



Informal Needs Assessment

A needs assessment is a tool that helps instructors and program managers discover learners' interests and what they need to learn. Adult schools in California rely on [CASAS](#) pre-testing for formal measurements of students' language proficiency and placement within a program.

Informally, teachers can identify more about a student's perceived needs, expectations, and abilities in several different ways. Five categories of needs assessments include:

- Survey questionnaires
- Learner inventories
- Timelines
- Brainstorming sessions and
- Dialogue journals

For details, view a [fact sheet](#) on assessing the needs of adult English Language Learners.

In creating survey questionnaires, for instance, the multilevel instructor may need to adjust the amount and difficulty of language used. Several excellent examples of surveys created by Los Angeles Unified School District demonstrate this range.

[Example 1 - ESL Beginning Low](#)

[Example 2 - ESL Beginning High](#)

[Example 3 - ESL Intermediate Low](#)

[Example 4 - ESL Intermediate High - A](#)

[Example 5 - ESL Intermediate High - B](#)

[Example 6 - ESL Advanced Low](#)

Surveys for beginners should rely primarily on pictures and use limited text to convey meaning. Also, in creating surveys for beginners, ask them to mark only a few topics they want to learn.

Surveys for intermediate and more advanced students typically contain few or no pictures, a larger number of items, and more complex language. In these surveys, questions prompt students to report on what they are interested in but also to self-assess how hard or easy it is to perform each of the items listed.