



ESOL Express

December 2008

Pause for thought

The ESOL sector is incredibly dynamic and, as such, it evolves at a startling rate. Often this means that we are so caught up in managing and implementing change that we have little time to stop and take stock. This issue of ESOL Express aims to do precisely that.

Centres often are unsure about the requirements for presenting candidate recordings for moderation. Our Lead Moderator for ESOL, Jane Jordan, has written some excellent additional guidance to help clarify what is expected.

There is also information about a series of training events for centres in February 2009. As we expand in the ESOL sector we are increasing the support we provide to our centres.

These events will focus on aspects of teaching and learning and aim to support tutors in their continuous professional development. Existing OCNW and new centres are all welcome!

Finally, as you may be aware, the QCA announced that it is initiating a review of the current ESOL Skills for Life qualifications. In anticipation of this review we have put together a survey (on the back page of this issue) to help gauge centre opinion on our qualifications and direct us as we move forward in updating and improving our ESOL Skills for Life qualifications. Please fill in the survey and return it to us. We really want to hear your opinions, and you could win £30 of shopping vouchers.

Ben Rockliffe

OCNW Development Manager – ESOL
b.rockliffe@lancaster.ac.uk

OCNW ESOL Qualifications

ESOL Skills for Life

Entry 1 100/4880/7
Entry 2 100/4881/9
Entry 3 100/4882/0
Level 1 100/5720/1
Level 2 100/5721/3

ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking & Listening only)

Entry 1 100/4883/2
Entry 2 100/4884/4
Entry 3 100/4885/6
Level 1 100/5722/5
Level 2 100/5723/7

ESOL for Work

Entry 3 500/2114/X
Level 1 500/2262/3

ESOL International

Entry 3 500/4061/3
Level 1 500/4062/5
Level 2 500/4064/9
Level 3 500/4063/7

Preparation for Community Interpreting

Level 3 500/3770/5

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Win £30 of vouchers with the OCNW ESOL Skills for Life Review Survey



Skills for Life - Speaking and Listening

Carrying out the Skills for Life Speaking and Listening assessments seems to be one of the most challenging aspects of the ESOL programme and tends to raise a number of issues, which emerge during external moderation.

First of all, there are the logistics of carrying out a one-to-one or small group oral assessment within an ESOL class, especially a community class. Sometimes it is difficult to hear the candidate on the recording because of the background noise of other students. But what does this mean in terms of fair assessment and its impact on the concentration of the tutor and candidate? It is not reasonable to expect tutors to carry out assessments within a normal class. Centres are expected to provide sufficient resources in terms of staffing and space for the assessments to be carried out under controlled conditions. This may mean double staffing, the provision of a quiet room, allocating specific sessions for the assessments and timetabling individual and small group appointments in a similar way as would be arranged for an external examiner.

The second main issue is the conduct of the assessment, particularly the role-plays. Evidence from recordings shows the following areas for concern: inconsistencies in the way the same tutor carries out the role-play with different candidates and in the way different tutors carry out the tasks; a tendency for some tutors to talk too much and not prompt

the candidate to give the information or ask the questions which are a requirement for meeting the criteria; presentations in which the candidate seems to be reading from a prepared text; lack of management of discussions to ensure each member of the group has the chance to contribute sufficiently to achieve the criteria.

It would be good practice for co-ordinators or internal moderators to arrange an internal standardisation training meeting to ensure that, especially where several tutors are involved, there is a consistent approach and that tutors make use of strategies for prompting participation. Tutors also need to ensure that candidates are well-briefed and understand the scenario and what they have to do to generate the evidence e.g. ask for specific information. In one centre at Entry 1 picture prompts have been created to stimulate the questions. In presentations, tutors must remember that candidates may use notes as prompts, but not write out their speech/talk.

Finally, the quality of recordings of the speaking assessments remains a significant area for improvement. This is a key aspect of the evidence which enables the external moderator to check the performance against the mark sheets, yet all too often recordings are of poor quality and difficult to hear, candidates are not introduced clearly by name and task and in discussions there is no indication as to who is speaking. In addition, where cassettes are used, there is insufficient information on the box for the moderator to be able to easily locate candidates e.g. the number and name

of the tasks, a sequential list of candidates with rev counts if possible should be clearly indicated.

In the centres with the best practice, digital or electronic recordings are made where each candidate is on a separate easily accessible file or, if cassette recorders are used, internal and external tasks are on separate tapes or sides of the tape. The task and level are clearly indicated and candidates are listed in order with rev counts given where possible. On the recording candidates are clearly introduced by name and the task they are carrying out. Where the task involves two or more candidates it is made clear who is the first candidate to speak. In discussions, the tutor manages the discussion to ensure all participate and refers to candidates by name so it is easy to follow who is speaking. Care is taken that the recorder or microphone is placed so that all the candidates can be heard.



Jane Jordan
Lead ESOL Moderator

This attention to detail can help both the internal and external moderator and save much time, as well as making for a fairer assessment process.

Vocabulary Building

One of our ESOL tutors shares a technique for helping candidates build up their working vocabulary.

Before starting my teaching career in the UK I worked in Germany. My students would be in class early and all lessons would start promptly on the hour, with the town hall clock chiming in the background. What else would you expect in a college in Germany? Sometime after, I returned to the UK and took up a teaching job in my local FE college. For my first few months, I decided that all my lessons would start on time, as they did in Germany, and that all latecomers would have to manage. This would be sufficient punishment and would teach them about punctuality. (You could tell I had developed a German mentality.)

However, after a few months I realised that the students' reasons for lateness were mainly very human, for example, the school run, or a critical appointment with a solicitor or the Home Office. To combat this and to accommodate the different time-zones in my classroom, I decided to buy all the students a notebook, just the right size to put in the back pocket of a pair of jeans. I gave the students the simple instruction to write down ten new words a week. If they felt very adventurous, they could even try and include the new word in a sentence. (I was always suspicious of the students who would come to class with ten words beginning with A and the first word in the list being 'ardvark'.)

Most students took the 'notebook-exercise' on and it became an integral part of the students' learning. For the first fifteen minutes of every lesson students would come up to the front of the class and write two of their most useful words from that week on the board. They would then teach their fellow students the meaning of these two words and in what context they were to be used. This activity allowed the latecomers to arrive, and we started the lesson together. Such a simple activity meant that I didn't have to start my lesson six or seven times and my students taught each other words that were important to them and their lives.

OCNW Training Days for ESOL Practitioners

We are pleased to announce that OCNW is to run a series of training events in February 2009 as part of our work to increase the support we provide to our centres. The events will be delivered by experienced practitioners and will focus on different aspects of teaching and learning and aim to support tutors in their continuous professional development. Existing OCNW centres and new centres are all welcome.

Each event will run from 10.00 am until 4.00 pm and will be divided into two sessions:

Part 1: Citizenship & ESOL

This session will look at the key immigration issues facing ESOL learners, tutors and providers in the UK. There will be an examination of routes to citizenship for Indefinite Leave to Remain and Naturalisation applicants before looking at how citizenship can be integrated into ESOL programmes.

Part 2: Using Functional ESOL for Work-Based Learning

This second session will look at how to recognise the needs of the employer and to identify the language skills necessary for ESOL in the workplace. There will be a demonstration of how using a genre-based approach can support ESOL teaching in the workplace, before looking at ESOL for Work qualifications and the bigger picture.

Refreshments and a full lunch will be provided. An OCNW accredited certificate of attendance will be given to each delegate that attends. To book your place simply tick the venue that you require and return this booking form. Alternatively book online at www.OCNW.com.

York	Tuesday 10th February 2009	The Royal York Hotel	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manchester	Wednesday 11th February 2009	The University of Manchester	<input type="checkbox"/>
London	Thursday 12th February 2009	The Russell Hotel	<input type="checkbox"/>

The event will commence at 10.00 am and finish at 4.00 pm. Places cost £50 per delegate from existing OCNW ESOL centres, £60 per delegate from new centres. There are no restrictions on the number of delegates that can attend from any one centre.

Name:

Job Title Centre:

Address:

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Email: Phone No:

Additional Requirements: Access Dietary Other

Please Specify

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N.B. Places are strictly limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis

Please return this form to Ruth Woodhouse, Corporate Events and Services, OCNW, West Lodge, Quernmore Road, Lancaster, LA1 3JT or fax to 01524 388467

If you have any queries regarding the events, please call Ruth Woodhouse on 01524 845046

Don't forget to fill in the ESOL Skills for Life Survey on the other side of this page.

Win £30 of Vouchers!!!

OCNW ESOL Skills for Life Review Survey

Name: Centre name:
Centre Type (e.g. FE College, Training Provider): Job Title:
Email: Telephone:

About your centre

1. Do you currently use OCNW ESOL Skills for Life qualifications?

Yes No

If yes, which levels?

Entry 1 Entry 2 Entry 3 Level 1 Level 2

2. Approximately how many learners do you have in your centre studying on ESOL Skills for Life programmes?

3. What types of learners do you have on your ESOL Skills for Life programmes?

- Economic migrants from the European Union that are in work
 Economic migrants from the European Union looking for work
 Asylum seekers
 Migrants from elsewhere in the world
 Migrant's spouses
 Other specific groups (please give details below):

About the qualification

4. Do you support the current assessment methodology?
(a mixture of internal and external assessment)

Yes No

If No, what would be your preferred method of assessment?

- Internal assessment
 External assessment
 Other (please give details below):

5. Do you find the Good and Satisfactory marking bands useful even though they are not recognised on the certificate?

Yes No

6. Would you support the recognition of the Good and Satisfactory marking bands on the certificate?

Yes No

7. Do you think the current way a learner's spikey profile is recognised on the certificate is appropriate?

Yes No

If No, then how could this be improved?:

8. Do you find the contexts used in the current External Assessments are appropriate?

Yes No

If No, then what contexts would you like to see used?:

9. Would you like the Speaking and Listening unit changed to assessment by an external examiner?

Yes No

10. Is there anything else you would like to add in order to help OCNW formulate plans for future reviewing ESOL Skills for Life qualifications? Please comment on the qualification content and general approach.

Thank you for your time.

Please return your completed survey to the following address by Wednesday 31st January 2009 at the latest:

Ben Rockliffe
OCNW, West Lodge
Quernmore Road
Lancaster LA1 3JT

All completed surveys will be placed in a draw. The name of the winner of the £30 vouchers will be announced on the OCNW website in January.

Don't forget to fill in the booking form for the ESOL Training Events at the same time as returning this survey.