WHAT TO LOOK FOR

A Quick Guide for Observing Classroom Content and Practice

Content

During an adult education beginning level ESOL class, you should observe the teacher integrating the corresponding level MA English Language Proficiency Standards and students engaging in a variety of standards and practices:

Talk about it	**Adult English Learners engage in communicative, collaborative interactions** ● **Participate in short social or task-related conversations**: ask and answer questions about provided information; follow rules for discussions (e.g., turn-taking, active listening); talk about familiar topics (e.g., self, family, home); state simple opinions and reasons; respond to others ● **Practice listening:** listen to and comprehend simple statements on familiar topics; identify a speaker's main idea or argument; extract details; follow a short sequence of events; take dictation ● **Practice speaking:** with support (e.g., scripts, sentence stems, teacher model), describe people, places, things, events; practice formulaic speech (Q&A, greetings) and "language chunks;" practice and give short presentation using multimedia (e.g., pictures, graphics) ● **Attend to accuracy:** Use common academic and career related vocabulary and basic grammatical structures (simple verb tenses; prepositions, word order, pronouns); practice appropriate intonation and pronunciation ● **Use listening/speaking strategies:** look up words/use translation app; notice communication gaps and repeat, rephrase, use body language, and L1 as needed; check for understanding
Read about it	**Adult English learners engage with level-appropriate complex texts, both print and digital.** ● **Extract meaning from simple digital and print texts:** with guidance, identify main point and/or argument, locate key details; make simple inferences; connect to funds of knowledge ● **Practice reading:** read aloud for fluency; put words or pictures from a text in sequential order; answer questions about a text ● **Attend to structure and form:** sound out words, connecting sound to print; identify organization of a text (time/sequence; cause/effect); use reading to learn new vocabulary and basic grammar ● **Use reading strategies:** use text features (headings, images) to make predictions and locate key information; preview vocabulary; identify cognates; re-read to check for understanding
Write about it	**Adult English learners write for a range of purposes and audiences.** ● **Write for a purpose**: with support (e.g., timeline, pictures), write sentences to describe a person, place, or event or to express an opinion; write short answers to questions; write emails, texts ● **Practice writing:** copy sentences from a model or dictation; label and sequence pictures; use new vocabulary in sentences; use digital tools (e.g., texting, email, chat); free-write on topic of choice ● **Attend to structure, form and organization:** Using models as needed, construct simple sentences, (e.g., accurate word order, spelling, punctuation, common linking words, simple verb tenses) ● **Use writing strategies:** write; brainstorm ideas related to a prompt; revise based on feedback; collaborate on shared digital documents; use word-processing features for revising, editing
Think about it	**Adult English learners engage daily in higher-order reasoning and metacognition.** ● **Interpret and analyze information:** discuss graphs, charts, percentages, large numbers; compare /contrast information presented in two texts; at Level 3: identify and analyze media sources ● **Research:** participate in short, shared research, drawing from interviews and provided sources; build knowledge about a topic and report on it (e.g., collect/produce data, take notes from print or digital sources; sort evidence into provided categories; summarize) ● **Notice patterns in language:** compare L1 linguistic patterns with English; use graphic organizers to analyze words and sentences ● **Develop independent learning strategies:** set learning goals (with scaffolded materials); observe and learn from others; play simple word games; use print and digital language applications (e.g., online textbook supplements, mobile apps) to practice English; evaluate the appropriateness of the level ("Is this a good fit for me? Why? Why not?"); reflect on learning progress

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Practices

The examples below feature three Standards from the ESOL Professional Standards. These Standards are just a sampling from the full set of the ESOL Professional Standards and were chosen because they create a sequence: the teacher plans a lesson that sets clear and high expectations, the teacher then delivers high quality instruction, and finally the teacher uses a variety of assessments to see if students understand the material or if re-teaching is necessary. This example highlights teacher and student behaviors aligned to the three Standards that you can expect to see in a rigorous adult education beginning level ESOL class.

PLANNING (Standard 4)	The ESOL teacher designs coherent, rigorous instructional lessons that include measurable learning outcomes, optimize student interaction, support the needs of all learners, are guided by SLA principles, and aligned to the MA ELPS.
What is the teacher doing?	**What are the students doing?**
● Presenting lesson objectives in simple language that students understand ● Contextualizing language skills in content familiar and meaningful to students (e.g., family, culture, work) ● Providing rigorous tasks that integrate digital literacy (e.g., finding information, making connections) ● Progressing from more to less controlled activities (e.g., modeling to scripted dialogue to unscripted) ● Grouping learners strategically (e.g., according to level, language group, interests, and/or goals) ● Assessing student learning of lesson objectives and task completion and sharing results with student	● With visual support and guidance, communicating their goals and interests to instructor ● Connecting lesson objectives to their goals ● Developing vocabulary in content areas ● Contributing to teacher-led discussion, gradually progressing to less controlled practice activities with supports, and then to authentic language use ● Using digital tools to practice language, communicate, and find information (e.g., digital workbooks, texts and chats, guided website searches)
INSTRUCTION (Standard 6)	The ESOL teacher facilitates language learning by using a variety of rigorous instructional methods and relevant materials that optimize student engagement, encourage productive struggle, foster critical thinking, and address diverse needs, interests, and levels of readiness.
What is the teacher doing?	**What are the students doing?**
● Providing, and removing scaffolding as needed so every student is engaged in activities ● Emphasizing speaking and listening, but including reading and writing ● Facilitating small group activities by clarifying directions, modeling, answering questions, taking notes of common errors to revisit ● Providing language and strategies to access complex texts and express complex thoughts ● Explicitly teaching digital literacy skills ● Limiting teacher talk to modeling, giving instructions, short explanations	● Interacting with teacher (e.g., actively listening, repeating model language, copying information, answering and asking questions, reading aloud) ● Practicing new vocabulary and structures, using supports (e.g., scripts, sentence stems, pictures) ● Engaging in authentic communication and "productive struggle," using strategies to negotiate meaning (e.g., gestures, visuals, prior knowledge, L1) ● Collaborating to understand a complex text, solve a problem, locate information, or navigate systems
ASSESSMENT (Standard 5)	The ESOL teacher uses a variety of formative and summative assessments to inform and evaluate instruction, develop differentiated learning experiences, measure student learning, and promote learner metacognition.
What is the teacher doing?	**What are the students doing?**
● Checking for understanding through verbal or visual feedback (e.g., 0-5 fingers; red-yellow-green cards) ● Assessing learning through an authentic task (e.g., role-play, completing an online form) ● Correcting errors that interfere with meaning; rephrasing, providing correct word ● Giving students tools and opportunities to self-test and reflect (e.g., pictorial checklist)	● Acknowledging feedback (e.g., through verbal confirmation, asking questions, self-correction) ● Demonstrating learning in multiple authentic ways ● Using self-assessment tools to monitor progress and learning