EMERGING TRAITS OF
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

BACKGROUND TO THE RESOURCE

At the Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL) mini-conference in Edmonton, AB on May 27th, 2019, a number of English as an Additional Language (EAL) practitioners gathered to discuss emerging practices in inclusive teaching, spaces, and policies. Since then, we have shared drafts of these practices with colleagues in EAL to ask for their input and there have been a number of suggested edits and critiques that have resulted in this final document.

As a community of EAL practitioners, we understand that the current climate of language instruction involves a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and, decolonization, and, as such, the emerging practices list below has a number of critical limitations. Please treat this as a *living document*, to be utilized, tested and improved upon with learners and colleagues in your respective institutions. We hope it catalyzes critical discussion, particularly the terms such as empathy, curiosity, humility, authenticity and allyship, whose meaning is located within different contexts and discourses. Numerous colleagues and contributors pointed out that these terms are often defined within Western, Euro-centric education systems and not representative of all cultures, and/or ways of learning & teaching.

This document is intended to be a contribution to the current context of inclusive teaching, and not intended to be prescriptive nor is it to be interpreted as the educational ideology of any one particular EAL provider.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INCLUSIVE **INSTRUCTOR**

Empathy
"Putting yourself in your students' shoes" while maintaining an awareness that you may never know the entirety of your students' experiences of inequity.

Example: Actively critique classroom teaching materials with colleagues and learners to sharpen awareness of the subtle, inherent biases. Have learners write, record, present, share experiences with bias, injustice, inequity. Encourage voices to speak up for equity.

Curiosity
Building relationships with learners through conscious curiosity—the awareness of both the intent and the impact of questions about identity and life experiences.

Example: Normalize the use of images, listening activities, and texts that echo and amplify the diverse, intersectional identities of individuals who are not part of the dominant racial, ethnic, cultural or gender groups. (e.g., Lesson on Workplace Diversity).

Humility
Recognizing our different and, in some cases, privileged life circumstances and how these may impact our understanding of the circumstances of our learners.

Example: Complete privilege checklists. A reflection activity that looks at privilege (physical, mental, linguistic, socioeconomic) and societal (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, etc.) can put assumptions of learners into perspective.

Authenticity
Building rapport and trust with your learners.

Example: Share authentically and honestly about your life experience, struggles, successes and failures.

Allyship
Increasing awareness of the role of power in instructor/learner relationships. Advocating for learners, standing beside them, echoing and amplifying historically marginalized voices.

Example: Normalize language related to LGBTQ+, racism, equity, ability/disability through in-class activities and materials.

INCLUSIVE **POLICIES**

Flexible
Considering the differing religious, cultural and traditional needs of learners.

Example: Opportunities to consult with local religious leaders on personal matters, participate in restorative justice circles as a disciplinary alternative, time to participate in ceremony, and celebrating cultural holidays.

Intentional
Regularly reviewing institutional policies for equity, diversity and inclusion.

Example: Ensure code of conduct, safe disclosure, respectful workplace, and any other policies not only comply with current legislation but are setting the stage for increased equity, decolonization, and justice.

Representative
Learner voice is central to and galvanizes policy development.

Example: Prioritize and amplify students' voices to increase expression representation of race, socio-economic status, ability, gender, immigration status, etc. in policy.

Welcoming
Employing inclusive language in policies, signage and other institutional communications.

Example: Develop institutional vision/mission statements that speak to equity, diversity and inclusion for organizational brochures and materials, etc. Decolonize policies, processes and procedures (e.g., no wait lists for indigenous learners, consistently hit matriculation targets).

INCLUSIVE **SPACE**

Accessible
Ensuring spaces are physically, mentally and spiritually accessible to all students.

Example: Technology services for low-vision students. Ramps and washroom accessibility. Interpreters, translators, documents in multiple languages. Prayer rooms, smudge rooms, On campus Elders, On campus counselling supports.

Thoughtful Design
Apply design thinking, human-centered design, universal design for learning, and other equity-centered practices to institutional spaces.

Example: Update signs, celebrate LGBTQ2S+ pride, acknowledge Treaties, host professional development (e.g., circles of learning, communities of practice, special interest groups).

Clear boundaries
Clarifying expectations and boundaries in the learning space. There is teacher presence but it does not become overwhelming.

Example: Co-create a Class Charter that learners and instructor sign and actively support.

Shared power
Giving learners the agency in the classroom that fosters a sense of ownership of the learning community.

Example: Instructors, administrators, executive leadership, board leadership and learners challenge inequitable systemic bias and discrimination and teach about Human Rights, Indigenous Rights and the 15 protected grounds.

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