Launching a Community-Based ESL Program

Nancy Dytynyshyn
Concordia University

———————————————

Abstract

The growing number of new Canadians, increasing requirements for work-place bilingualism, and the lack of government-sponsored English second language programs may prompt various community groups to offer an ESL program. This paper examines the steps taken in preparing to launch a community-based ESL program in an urban, Canadian context, specifically in Montreal, Quebec. Four preparation phases will be reviewed: the observation of existing community ESL programs, the establishment of aims and measures of success, an evaluation of available teaching materials, and teacher training. After going through the process described in this paper, a community-based ESL program was actually launched in the Notre-Dame-de-Grace borough of Montreal in September, 2007. A brief account of the program's first year will also be included.

———————————————

LAUNCHING A COMMUNITY-BASED ESL PROGRAM

After recognizing the need for a community-based ESL program but before actually launching one, many questions must be asked and answered. This preparatory process will be described in terms of four phases.

Phase One: Observation

The first step in preparing to launch a community-based ESL program is to visit a number of existing programs functioning in a similar context. In provinces other than Quebec, contacting and interviewing federal government Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) providers would be an important first step (Welcome to Canada, 2007). In Quebec, LINC services are offered in French, so other community groups offering ESL instruction must be sought out. Observation of classes in session will be most helpful. In addition, valuable information can be obtained by interviewing the respective program's coordinator or director using a carefully thought-out list of questions, such as those included in Appendix A. In this case, the information gathered from observation of three Montreal community ESL programs was combined. Other community ESL providers were consulted without direct observation of their programs. Compared with the business or academic context, community-based ESL programs demonstrate the unique features described below as they seek to offer a high-quality English language learning experience to their clientele.

Aims. It may be surprising to find that the primary aim in many community-based ESL programs is not actually the teaching of English. Contrary to the academic or business English class, which has specific language targets that the student must reach, the aims of the community-centred program are often more holistic. Helping students integrate into their new community is usually the goal; the teaching of English is a means to this end, but not the end in itself.

Students. The students participating in a community-based program are much more heterogeneous than in a business or academic English class. Primarily immigrants and refugees, some may have spent years in Canada before deciding to begin learning English; others may be very recent arrivals. They are from all over the world. Classes are multi-ethnic and students have no common L1. The educational and professional status of the learners can vary dramatically, many having exercised professional careers in their country of origin. However, some may be illiterate even in their L1. More of the students are at a beginner or intermediate level with fewer advanced students than in a business or academic English class. A business English teacher in Montreal encounters

very few, if any, true beginners. This is not the case for the clientele of a community-based program.

The needs of the students are different from those in a business English class where the students are all employed and generally well established socially. The community ESL teacher needs to be sensitive to the students' particular emotional struggles. Loss of self-esteem and status in light of not being able to exercise their profession in their adopted country, culture shock, acclimatization, separation from family members or personal trauma may all be at play. New arrivals to Quebec have the double challenge of sensing the need to learn both French and English in order to get ahead.

In terms of the students' linguistic needs, speaking and listening skills are generally more important than writing skills in a community ESL program. The beginner requires survival skills: learning to exchange information, make phone calls and appointments, fill out forms, and carry on basic conversations with a store clerk, doctor or teacher. However, they also need a place where they can explore language that allows them to express their thoughts and feelings. They need the opportunity to move beyond the superficial and enter into more significant relationships with English-speakers (Smith & Carvill, 2007). In terms of formal instructional settings, a student-centred class where learners experience communicative language teaching with focus on form is currently thought to be the best way to meet these linguistic needs. All of the community program directors interviewed favoured this theoretical orientation although some were more successful than others in implementing it.

In addition to their linguistic requirements, new Canadians may also need to have some of their dignity restored by being recognized as an expert in some domain. Simply teaching another how to make one of their traditional dishes or talking about their country of origin can be affirming. The greater flexibility offered by a community-based ESL program can potentially provide for these needs as well.

For many of the students the education system in Canada is very different from that of their home countries. They may come from a culture where a student does not look a teacher in the eye, must never say no to a teacher, or where men and women are not educated together. They may not easily share their thoughts or they may be expecting a teacher-centred class where a language is talked about rather than spoken. They may prefer individual tasks rather than group work, all of which makes managing communicative activities more challenging. All teachers have to deal with differences in students' personality and learning style, but these

additional cultural factors affect language learning in ways that the business English teacher rarely encounters.

Finally, these students' lives are often in a process of change. Some will relocate, get part-time or full-time jobs, begin a government-sponsored training program or be admitted to an academic institution. All this can contribute to a rather high dropout rate.

Teachers. Unlike the business or academic English context, the teachers in a community-based program are usually volunteers. One of the main challenges for such programs is attracting and keeping quality teachers. The individuals drawn to volunteer in this way have often taught in some context in life, but the community class may be their first ESL experience. However, most volunteer teachers truly love internationals so a lack of training is not necessarily a negative factor. A teacher's influence in a student's life springs more from the teacher's character than from the teacher's knowledge. As long as the teacher is a willing learner, a lack of experience can be overcome. However, the teaching support offered by the course book will be more essential in a community-based program with less experienced teachers.

The program coordinator in a community-based ESL program may also be a volunteer, although some programs hire a director with both TESL and administrative experience.

Organizational Context. The community-based ESL program is a not-for-profit venture. Students pay very little, if anything, for the hours of instruction they receive. In some cases this may contribute to high dropout rates, but offering the course at a low cost allows these programs to reach individuals who would never otherwise have the opportunity to study English. Because the funding for the course is usually much more limited than in a corporate or governmental language classroom, this factor has to be considered in choosing materials and activities. Access to overhead projectors, computers, dictionaries and other reading materials will also likely be more limited. However, off setting the reality of having fewer material resources, the community ESL class may actually be able to offer more human resources. The implication in community-based ESL teaching is that there is a host community behind the program, uniquely poised to provide addition out-of-class opportunities for interaction. This extra contact provides more practice in English as well as meeting some of the social and integrational needs identified above.

Inherent in community-based ESL teaching, then, are certain realities that will make the job more challenging and others that will make it a delight. Anyone interested in beginning such a program would be wise to give consideration to these unique features.

Phase Two: Establishment of Aims and Measures of Success

Once a general understanding of the nature of a community-based ESL program is assured, a number of issues must be examined with respect to the particular circumstances of the proposed new program. This includes analyzing the nature of the community desiring to host the program, the needs of the target community, the aims of the ESL program, and how success will be described or measured.

The Host Community. A community-based ESL program has the distinct advantage of having an entire community behind it. Therefore, planning the ESL program requires understanding the composition of the host community and the availability of its members to participate in or support the program. Will the host community provide financial support or does the program need to be self-supporting? Will its members be available and qualified to teach, serve as classroom helpers or become language partners?

In addition, the location of the facility housing the program needs to be considered. Is it accessible by public transportation and is it easy for newcomers to find? The answer to these questions will affect the kind of publicity needed to make the program known. An ESL program based out of a building located on a major artery in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood will likely need no further publicity than a sign placed on the door.

The Target Community. Directly related to the nature of the host community is the identification of the target community from which students are expected to come. If there are a large percentage of non-English speakers, a community centre or faith-based community could target the geographical neighbourhood where their building is located. Alternately, the host community may have a particular connection with an ethnic community and may find themselves serving primarily Asian or Latin American learners, for example. An English primary or high school in a multi-ethnic borough might target the parents or family members of their students. Whichever model is chosen, it is important to research and

identify the target learners before launching a community-based ESL program.

Aims of the ESL Program. The aims of the program must, in some way, complement the vision statement of the host community organization. Various community-based ESL programs will have different perspectives on their aims, although what they actually do, in fact, may be quite similar from one program to the next. Improving the quality of life for the ESL student by offering quality English language instruction would be a typical aim for such an ESL program.

Better English skills improve the quality of life by reducing culture shock, isolation and loneliness, and by enabling students to be better positioned in the job market. However, a community-based program may also offer improvements in other aspects of quality of life such as promoting greater integration and participation in community life; providing for physical needs when these needs become apparent; and enabling the development of significant or long-term relationships between students, between students and teachers, or between students and the members of the host community itself. All of the program directors interviewed in phase one emphasized the importance of having a snack break mid-way through the teaching time to allow students and teachers to mingle.

Measures of Success. Success in a program with the aim of improving quality of life needs some objective, measurable component as well as less-measurable anecdotal indicators of success. Ideally, the listening and speaking skills of students should be tested at the end of each session. This contributes to students' satisfaction and motivation, as well as serving as reinforcement for the volunteer teachers. Anecdotal measures of success could include:

- a student who forges a friendship with his or her language partner
- a student who begins using a community resource for the first time
- a student who dares to attend a school governing board or town council meeting
- a student who tearfully announces that he or she can no longer come to class because of a job or course opportunity
- students from differing world views showing an increased understanding of one another

Success in a community-based ESL program is a much broader concept than in a business or academic English class. Any indication that the student is growing linguistically, personally, socially or in citizenship would be a sign of success.

Although the program must reach a minimum number of learners, success should not necessarily be measured by the number of students involved. It is not necessary for the community program to grow to serve hundreds for it to be successful. In fact, growth must be paced with the availability of teachers, which is usually the limiting factor in a community-based ESL program.

Attrition is very normal in a community-based program and should not automatically be seen as a sign of failure. Certain measures can help control the negative effects of attrition. Limiting session length, with entry in the first or second class only, may improve the quality of the class and reduce attrition. Registering a few extra students in each group could help compensate for students who will drop out. Most groups find that charging a nominal fee, perhaps equivalent to the cost of the student course book, helps students remain more faithful in their attendance. If, even with these measures in place, classes are finishing the eight-week session with only a handful of students, further evaluation of the program should take place to determine the cause.

Finally, a degree of longevity for the program would be another indication of success. The program would not need to become a permanent institution in the host community, but it would be advisable for the program to continue for at least three to five years in order to justify the initial investments of time, energy and finances. This would be even more important if the host community chooses to invest in class sets of student course books or offers the course entirely free of charge.

A successful program will generally also benefit the host community, although this should not be what drives the program. Possible benefits could include novice teachers discovering new talents, ESL team members being challenged to re-examine their own values and worldview, or even exposure to new ethnic dishes at community potlucks.

Phase Three: Evaluation of Materials

Once the needs analysis, aims, and measures of success have been clarified for the given community, more specific details of program organization and choice of curriculum materials can be considered. Choosing an appropriate course book for an ESL class is very important,

but the choice of a curriculum for an ESL program has even more ramifications.

Begin by making a list of possible curricula. During the observation phase, a number of curricula will have been highlighted. What other groups are successfully using is always a good place to start. In addition, Internet research, a visit to the local language book store, and contacting ESL providers in other cities and provinces will allow other possible curricula to surface.

From this collection, an initial assessment of theoretical orientation, suitability for the community context, and availability will make it possible to short-list three or four of the potentially best curricula. These can then be submitted to an in-depth evaluation using an evaluation guide similar to the one in Appendix B. This guide was based on Alan Cunningsworth's checklist (1995) with additional criteria coming from Smith and Carvill (2000). The evaluation guide needs to be adapted to the aims and context of the particular community ESL program in question. For example, one criterion under *topics* in this program's checklist was "Do the topics, values, and underlying messages support the worldview of the teachers and the host community group?" This criterion may be important for some community-based groups but not for others, depending on their aims.

Each component of the course curriculum (including audio, video and web support, placement testing and evaluation materials) should be noted as well as all of the options for both students and teachers (full and split editions, workbooks). At this stage it is important to actually examine copies of the potential materials, not just descriptions of them. This may require temporarily borrowing from other ESL providers or spending significant amounts of time at the local language bookstore. Taking the time to thoroughly evaluate the materials will pay off in the long run.

The final curricular choice should ideally be made in consultation with some of the potential teachers and possibly with the governing body of the host community group.

Phase 4: Recruitment and Initial Teacher Training

Recruitment. Recruiting and training teachers are key components in launching a successful community-based ESL program. The first step is recruitment. As noted in the observation phase, teachers will generally be volunteers, many with no previous TESL training or experience. The sought-after qualities for a community-based ESL teacher may diverge

significantly from those required in a business or academic context. Depending on the aims of the program, some of the key qualities to look for in potential teachers include:

- personal integrity: Will the potential teacher positively represent the host community to the students?
- social and emotional maturity: Will the potential teacher be able to interact in healthy ways with the students and other members of the ESL team? Is he or she struggling with any major unresolved issues that could interfere with attending to the students' needs?
- competency as a speaker of English: Will the teacher be able to provide high-quality linguistic input both in and out of class? Appropriate standards for teacher competency may vary from one context to another, but in Montreal being able to speak English like a native speaker is usually very important.
- a love and respect for internationals
- a willingness to learn and develop as a teacher
- experience in teaching English as a second language or TESL training

The interviews conducted in the observation phase revealed that, in a community-based ESL program, there is a particular need to protect teachers from burnout and discouragement. Making the experience positive for the teachers emerges as a top priority for the program coordinator. Students make best progress if they come to class more than once a week, but most volunteer teachers cannot give two evenings a week in addition to their jobs and personal commitments. Team teaching emerges as a positive option where the community offers courses twice a week, but each teacher teaches only once. Even so, teachers' lives are also subject to change and new teachers are constantly needed. Placing a teaching assistant in each class allows for both on-the-job training of new teachers and ease of finding substitutes when the teacher is absent.

Initial Teacher Training. Once the teaching team has been assembled (teachers and assistants), teacher training is the next step. A workshop format provides the opportunity for hands-on learning and team building. Some of the key areas to include in teacher training are:

- taking steps to ensure that the entire team shares the same aims and measures of success. Many team decisions will need to be made as

plans are implemented and having shared goals will help streamline those decisions.

- demonstrating and having the teachers experience communicative language teaching. Most volunteer teachers will bring with them the teacher-centred model of instruction they themselves were taught under. It will take time and effort to get them thinking outside this box. Having them experience communicative activities taken from the chosen curriculum will be of particular benefit.
- familiarizing the teachers with the curriculum. They need to get their hands on the materials they will be using, see how it is organized and locate the teaching resources. An example of a paired workshop activity designed to familiarize teachers with Pearson's *Top Notch 3 Teacher's Edition* is included in Appendix C as an example (Saslow & Ascher, 2005).
- providing time for session planning. The mini-team responsible for teaching each level (two teachers and two assistants, in this case) needs time to clarify any grammar or pronunciation points they will be teaching in the session's units. Remember, the teachers probably don't know what the present perfect tense is, nor are they even aware of vowel reduction. They also need to discuss pacing and division of teaching material. This final step may be more effectively done after the teachers have had a chance to examine the materials on their own.

Account of the First Year

The first three phases of the launch of this particular community ESL program were conducted in the summer of 2007. The project was presented to and approved by the host community's governing board, and potential teachers from the faith-based host community were approached. Guided by the advice gleaned from phase one, three eight-week sessions were planned: one in the fall of 2007, one in the winter of 2008 and one in the spring of 2008. Students would study on Monday and Thursday from 7-9 pm, while teachers would teach only once a week. Each group would have a teaching assistant. Being advised to start small, but offer at least two levels, the program would require four teachers and four teaching assistants. A ninth team member would be added to take charge of snack time. All members of the ESL team were volunteers, including the program coordinator, who also taught one evening per week. Two teachers (including the program coordinator) have TESL

certificates from Montreal's Concordia University; the others had little or no TESL training or experience.

The target community was the Cote-des-Neiges Notre-Dame-de-Grace borough of Montreal. A densely-populated, multiethnic borough, the CDN-NDG community at large is home to many potential learners of English. The host community's building is in a rather obscure location a ten-minute walk from the nearest subway station. Publicity consisted primarily of posters placed on bus shelters in the target area, especially those near subway stations. Half of the ESL teaching team also lived in the target area and placed posters in strategic locations at grocery stores, community centres and libraries. Announcements were placed on several ethnic Web sites.

The evaluation of potential course books led to the choice of Pearson's *Top Notch* curriculum. Although not perfectly suited to the teaching context (this is an EFL curriculum), the teachers' edition offers the extensive teaching support required. Its "multi-syllabus syllabus" format (Harmer, 2001, p. 299) allows for busy and inexperienced teachers to find everything they need to teach the four skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and functional language all in one book. The emphasis on speaking and listening and the use of a communicative approach with focus on form were also key factors that influenced the choice. The teachers would need help overcoming their natural teacher-centred tendencies and this curriculum offers a companion volume, *Copy and Go* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006), containing a reproducible communicative activity for every lesson at all four levels.

The importance of adequate placement testing also surfaced during the phase one interviews, so the availability of an inexpensive companion placement package was an advantage. The complete placement package involves a listening, reading, and speaking test, as well as a multiple-choice written test of grammar and vocabulary. All four tests are designed to take about one hour and forty minutes to complete. It was decided to retain only the ten-minute picture-based speaking test and a twenty minute shortened version of the written test. The scores were combined more or less according to the formula given in the placement package.

For the final step in the fourth preparatory stage, all nine team members attended a three-hour teacher-training workshop held in September, 2007. Discussion of aims, participation in communicative activities, and orientation to the *Top Notch* curriculum were the order of the day.

In spite of ample publicity, only thirteen students registered for the fall session. Nine of them were intermediate learners and four were beginners. Guided by the priority of providing a positive teaching experience for the new teachers, the decision was made not to open a beginner class. With an initial enrolment of four, there was too much danger of teachers enthusiastically preparing lessons and then having few or no students to teach by the end of eight weeks. An upper intermediate group was offered for the nine. Throughout the session, the ESL team members took turns assisting and teaching, thereby slowly gaining experience.

In the winter session forty-one students registered for class. This required growing from one level to three and necessitated the addition of four new ESL team members (two teachers and two assistants for the third level). Groups were offered for beginner II (nine students), intermediate I (fourteen students) and intermediate II (eighteen students). It was impossible to recruit four new team members before classes began so placing an assistant in the beginner group each night became the priority, while the intermediate teachers initially taught alone. However, by the end of the session four new team members had been added.

In the spring session fifty students registered, which required the opening of a beginner I class. Now all four *Top Notch* levels were being offered. During session three, two more ESL team members were added, three of the original teaching assistants began teaching a group, and again, the priority was placed on having assistants in the beginner I and II classes.

A second two-hour teacher workshop was held between the fall and winter sessions specifically providing an overview of the English verb system. A third workshop dealing with the supra segmental aspects of English phonology (primarily stress-timing and vowel reduction) was held between the winter and spring sessions. Until that point, the teachers were largely omitting the pronunciation work, unable to understand themselves what the lessons were teaching. The program coordinator also kept in touch with teachers over the sessions and responded to particular questions as they arose. More workshops would have been very helpful, but the guiding principle was not to burn out the teachers with meetings.

In order to simplify the first year, no formal evaluation of any kind took place in the first session. At the end of the second session, student evaluations for each group were developed. These were adapted from unused listening, speaking and grammar activities from the units covered. Evaluations were carried out in the second last class, with students getting feedback in the last class. In the spring session, the team decided instead

to ask the students to evaluate the course. The evaluation form developed is included as Appendix D. In addition, a modified form was mailed to nineteen students whose attendance was very irregular or who dropped out altogether (see Appendix E). Both of these evaluation forms were provided in French and in English, with students given the opportunity to respond in English, French or Spanish. To complete the evaluations, the program coordinator invited each member of the ESL team to submit a program evaluation before the final team meeting in May, 2008.

Although the purpose of this paper is not to give a detailed evaluation of the infant ESL program, the following general points are worth mentioning:

- In this program, a $40 non-refundable registration fee was charged. This covered the purchase of the student split edition course book for each student (which they kept) and the costs of publicity and snack. The teachers' editions, *Copy and Go* companion volumes, class audio sets, and white board markers and erasers were also purchased and loaned to each teacher. Although the program required a small investment from the host community in the first session, it was self-supporting over the three sessions.
- Apart from the beginner I group, all but one student felt they had been placed at the right level. Considering none of the team members had any experience in placement testing, the consensus was that the placement procedure was worthwhile and relatively predictive of how the student would perform in class. The teachers themselves felt that two more students had been placed in a group that was too difficult for them. However, both were students that had placed high on the written test and at least two levels lower on the speaking test. In future, for this particular program, it might be good to weight the speaking test a little more heavily than the placement package suggests.
- In the beginner I group, the majority of students felt the level was too hard. This may be in part due to the teachers' lack of experience in simplifying teacher talk, the fact the Monday night teachers went much faster than the Thursday night teachers, or simply that *Top Notch Fundamentals* is too difficult for true beginners. This issue will need particular attention in the future. A first step will be to plan a teachers' workshop specifically for the four team members handling this level. Issues such as modeling an activity rather than explaining it should be covered.

- There was significant attrition in some groups. At the time of press, all returned evaluations from students who attended irregularly or dropped out indicate the reason was a change in their schedule that rendered them no longer able to attend.
- Overall, the students placed a high learning value on group discussions, games, and the listening activities. They generally placed a lower value on pair work. One possible reason is that the category of pair work may be too broad, including everything from correcting a grammar activity in pairs, to information gaps and games done in pairs. Given the advantageous student talk time potentially offered by pair work, the lesser interest in pair work may alternately suggest that the teachers themselves are not seeing its value or are unable to set up effective pair work. This would be another focus for future teacher training.
- Fifty percent of the students registered in any one session returned for the next session. Of the total of seventy students served over the first year, only two came from the host community itself. The other students all came from the community at large, the majority from the CDN-NDG borough. North African, Eastern European and Latin American students formed the majority of the student body with a few Asian, Middle Eastern and West African students. There were no native-born Québecois in the classes.
- The ESL team noted a variety of anecdotal signs of success. Two students from the intermediate II group had to stop coming because they got jobs in which they were required to use English and French in sales or customer service. One student expressed personal struggles and was connected with a family from the host community who spoke her mother tongue. This family was able to provide support and encouragement outside of class time. Many students expressed disappointment that there was not going to be a summer session (Taking care of the teachers is still priority number one. They need a rest.) Some students had perfect attendance and some groups averaged an 80% attendance rate through the eight weeks. Several teachers discovered a passion for teaching adults or teaching ESL. One mentioned going home "pumped" every Thursday. Two volunteered to tutor particularly keen students over the summer on their own time. All but two of the ESL team members plan to be involved again in September, 2008. Finally, the ESL team had a lot of fun interacting with the students.

CONCLUSION

Launching a community-based ESL program is an exciting venture! This paper has outlined four phases host communities would be wise to consider when planning a new program: observation of programs operating in a similar context, establishment of aims and measures of success, choice of curriculum, and teacher recruitment and training. A brief account of the fledgling ESL program in question has been given. This paper has focused only on establishing a community ESL program in the urban Canadian context. It would be worthwhile exploring the process by which interested community groups in a rural or small-town setting could address the needs in their communities. In conclusion, implementing a community-based ESL program entails a great deal of work. But for those who find teaching in such a setting an enriching and rewarding experience, there is plenty of room for new ventures!

REFERENCES

Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your coursebook.* Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Limited.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching.* Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Saslow, J & Ascher, A. (2005). *Top notch 3 teacher's edition and lesson planner.* White Plains, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Saslow, J & Ascher, A. (2006). *Copy and go.* White Plains, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Smith, D., & Carvill, B. (2000). *The gift of the stranger: Faith, hospitality, and foreign language learning.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Welcome to Canada: What you should know. (2007). Retrieved August 1, 2008 from http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/welcome/wel-11e.asp.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ESL PROGRAM DIRECTORS

1. When did you get started offering ESL classes?

2. What are your goals for the program? Do you expect to be involved in the students' lives outside of English class?

3. What kind of ESL classes do you offer?

4. Who are your students? How do they know about the program?

5. How do you evaluate the Ss' proficiency level?

6. What materials do you use? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these materials? Do teachers add their own material or do they follow the course book quite closely?

7. How much, if anything, do you charge?

8. Who covers the costs of using the facilities, teaching materials, publicity and snacks?

9. Who are your teachers? What kind of training do they have?

10. What do you think is the best part of your ESL program?

Additional remarks/observations:

APPENDIX B

COURSE BOOK AT A GLANCE

A = A strength for this course book
B = Course book is adequate
C = Inadequate, a point of weakness for this course book

	Criteria	A	B	C
Aims & Approaches	Do the aims of the course book correspond closely with the aims of the teaching program and with the needs of the learners?			
	Is the course book suited to the learning/teaching situation?			
	Is the course book comprehensive? (Does it cover most or all of what is needed?)			
	Is the course book flexible? Does it allow different teaching and learning styles?			
Design & Organization	Is the content well organized (according to topics, skills, functions, etc)? Is the layout clear?			
	Is the content well sequenced?			
	Is there adequate revision and recycling?			
	Is there suitable evaluation material?			
	Are there reference sections for grammar, functional language, etc.?			
Language Content	Does the course book cover the main grammar items appropriate to each level, taking into account the learners' needs?			
	How well does the course book treat a particular grammar point (ex. the difference in meaning between the simple present and the present progressive)?			
	Is material for vocabulary teaching adequate and does it include strategies for individual learning?			
	Does the course book include pronunciation work?			
	Does the course book deal with structuring and conventions of language use above the sentence level?			
Skills	Are all four skills adequately covered, with emphasis placed on speaking and listening? Is there material for integrated skills work?			
	Is listening material well recorded, as authentic as possible, and accompanied by background info and activities to help comprehension?			
	Is material for spoken English (dialogues, role-plays) well designed to equip learners for real-life interactions?			
	Is there a good balance between activities that focus on accuracy and fluency?			

	Criteria	A	B	C
Topics	Will the topics help expand students' awareness and enrich their experience?			
	Are women represented equally with men? Are visible minorities represented?			
	Do the topics, values, and underlying messages support the world view of the teachers and the host community group?			
	Do the topics allow students to explore both the positive and negative elements of culture, particularly Canadian culture?			
	Is the material up-to-date? Will it remain so for at least 5 years?			
Methodology	Are the approaches to language learning appropriate to the learning/teaching situation?			
	Are students expected to take a degree of responsibility for their own learning? Is there material suitable for individual work?			
	Does the course book treat the learner as a whole person? Does it allow for open-ended exploration of ethics and spirituality?			
Teachers' Books	Is there adequate guidance and support for teachers who may not have any TESL training? (How heavy is the preparation load?)			
	Do the teacher's books include ALL of the material required to teach the lesson?			
	Can any of the material be legally photocopied?			
	Are answer keys to exercises given? Are the listening texts reproduced?			
	Can the course book be easily adapted to team teaching?			
Practical Considerations	Does the cost of the course package represent good value for money for both the program and the student?			
	Are the books attractive?			
	Are the books strong and long lasting?			
	Are they easy to obtain? Can further supplies be obtained at short notice?			
	Does the community centre have all the equipment necessary to use the teaching material?			
	Is the series appropriate for the full range between true beginners and upper intermediate?			

APPENDIX C

SURFING THE TEACHER'S EDITION

Work in pairs. Use the teacher's edition of Top Notch 3 to answer these questions. Record the answer as well as the page number where you found the answer.

	Page #
1. What is the theme of the first unit?	
2. How many pages are there in each unit in the Student's book?	
3. Each unit starts with a 2-page introduction and ends with a 2-page review. In between are the lessons. How many lessons are there in each unit?	
4. In each unit, lessons 1 and 2 start with the same kind of activity. What kind of activity?	
5. In each unit, lessons 3 and 4 end with a free practice activity. What heading is used for these activities?	
6. What are the unit goals for the unit on ethics and values?	
7. How long do they suggest the listening comprehension activity on page 52 will take? How do you (the teacher) know what the students will be hearing without playing the class audio yourself?	
8. What is the past participle of the irregular verb *eat*?	
9. What words are taught in this level that start with the letter v?	
10. What is the pronunciation focus for unit 2?	

APPENDIX D

EVALUATION FOR THE ENGLISH COURSE- SPRING 2008

1. What activities did you learn the most from? (You can choose more than one. ☑)
- ❑ Games
- ❑ Pair work (with a partner)
- ❑ Group discussion (3 or more people)
- ❑ Reading articles
- ❑ Listening to conversations on the CD
- ❑ Grammar explanations
- ❑ Other (specify) _____

2. Did you feel that you were in the right level?
- ❑ No, it was too difficult.
- ❑ No, it was too easy.
- ❑ Yes, it was just right.

3. How did you find the class schedule? Which nights would you prefer?
- ❑ Monday and Wednesday
- ❑ Tuesday and Thursday
- ❑ Monday and Thursday

4. Would you prefer daytime classes? Morning or afternoon?
_____

5. What did you like most about the English courses?
_____

6. In class I would like us to _____ more.
   In class I would like us to _____ less.

7. What could we do to improve the course?

_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX E

In March you registered for an English course at _____. We notice you did not come regularly. Please fill out this evaluation form. It will help us know how we can improve the course next year. A French version is available on the back. When you have filled out the form, please mail it back to us in the envelope. Thank you for your time!

1. Were you placed in the right level?
- ❑ No, it was too hard
- ❑ No, it was too easy
- ❑ Yes, it was just right

2. I didn't come regularly because
- ❑ My schedule changed and I couldn't come
- ❑ I didn't like the atmosphere
- ❑ I wasn't learning anything
- ❑ The teaching was not good
- ❑ There was too much _____ in the course
- ❑ There was not enough _____ in the course
- ❑ Other (please specify):

3. Would you prefer daytime classes? Morning or afternoon?

4. When you did come, which activities did you learn the most from? (You can choose more than one. ☑)
- ❑ Games
- ❑ Pair work (with a partner)
- ❑ Group discussion (3 or more people)
- ❑ Reading articles
- ❑ Listening to the CD
- ❑ Grammar explanations
- ❑ Other (specify)

5. What could we do to improve the course?

_____

_____

_____