/corporate/edresources/eslruralroutes.htm
The ABCs of Practical Literacy: Personal Management	http://www.esl-literacy.com/sites/default/files/ABC-personal%20management_o.pdf
The ABCs of Practical Literacy: Employment Literacy	http://www.esl-literacy.com/sites/default/files/ABC-employment%20literacy_o.pdf
The ABCs of Practical Literacy: Economic Literacy	http://www.esl-literacy.com/sites/default/files/ABC-economic%20literacy.pdf

Rural Routes team members are a great contact if you are not sure what will work best for your learners. We are also able to provide professional development to support your use of these resources. Send an email or give us a call.

Connections

Do you have any unique tidbits to share? Have you developed resources or found ways to meet your community's needs? If so, contact **Sue Oguchi** so you can share your knowledge and ideas in this newsletter! Phone 403.331.0030 or email Susan.Oguchi@NorQuest.ca