
Pennsylvania ESL Program Specialist Certification

Approved for teachers statewide

Developed for the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the ESL Specialist Certification Program has certified over 1,000 ESL school program coordinators and classroom teachers to work in classrooms with English Language Learners (ELLs).

ESL Certification Courses

1. ESL01 Developing Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity | 8 Weeks
 2. ESL02 Language Acquisition | 12 Weeks
 3. ESL03 Literacy Acquisition | 8 Weeks
 4. ESL04 Observing and Planning Instruction to ELL Students | 8 Weeks
 5. ESL05 Implementing and Managing Instruction to ELL Students | 8 Weeks
 6. ESL06 Assessing ESL Students | 8 Weeks
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Course Descriptions

ESL01 Developing Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

Overview

- Sponsored by Midwestern IU IV
- Act 48 Credits: 3 graduate-level credits (**PA Dept. of Education Approved**)
- Course Instructor: Susan Evans
- Course Duration: 8 Weeks
- Course Type: Facilitated

As the diverse population of the United States increasingly grows, it is important in our communities and public schools to develop cultural competence to overcome language and cultural barriers. This course is based upon knowledge of behaviors, beliefs and attitudes of a multicultural approach to learning. It also includes cultural awareness activities for promoting school staff understanding about other cultures and in comparison to American culture and strategies for working with English Language Learners. Participants will examine socio-linguistic aspects of U.S. and world cultures, sources of cross-cultural conflict, and approaches to

cross-cultural conflict resolution as they relate to K-12 settings, their communities and the communities in which they teach.

Course Objectives

Participants will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the processes of negotiating one's cultural identity.
2. Differentiate among the varied processes of cultural transitions, including acculturation, assimilation, biculturation and resistance.
3. Identify negative effects of prejudice, stereotyping and ethnocentrism on language learners' successful learning in schools and promote pro-social classroom learning environment.
4. Recognize cultural bias in curriculum and materials and use a range of resources to deliver instruction.
5. Demonstrate effective intercultural communication skills to appreciate diverse cultures.
6. Develop effective techniques for communication between home and school by recognizing and supporting the preferred mode of communication of the parent/guardian (written, oral, L1, L2, etc.) and utilizing interpretation and translation resources appropriately.
7. Demonstrate understanding of the interdependence of language and culture to facilitate students' transition between the home culture/language and U.S. school culture/language.
8. Integrate diverse ways of learning and multiple cultural perspectives, including building on ELLs' strengths, into the planning/adapting of curriculum and instructional methods.
9. Use research in the field of ESL to articulate a personal educational philosophy for instructing ELL's.
10. Create a personal professional development plan based on interests and reflection, taking advantage of opportunities to support those goals in professional associations and other academic organizations.

ESL02 Language Acquisition | 12 Weeks

Overview

- Sponsored by Midwestern IU IV
- Act 48 Credits: 3 graduate-level credits **(PA Dept. of Education Approved)**
- Course Instructor: Susan Evans
- Course Duration: 12 Weeks
- Course Type: Facilitated

This course is designed for teachers or future teachers of English Language Learners. Educators taking this course will develop knowledge and skills in the areas of structure of the English language, grammar, and pronunciation, including lexical, morphological, syntax, phonological and pragmatic components. Educators taking this course will develop knowledge of the process of first and second language acquisition, including developmental issues in verbal, non-verbal skills, and vocabulary. They will also develop knowledge and skills to assist ELLs to communicate using verbal and non-verbal language.

Course Objectives

Participants will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Recognize language as an integrative system made up of component parts (phonology, morphology, syntax, pragmatics and semantics) and apply this knowledge to identify aspects of English that are difficult for ELLs.
2. Support ELLs in communicating effectively for social and academic purposes by enhancing oral/aural skills, i.e., recognizing and using syntactic structures, the English sound system, and other communication skills.
3. Support ELLs in understanding and using appropriate register variation and language use within different contexts and for different audiences, including formal, informal, social, and academic.
4. Develop a variety of instructional techniques to assist ELLs in developing and using vocabulary (idioms, cognates, and collocations) and L2 literacy appropriately in written and spoken language, including contextualized practice.
5. Apply knowledge of the principles of first and second language acquisition, and of the differences between first and second language acquisition, to the design of instruction for ELLs.
6. Apply strategies that recognize the role of students' L1s as a resource for language and literacy development and for communicating with invested participants (students, families, volunteer support, and bilingual aides).
7. Model the use of culturally and linguistically responsive techniques and dispositions, so as to support the learning of other school professionals working with ELLs.
8. Demonstrate understanding of the interdependence of language and culture to facilitate students' transition between the home culture/language and U.S. school culture/language.
9. Use research in the field of ESL to articulate a personal educational philosophy for instructing ELL's.
10. Create a personal professional development plan based on interests and reflection, taking advantage of opportunities to support those goals in professional associations and other academic organizations.

ESL03 Literacy Acquisition | 8 Weeks

Overview

- Sponsored by Midwestern IU IV
- Act 48 Credits: 3 graduate-level credits (**PA Dept. of Education Approved**)
- Course Instructor: Susan Evans
- Course Duration: 8 Weeks
- Course Type: Facilitated

Educators taking this course will develop knowledge of the process of literacy development for second language learners and strategies to assist ELLs in the different stages of second language usage. The purpose of this course is to help future ESL teachers develop an understanding of how ELLs acquire literacy in a second language, understand the five foundational components systemic to successful reading programs (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension), implement differentiated writing instruction, and identify effective strategies and techniques to improve literacy instruction for native English speakers and ELLs in K-12.

Course Objectives

Participants will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Recognize language as an integrative system made up of component parts (phonology, morphology, syntax, pragmatics and semantics) and apply this knowledge to identify aspects of English that are difficult for ELLs.
2. Develop a variety of instructional techniques to assist ELLs in developing and using vocabulary (idioms, cognates, and collocations) and L2 literacy appropriately in written and spoken language, including contextualized practice.
3. Plan effective lessons in all domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) using a variety of materials, texts, activities, strategies and assessments appropriately based on consideration of the learners' differing English language proficiency, L1 literacy and prior knowledge, age and developmental stages, grade levels, learning styles and socio-cultural needs.
4. Develop and implement communicative activities in K-12 classrooms that promote authentic interactions for social and academic purposes and that integrate all language skills, i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
5. Plan and provide evidence-based reading and writing instruction that includes various cueing systems (i.e. graphic, syntactic, and semantic cues) appropriate for ELLs.
6. Model the use of culturally and linguistically responsive techniques and dispositions, so as to support the learning of other school professionals working with ELLs.

7. Demonstrate understanding of the interdependence of language and culture to facilitate students' transition between the home culture/language and U.S. school culture/language.
8. Use research in the field of ESL to articulate a personal educational philosophy for instructing ELL's.
9. Create a personal professional development plan based on interests and reflection, taking advantage of opportunities to support those goals in professional associations and other academic organizations.

ESL04 Observing and Planning Instruction to ELL Students | 8 Weeks

Overview

- Sponsored by Midwestern IU IV
- Act 48 Credits: 3 graduate-level credits (**PA Dept. of Education Approved**)
- Course Instructor: Susan Evans
- Course Duration: 8 Weeks
- Course Type: Facilitated

This 3-credit course is designed for teachers of English Language Learners. Because ELL students come to us with a variety of backgrounds and at diverse levels of language acquisition, it is important for ESL teachers to have the knowledge and skills necessary to create a developmentally appropriate curricular program for all students. Upon completion of this course, teachers will be expected to be able to: design an ESL program tailored to meet the needs of each student. Participants will be able to identify appropriate materials and resources to be used with children at each level of English Proficiency.

Course Objectives

Participants will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Design standards-aligned instruction in English utilizing the Pennsylvania Academic Standards, the English Language Proficiency Standards, and Can-Do descriptors in relation to the continuum of proficiency levels.
2. Plan ESL instruction and assessment specific to the reading and writing needs of students with limited formal schooling (LFS) or interrupted formal education (SIFE).
3. Recognize, plan and implement key elements of ESL lesson design, which include:
 - Content and language objectives;
 - Scaffolding, supports;
 - Activating and building on prior knowledge
 - Formative and authentic assessments; and
 - Academic and social interaction at the English Language Proficiency Level of the student, specifically in the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

4. Differentiate instruction based on formative assessment of student progress, reteaching as necessary for students who need additional time and alternative approaches to meet learning outcomes.
5. Develop and implement communicative activities in K-12 classrooms that promote authentic interactions for social and academic purposes and that integrate all language skills, i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
6. Collaborate with and provide guidance to content teachers of ELLs related to using English language proficiency standards (ELPS), appropriate supports, and adaptations which provide students access to content instruction, tasks and assessments at their English language proficiency level.
7. Select, analyze and adapt a variety of authentic sources and tools to enhance oralcy and literacy development for ELLs, including but not limited to:
 - Various popular texts, including fiction, non-fiction, comic-book style, etc.;
 - Visual and/or original source materials;
 - L1 materials;
 - Music;
 - Media and multimedia, including technological resources and electronic communication
8. Plan effective lessons in all domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) using a variety of materials, texts, activities, strategies and assessments appropriately based on consideration of learners' differing English language proficiency, L1 literacy and prior knowledge, age and developmental stages, grade levels, learning styles and sociocultural needs.
9. Develop classroom activities that could involve families and provide ELLs and their families with information, support and assistance.
10. Develop classroom activities that could involve families and provide ELLs and their families with information, support and assistance.

ESL05 Implementing and Managing Instruction to ELL Students | 8 Weeks

Overview

- Sponsored by Midwestern IU IV
- Act 48 Credits: 3 graduate-level credits **(PA Dept. of Education Approved)**
- Course Instructor: Susan Evans
- Course Duration: 8 Weeks
- Course Type: Facilitated

This 3-credit course is designed for teachers of English Language Learners. Because ELL students come to us with a variety of backgrounds and at diverse levels of language acquisition,

it is important for ESL teachers to have the knowledge and skills necessary to implement and revise a developmentally appropriate curricular program for all students. Upon completion of this course, teachers will be expected to be able to: implement and revise an ESL program tailored to meet the needs of each student. Participants will be able to modify and employ appropriate materials and resources to be used with children at each level of English Proficiency.

Course Objectives

Participants will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Design standards-aligned instruction in English utilizing the Pennsylvania Academic Standards, the English Language Proficiency Standards, and Can-Do descriptors in relation to the continuum of proficiency levels.
2. Plan ESL instruction and assessment specific to the reading and writing needs of students with limited formal schooling (LFS) or interrupted formal education (SIFE).
3. Recognize, plan and implement key elements of ESL lesson design, which include: Differentiate instruction based on formative assessment of student progress, reteaching as necessary for students who need additional time and alternative approaches to meet learning outcomes.
 - Content and language objectives;
 - Scaffolding, supports;
 - Activating and building on prior knowledge;
 - Formative and authentic assessments; and
 - Academic and social interaction at the English Language Proficiency Level of the student, specifically in the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
4. Develop and implement communicative activities in K-12 classrooms that promote authentic interactions for social and academic purposes and that integrate all language skills, i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
5. Collaborate with and provide guidance to content teachers of ELLs related to using English language proficiency standards (ELPS), appropriate supports, and adaptations which provide students access to content instruction, tasks and assessments at their English language proficiency level.
6. Select, analyze and adapt a variety of authentic sources and tools to enhance oralcy and literacy development for ELLs, including but not limited to:
7. Plan effective lessons in all domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) using a variety of materials, texts, activities, strategies and assessments appropriately based on consideration of learners' differing English language proficiency, L1 literacy and prior knowledge, age and developmental stages, grade levels, learning styles and sociocultural needs.
 - Various popular texts, including fiction, non-fiction, comic-book style, etc.;
 - Visual and/or original source materials;

- L1 materials;
 - Music;
 - Media and multimedia, including technological resources and electronic communication.
8. Develop classroom activities that could involve families and provide ELLs and their families with information, support and assistance.
 9. Use research in the field of ESL to articulate a personal educational philosophy for instructing ELL's.
 10. Create a personal professional development plan based on interests and reflection, taking advantage of opportunities to support those goals in professional associations and other academic organizations.

ESL06 Assessing ESL Students | 8 Weeks

Overview

- Sponsored by Midwestern IU IV
- Act 48 Credits: 3 graduate-level credits **(PA Dept. of Education Approved)**
- Course Instructor: Susan Evans
- Course Duration: 8 Weeks
- Course Type: Facilitated

Assessing ELL Students is a three credit (45-hour) course designed to expand your knowledge of effective assessment practices and support services available for ELL students. Topics Include effective assessment practices, purposes for assessment, multiple assessment models, use of evaluation techniques, scaffolding of assessments, and formal/informal assessment tools. Learn about the availability of school support services to assist ELLs in language acquisition and content learning. Discuss ways to promote parental/family involvement with their children's education program. Gain hands-on experience in test administration, interpretation, and reporting. Individual education plans for ELLs identified as special education students will also be discussed. Students will also examine: multiple assessment models, use of evaluation techniques, scaffolding of assessments, and discuss formal and informal assessment tools.

Course Objectives

Participants will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Use multiple and appropriate formative and summative assessment measures for a variety of purposes.
2. Apply appropriate testing practices for English language learners including:

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- Determination of the validity and reliability of tests to make assessment related decisions for ELLs;
 - Knowledge and application of alternative and multiple assessment measures to ascertain what ELLs' know and can do;
3. Appropriate interpretation and use of data to support ELLs:
 - Assessment of ELLs' test-taking challenges and creation of strategies and scaffolding techniques to address these challenges;
 - Recognize, apply and share state-allowed testing accommodations for ELLs at varying proficiency levels;
 - Identify and use multiple assessment resources and measures to make informed decisions concerning an ELL's progression through a language instruction program, observing all applicable national and state standards;
 - Implement a variety of assessment tools as part of classroom instruction, planning and recording of progress towards proficiency and academic achievement.
 4. Inform parents/families, using their preferred mode(s) of communication, of federal and state-mandated testing, and the implications of such testing, for ELLs in a language instructional program.
 5. Identify accountability measures and assessment targets in order to analyze real-time ELL data in order to make programmatic and instructional adjustments.
 6. Analyze data from various ELL groups to evaluate the effectiveness of an ESL program or language teaching methodology
 7. Identify and use a variety of resources and research, including native-language assessment and accommodated assessments, to inform decisions about language differences, giftedness, learning disabilities or other qualities of ELLs which would entitle them to participate in school programs.
 8. Use research in the field of ESL to articulate a personal educational philosophy for instructing ELL's.
 9. Create a personal professional development plan based on interests and reflection, taking advantage of opportunities to support those goals in professional associations and other academic organizations.