

BC Safe Haven Language Curriculum Training: Supporting Diverse Learning

Building Accessibility in EAL Programs: Tools, Supports, and Approaches

Core Principles for Supporting Diverse Learners

- **Explicit instruction** (modeling, think-alouds, guided practice)
- **Multimodal input** (see it, hear it, do it)
- **Reduced cognitive load** (less text, fewer steps at once)
- **Predictable routines and task structures**
- **Repetition and review without stigma**
- **Flexibility in time, output, and participation**
- **Strength-based approaches** that value oral skills, lived experience, and multilingualism

High-Impact Classroom Strategies

- **Clear learning goals stated verbally and visually**
- **Step-by-step instructions with visual cues**
- **Chunked reading and writing tasks**
- **Sentence starters, word banks, and graphic organizers**
- **Alternatives to copying or long writing tasks**
- **Extra time for reading, writing, and responses**
- **Frequent comprehension checks** (without putting learners on the spot)
- **Assistive tools** (text-to-speech, speech-to-text, translation apps)

Assessment & Participation: What Accessibility Looks Like

- **Oral or visual alternatives to written tasks**
- **Smaller assessment tasks over time**
- **Demonstrations of learning through role-play or visuals**
- **Reduced emphasis on spelling and mechanics when assessing meaning**
- **Clear rubrics focused on communication, not speed**

Reflection Question

What is one instructional change you can make to better support learners with diverse learning needs in your EAL classroom?

Canadian Resources: Diverse Learning & Learning Disabilities for Newcomers and Refugees

1. **Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC)**
National leadership organization offering research, advocacy, and resources on learning disabilities across the lifespan, including adults and multilingual learners.
2. **LD@school (Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario)**
Evidence-based classroom strategies and educator tools for supporting learners with learning disabilities and ADHD; adaptable for EAL contexts.
3. **Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO)**
Professional learning, workshops, and educator-focused resources on learning disabilities and inclusive practices.
4. **CanLearn Society**
Canadian organization specializing in learning strategies and supports for adults with learning disabilities, including literacy and study skills.
5. **Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC)**
Resources on communication accessibility, plain language, and inclusive communication practices relevant to EAL learners with diverse learning needs.
6. **Inclusive Education Canada (IEC)**
National organization promoting inclusive education and systemic accessibility across learning environments.
7. **Canadian Accessibility Network (CAN)**
Research and practical resources related to accessibility, disability inclusion, and barrier reduction in education and community services.
8. **ATESL – Supporting Learners with Diverse Needs and Abilities**
Practical guidance for adult EAL, LINC, and settlement-based programs; widely used across Canada.
9. **Settlement.org (OCASI)**
Information and referral resources related to settlement, disability supports, and community services for newcomers and refugee claimants.
10. **Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)**
Settlement services and referrals for newcomers and refugees, including supports related to learning, health, and accessibility.
11. **Provincial Adult Education, ESL, and LINC Accessibility Services**
Local school boards, colleges, and settlement agencies often provide learner supports and accommodations **without requiring formal diagnosis.**