

CHANGING TERMINOLOGY FROM ESL TO EAL

The Adult Language Training Branch is implementing a change from the term English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to **English as an Additional Language** (EAL) programs.

EAL is a more encompassing term and reflects that individuals may speak a number of languages and dialects, of which English is but one more. By ignoring the range of languages and dialects a person may already have, it seems to suggest that the other languages don't count. This further implies that the person is in some kind of deficit situation linguistically.

This more inclusive position is being adopted in an increasing number of contexts in Canada and abroad. It is more common to see the term EAL used in the professional literature and by various programs or agencies. In Manitoba, Education, Citizenship and Youth (the provincial governmental department responsible for ESL in the K-S4 system) has adapted the term EAL. Elsewhere, in Canada, it has been the term of choice in BC (BC TEAL) for a number of years.

Both terms (ESL and EAL) may be used interchangeably for a period of time. It will require time to update print and online documents and publications, and explain the terminology change to all the stakeholders.

Using the term EAL encourages a more additive approach to teaching English to speakers of other languages and respects the range of experience, knowledge and skill that immigrants bring to the Province.