

## Working With ESL Literacy Learners

### Who Are ESL Literacy Learners?

An ESL Literacy Learner is someone who:

- Has little experience being in a classroom
- Has had interrupted education for a variety of reasons (e.g., war)
- Has little formal education in their first language
- Has had restricted access to education due to factors such as gender or poverty
- Are non-Roman alphabet learners
- May fit into one of the following categories:

Pre-literate	➤ Come from cultures where spoken languages do not have written forms or where print is not part of daily life
Non-literate	➤ Do not read or write in any language
Semi-literate	➤ Have some basic reading and writing skills, but are not yet functionally literate

### What resources are available?

ATESL Resource Library	Includes resources such as NICO (Newcomer Introduction to Classes Online), Literacy Assessment Tools, and Interactive English. <a href="https://www.atesl.ca/resources/resource-library/">https://www.atesl.ca/resources/resource-library/</a>
Easy Reading Work-related Workbooks	<a href="https://alis.alberta.ca/tools-and-resources/content/products/easy-reading-job-profiles/">https://alis.alberta.ca/tools-and-resources/content/products/easy-reading-job-profiles/</a>
English Express Newspapers	<a href="https://calp.ca/express">https://calp.ca/express</a>
ESL Literacy Network	Extensive resource through Bow Valley College, providing workshops, resources, tools, and support. <a href="https://globalaccess.bowvalleycollege.ca/networks/esl-literacy-network">https://globalaccess.bowvalleycollege.ca/networks/esl-literacy-network</a>
Healthy Eating Toolkit	<a href="https://www.immigratemanitoba.com/alt/EAL-Healthy-Eating-Toolkit.pdf">https://www.immigratemanitoba.com/alt/EAL-Healthy-Eating-Toolkit.pdf</a>
Tutela Resources for ESL Literacy Learners	You must be a registered member of Tutela to view these resources. Membership is free and available for all ESL professionals. <a href="https://tutela.ca/Resources?resource_type=&amp;content=ESL%20Literacy%20Learners">https://tutela.ca/Resources?resource_type=&amp;content=ESL%20Literacy%20Learners</a>

**NOTE:** If the links won't open when you click on them, copy and paste the link into your web browser.

## What approaches work best with ESL Literacy Learners?

- **An interactive Instructional Approach (whole-part-whole):**
  1. Present authentic task in its entirety (show what the task will look like when finished)
  2. Break down task into manageable pieces (individual components) that learners work through systematically (learners complete one step at a time)
  3. Address the task in its entirety at the end (learners put all the steps together in the final task)
  
- **Learner-centred tasks:**
  1. Begin with the learner's culture and prior experience
  2. Build in oral communication as the foundation for literacy development
  3. Use tasks that are meaningful and relevant to the learner
  4. Choose vocabulary, grammar, and strategies that relate to the discussions with the learner
  5. Focus explicitly on both meaning and form
  6. Scaffold to build in concepts and confidence
  7. Practice, reinforce, and transfer learning from one task to another (from lesson to real-life situations, community, and workplace)
  
- **Skills, Knowledge, and Strategy Development for Writing**
  1. Provide structure, sequence, and repetition
  2. Focus on mechanics (e.g., spelling, handwriting)
  3. Recycle and spiral instruction (repetition, repetition, repetition)
  4. Consider the socio-cultural and contextual needs of the learner
  5. Use real-world tasks that the learner has to address outside the classroom (e.g., note from the child's teacher, doctor's appointment, grocery shopping)
  6. Provide for learners to collaborate with other learners
  
- **Strategies for Vocabulary Building**
  1. Teach vocabulary that is central to the concepts being taught
  2. Choose vocabulary words that relate to previously-learned words
  3. Review vocabulary words frequently
  4. Teach context clues when appropriate for the learner's level
  5. Limit the number of vocabulary words introduced at any given time

### A Few Specific Needs of ESL Literacy Learners

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Basic and simple language and literacy skills</li> <li>➤ Specific and targeted learning strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Experience success in small manageable tasks to build self-confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Slower pace</li> <li>➤ Repetition!</li> </ul>
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