LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CLASSROOM:

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO COMPETENCY-BASED ESL TEACHING

Instructor's Handbook: Quick FAQ

What is this handbook?

The *Language and Culture Classroom: A Practical Guide to Competency-Based ESL Teaching* is an instructor resource for college-level English as a Second Language. It supports the teaching of academic, social, cultural, and literary communication within Québec's competency-based college framework.

The handbook brings together curriculum planning, language instruction, classroom activities, research skills, and assessment guidance across 15 units. It is designed to help instructors develop students' ability to communicate with ease in English while strengthening their critical thinking and intercultural awareness.

What does the handbook cover?

The course is organised into three stages, moving from foundational communication skills to more advanced academic tasks.

Units 1–5: Foundations and Initial Assessments

Students develop listening and reading strategies, expand vocabulary, learn oral presentation structures, review verb tenses, and practise summarising. This stage also prepares students for Listening Exam I and the midterm oral presentation.

Units 6–10: Midterm Assessments and Essay Development

Students complete the midterm oral presentation and writing evaluation, develop essay structure and planning skills, practise transitions and conditional forms, and learn to evaluate reliable sources. These units also include Listening Exam II preparation, peer review, and final essay topic approval.

Units 11–15: Advanced Language Skills and Final Evaluations

Students study the future perfect, adjective comparison, and frequency adverbs while refining their essay plans and reviewing grammar. The final units guide instructors through the listening, reading, writing, and oral presentation evaluations, followed by a course-closing reflection.

What teaching resources are provided?

The handbook includes a range of materials to support classroom instruction, academic communication, and assessment.

Listening and reading strategies: Techniques for developing comprehension, including the SQ3R reading method: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review.

Grammar instruction: Explanations, practice questions, and review tests covering key language structures.

Oral communication: Presentation frameworks, rehearsal activities, and guidance on organising ideas, engaging an audience, and responding to questions.

Academic writing: Essay planning, paragraph development, summarising, paraphrasing, transitions, and revision strategies using ARMS and CUPS.

Paragraph development frameworks: TEEL (Topic sentence, Explanation, Evidence, Link) and PEEL (Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link) to help students organise arguments, develop ideas, integrate supporting evidence, and maintain paragraph coherence.

Research skills: Guidance on identifying and evaluating reliable sources using the CRAAP Test.

Assessment resources: Listening and reading comprehension activities, examination questions, evaluation criteria, feedback sheets, and student-friendly rubrics.

Classroom support: Extension activities, Quebec-based cultural contexts, and strategies for addressing common learning challenges.

How does the handbook approach language teaching?

The handbook draws on Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, and competency-based education. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are developed together rather than taught as isolated skills.

Grammar and vocabulary are integrated into meaningful communication tasks. Students also learn to research responsibly, analyse ideas, construct arguments, and communicate clearly in academic and intercultural contexts.

How are students assessed?

Assessment combines ongoing practice with formal evaluations. Students complete listening and reading exams, oral presentations, writing evaluations, grammar tests, and an extended final essay. The handbook provides guidance on assessment procedures, evaluation criteria, preparation activities, and feedback.

How does the handbook support academic writing?

Students are guided through the full writing process, from selecting a topic and evaluating sources to planning an essay, developing body paragraphs, writing introductions and conclusions, and revising their work.

TEEL and PEEL provide clear structures for developing body paragraphs, while ARMS and CUPS help students review and improve their writing. The handbook also includes essay checklists, model responses, peer-review activities, and practice tasks.

How does this course connect to other ESL courses?

Language and Culture builds on the competencies developed in the preceding English as a Second Language course. It also prepares students for the subsequent English Culture and Literature course by strengthening their research, analytical reading, academic writing, oral communication, and critical thinking skills.

What additional reference materials are included?

The appendices provide full-course grammar summaries, mixed grammar tests, essay-writing checklists, final examination preparation materials, instructor resources, classroom support strategies, and student-friendly rubrics. These resources help instructors maintain consistency across teaching, assessment, and feedback.

Who is this handbook intended for?

It is designed for college ESL instructors who teach communication through social, cultural, and literary themes. It can also support teachers seeking ways to integrate language skills, critical thinking, research, and competency-based assessment into their courses.

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