

Web-enhanced Curricular Infusion of ESOL Competencies in Initial Teacher Certification Programs

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Abstract

As the cultural and linguistic diversity continues to increase in Florida's K-12 public school population, the demand for teachers trained to address their unique needs becomes paramount. Previously a responsibility of Florida's school districts, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) training has been delegated to colleges of education per state mandate. This mandate requires that graduates of initial teacher certification programs in the state's universities demonstrate competency in all of the 25 Florida Performance Standards for Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages. In order to satisfy this charge, colleges of education in Florida are following a variety of training models: stand-alone courses, curricular infusion, or a combination of the two. A large, metropolitan university in Central Florida has developed an integrated model consisting of two stand-alone courses, field experience integration of the standards, and curricular infusion of ESOL standards via on-lone modules in methods courses. The authors, who teach methods courses in which such infusion has been recently effected, surveyed their students to obtain feedback regarding the modules, the results of which are discussed in this paper.

Keywords : *On-line instruction; Web-enhanced instruction; Technology integration; ESOL infusion*

Introduction

Web-enhanced instruction is growing in popularity as a more efficient and convenient mode of delivery in many of today's student-oriented classrooms. On-line instruction affords the students flexibility in instruction and completion of assignments, empowering them to assume control of their education.¹ It can serve to enhance the student-centered classroom that "concentrates on authentic, challenging tasks that provide relevant learning experiences for students and that lead them to understand broad concepts

and develop strategies for finding and analyzing information that they need.”² To address a state mandate concerning teacher preparation, this potentially powerful mode of delivery has been recently integrated into the initial teacher certification program at a large, metropolitan university in Central Florida through curricular infusion. Instructors wanted a forum within which students could reflect on real-life experiences and develop feasible modifications based on what they had learned and the resources they had tapped.

Background Information

In 1990, a suit was issued against the State of Florida by a united group of minority organizations for its failure to make accommodations in instruction to ensure the scholastic success of all ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students. The resultant mandate, the Consent Decree,³ requires extensive ESOL training for every Florida teacher having at least one ESOL student in his/her class.⁴ The training typically consisted of 300 hours of in-service credit or 15 semester hours of courses addressing the following areas: methods of teaching ESOL, ESOL curriculum and materials development, cross-cultural communication, applied linguistics, and assessment.

Previously a responsibility of school districts, the state-mandated training has been shifted to Florida colleges of education in all state-approved initial teacher certification programs. The Florida Department of Education has stipulated that graduates of initial teacher certification programs in the state’s universities demonstrate competency in all of the 25 state-mandated Florida Performance Standards for Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages.⁵ (see Appendix A). Education majors will thus ultimately graduate as fully ESOL-endorsed teachers.

Although all of the state universities are required to address the same five required topics, they have been granted flexibility concerning how they will satisfy the mandate. Some universities have opted for five stand-alone courses dealing with each of the areas; others have selected complete curricular infusion; the remaining have decided upon an intergrated model. The [university name], which falls into the latter category, has elected to develop a model that combines stand-alone courses and curricular infusion. Two courses, Theories and Practices of Teaching ESOL Students in Schools and Issues in Second Language Acquisition, were developed as stand-alone courses. The other requisite hours of ESOL training have been integrated into courses throughout the curriculum, inclusive of field experiences.

The creation and implementation of a professional development model to

satisfy the requisites of this mandate has been nothing less than monumental and has spanned several years. To finance the initiative, a highly comprehensive and multi-tiered grant entitled Project Jericho was secured.⁶ The professional development of university faculty, many of whom found themselves lacking the proper ESOL training and credentials, constituted the initial year of the grant. In preparation for teaching their students ESOL strategies, faculty completed 45 hours of training in the five state-mandated areas through an eclectic training model incorporating whole-group presentations, individual on-line exercises, and small group mentor-led sessions.⁷

The Integration of ESOL Competencies into Methods Courses

Upon receiving the ESOL endorsement, faculty prepared to impart what they had learned to their students. Syllabi were revised to accommodate the infusion of ESOL competencies, a task the faculty had been taught during their ESOL training. Faculty developed matrices that cross-referenced ESOL competencies, objectives, student assignments and activities, and modes of assessment in the courses to be infused. The resultant course syllabi now include assignments requiring that students make adaptations to instructional materials, lesson plans, teaching strategies, and assessment instruments to address the needs of ESOL learners.

In most of the ESOL-infused courses, students complete ESOL modules developed specifically for a particular course. The modules may be accessed at <<http://reach.ucf.edu/~tesol>>, the college of education's Web site developed as a significant component of the Project Jericho grant. Since the State of Florida requires that the college of education detail "**multiple and specific** sources of data (evidence) to be used to determine acquisition of each of the 25 ESOL Performance Standards,"⁸ students create and maintain a TESOL-In-Progress Notebook. Any number of artifacts can serve as evidence: course assignments, an ESOL teacher's assessment of a student teaching ESOL students, lesson plans adapted to address ESOL students, etc. Students document these pieces of evidence on a TESOL-In-Progress Worksheet that is to be downloaded from the TESOL Web site. The form serves as the table of contents for the notebook, which is to be divided according to each of the infused courses. As assignments are completed, students place them in the notebook according to the course requiring the assignment. The TESOL-In-Progress Notebook should be completed by the end of each student's senior internship, at which time the senior internship

coordinator will review the portfolio for mastery of the competencies.

The Infusion of ESOL Competencies in Professional Teaching Practices

Curricular infusion of the 25 Florida Performance Standards for Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages into EDG 4323 Professional Teaching Practices was effected in Fall 2002 via on-line modules (see Appendix B). Florida Performance Standards 13 and 16, which deal with curricular design and pedagogy, had a natural fit within this general methods course. EDG 4323—consisting of pedagogy, design, implementation, and assessment of lessons, classroom management, developmentally appropriate strategies, and instruction for diverse learners—provides a solid foundation for the university's initial teacher certification program.

Standard 13 specifies that the ESOL teacher be able to “evaluate, design, and employ instructional methods and techniques appropriate to learners' socialization and communication needs, based on knowledge of language as a social phenomenon” (Florida Department of Education Performance Standards for Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages). Students were required to complete one of two activities available to address Standard 13. Students who completed Activity 1 of Standard 13 accessed websites detailing cognitive processing strategies, which are strategies that assist learners in organizing content to render it more manageable and comprehensible. Students described selected strategies and discussed modifications to facilitate the acquisition of the content by ESOL students.

Activity 2 of Standard 13 required students to use a visual learning software program called “Inspiration” that was available in the curriculum materials center on campus. “Visual learning techniques—graphical ways of working with ideas and presenting information—teach students to clarify their thinking, and to process, organize and prioritize new information. Visual diagrams reveal patterns, interrelationships and interdependencies. They also stimulate creative learning.”⁹ Using Inspiration, students created a concept map representative of modifications made for an ESOL student.

Standard 16 specifies that the ESOL teacher exhibit the following competency: “Design and implement effective unit plans and daily lesson plans which meet the needs of ESOL students within the context of the regular classroom.” Student were again given a choice of exercises to complete. Activity 1 of Standard 16 instructed that, after reviewing on-line ESOL lesson plans and resources, students delineate a sequence of activities to teach a concept of their choice, describing any adjustments made for students

with limited English proficiency. They also indicated the learning style addressed by the specific modification. Students opting to complete Activity 2 of Standard 16 located Web sites containing lesson plans beneficial to teachers with ESOL students and reflected on any apparent adjustments made in the plans for these students.

To ascertain students' perceptions of this course assignment, including feedback concerning its on-line nature, the authors developed and administered a survey to their EDG 4323 students at the conclusion of the Fall 2002 semester (see Appendix C). The survey consisted of 12 Likert-scale items asking students to rate their experiences ranging from the ease of accessing the Web site and their enjoyment of the on-line delivery of the assignment to their perceived relevancy of the activities to their future teaching. The survey also included two free-response questions. One open-ended item asked students for suggestions for improvements for this activity. In the latter free-response item, students were queried about their enjoyment of the activity. The results of the survey are detailed below.

Results

One hundred ninety-seven students responded to the survey. Each student was enrolled in Professional Teaching Practices and had completed the ESOL assignment as a course requirement. Completion of the modules enabled them to address ESOL Standards 13 and 16, which dealt with curricular design and pedagogy.

The first two questions on the survey asked about the students' overall reaction to the ESOL assignment and the clarity of the standards addressed in the assignment. Sixty one percent of the students agreed that the two ESOL standards were clearly communicated. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents indicated their overall rating of the ESOL assignment as average or above.

Because of the emphasis on technology integration in the undergraduate teacher preparation program, the online aspect of the ESOL assignment was of great interest to the researchers. Specific survey questions were written to evaluate the students' feelings relative to the online component. When asked about the ease of accessing the online assignment, 69% agreed that the ESOL online module was easy to access. Fifty-one percent agreed that the directions for the online module were easy to follow. However, 36% disagreed that they enjoyed the online nature of the ESOL assignment.

Throughout the entire undergraduate program, faculty attempt to help students make connections between the course content and the students' future teaching. While the evidence to support this objective lies ahead once the students are employed as teachers, the researchers tried to learn how the

students felt the ESOL activities related to their future teaching. Sixty percent of the students agreed with the statement that the ESOL activities were relevant to their future teaching.

To complete the activities, the students had to review several Internet sources. Two of the links, "Reading Strategies that Assist Content Area Reading" and "Best Practices for Multi-Level Teaching for Elementary School ESOL", detailed cognitive processing strategies to facilitate students' comprehension and processing of class content. Another link, "ESL Lesson Plans and Resources," took students to lesson plans and instructional materials created by in-service teachers. When asked to evaluate each link, approximately 47% of the students agreed that each link was instructional.

Faculty try to be cognizant of the time commitment required for each learning experience. Most of the students at this university work while attending college and some are married with families. When asked about the time commitment required to complete one activity using a software program, 45% of the 134 students who completed this particular activity agreed that the time commitment was beneficial to their future teaching.

The ESOL assignment gave the students two choices of activities for each of the two required standards. When asked whether the activity selected adequately prepared the student to "evaluate, design, and employ appropriate instructional methods and techniques appropriate to learner's socialization and communication (ESOL Standard 13)," 55% of the students agreed. Fifty-four percent of the students agreed when asked whether the activity selected for ESOL Standard 16 adequately prepared them to "design and implement effective unit plans and daily plans, which meet the needs of ESOL students within the context of the regular classroom."

Students also responded to two open-ended questions, the first of which asked for suggestions for enhancing the ESOL assignment. When asked how this activity might be improved to make it a richer learning experience, students responded with valuable feedback that will be used by the researchers to improve the online ESOL module. The suggestions included in this paper were those expressed most frequently.

The following responses reflect the students' desire for an opportunity for hands-on application of the theory and pedagogy presented in the modules:

- * ESOL studies should be more hands-on. Completing paperwork doesn't make one qualified to teach ESOL students.
- * Do scenarios; not just write what we "think" we should do. More hands-on activities like critiquing situations and discussing ESOL obstacles.
- * ESOL teaching than just Internet.

- * I don't feel that enough time or info was given to adequately instruct me on how to put together an ESOL lesson plan.
- * If the activity was more hands-on it would be more enjoyable.
- * Instead of learning only on-line, I would like to see some of these activities done in the classroom.
- * Have student implement this activity into classroom.

Students also commented on the specificity of the directions for completion of the modules:

- * Discuss length if it is important.
- * Explain [term] learning modalities and define unfamiliar vocabulary.
- * Directions could be more descriptive.
- * Directions should be more specific. There should be more explanation on how to use these activities in the classroom.
- * I think if the instructors explain the modules needed for their class and expectations the experiences would be beneficial.

The comments below are illustrative of students' technological difficulties in completing the course requirement:

- * Have all links work!
- * Find/create better, more effective web site resources. Make ESOL page more accessible.
- * I feel that the links could have been more helpful with the actual activities.
- * I find the program overall very clumsy and difficult at times. It needs to be more readily accessible and explained better.
- * It would be great if the web sites were always relevant to the modules.
- * Link could be updated. Links for EDF 4214 [another methods course] did not work at all.
- * Lines to info on topic were not very detailed. More links needed.
- * Make all of the activities easy for students to complete on their computer.

Students also requested that instructor expectations for the completion of the module be more thoroughly and clearly communicated. In addition, they asked that samples of completed ESOL modules be made available, either on-line or on reserve in the curriculum materials center, to use as guides. The desire for more class discussion about ESOL strategies and their implementation was also expressed. A student suggested that an entire unit on ESOL be taught by the instructor. Another student asked that instructors "tailor [the assignment] towards specific majors, more links for secondary educators."

The second survey question asked students to state what they enjoyed about the ESOL assignment. The students again gave detailed feedback that

will be used by the researchers to improve the assignment. Students reflected on the application of ESOL theory and pedagogy to their future teaching:

- * Being able to come up with ideas for ESOL.
- * Enjoyed finding Internet connections that could assist me in the classroom.
- * Enjoyed making the Venn diagram. Got me thinking how to use such strategies in my class.
- * It gave good ideas and it was useful to us as future teachers.
- * The different ways to incorporate ESOL activities into lesson plans.
- * I found it helpful to bookmark the sites for future reference. I think they'll be even more helpful then.

Other comments reflected positively on the on-line nature of the assignment:

- * Being able to do it at home.
- * It helped me realize how useful the Internet is when it comes to teaching and ideas.
- * Links to other useful websites.
- * The fact that it wasn't a separate class and you could do it at your own pace.

Learning the cognitive mapping program "Inspiration" was a favorite activity of students who elected to complete Activity 2 of Standard 13, a component of which was the creation of a concept map using this software program. The following comment is representative of this experience: "I enjoyed using Inspiration. It was very useful. I can see many applications for ESOL students as well as SLD and mainstream students." Students were also appreciative of learning about different teaching styles and the different ways to incorporate ESOL activities into lesson plans. According to one student, the assignment forced her to "keep in mind how to include all students." Having flexibility in assignments to complete was another popular comment. Finally, students reflected on the growth they experienced having completed this assignment: "It made me examine my teaching procedures critically — I liked it!"

Discussion

The use of Web-enhanced modules to facilitate a newly mandated ESOL requirement in the course Professional Teaching Practices was examined through a survey of 197 students who completed an online ESOL module during the Fall semester of 2002. The results of the survey indicated that 78% of the students rated the assignment as average or above. Thirty-three percent enjoyed its on-line nature. Only 18% of the students reported that

the module was difficult to access, and 19% felt that the directions for the online module were difficult to follow. However, because some students were confused about the depth of response required, instructors of Professional Teaching Practices will be advised to improve the clarity and detail of their explanation of the assignment. A concerted effort will also be made to define on the Web site unfamiliar vocabulary such as “learning modalities”, in response to a complaint issued by one student. In addition, now that the initial group of Professional Teaching Practices students has completed the module exercises, samples of this assignment will now be available for student perusal, a request made by several other students.

Student’s concerns regarding technological difficulties in completing the course requirement are being addressed as the researchers collect and add additional links relevant to ESOL theory, curricular design, and pedagogy. Links that no longer work are being deleted from the Web site.

Numerous complaints were expressed concerning the lack of hands-on extensions to this on-line activity. Students also requested detailed class discussion about ESOL pedagogy and their implementation within an actual classroom. Another student recommended increasing the number of links on the ESOL Web site applicable for secondary majors. As instructors plan for upcoming semesters of this course, curricular modifications will be made, addressing the students’ comments. One such adjustment can easily be made to an existing course requirement—microteach 2. Microteach 2 currently requires students to use an indirect instruction delivery mode consisting of learner interaction in groups and/or hands-on activities. Such instruction lends itself well to numerous ESOL strategies such as Paired Verbal Fluency, Think-Pair-Share, and Clock Buddies, all of which engage students in discourse with peers. Consequently, Professional Teaching Practices instructors will require that pedagogical modifications be made for ESOL students when planning and implementing microteach 2. This requisite will afford students direct application of strategies learned in the ESOL modules.

Another activity of this course deals with the stages of acculturation experienced by a fifth grader named Victor who recently immigrated to the United States from Mexico and who lacks fluency in English. The poignant videotaped account serves as a foundation for a group activity in which students discuss situations in the video that were deleterious to the youth’s performance at school. This group activity could be made into a powerful extension to the modules if additional class time were dedicated to the in-depth discussion and modeling of strategies that could address Victor’s unique needs.

Although there were numerous suggestions for improvement of the on-

line assignment, many students indicated that overall they enjoyed the assignment. Students appreciated its relevance to their future teaching, while others applauded being able to select which activities they would like to complete. Students appreciated being able to work at their own pace and at home. Possibly one of the most profound benefits in support of the continuance of this assignment is the intellectual challenge provided by the modules. According to several students, the assignment caused them to critically analyze their teaching philosophies and strategies, forcing them to be ever mindful that the planning and implementation of lessons requires the consideration of the needs of **all** students.

Notes

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Appendix A

Florida Performance Standards for Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages

The ESOL teacher is able to:

1. Conduct ESOL programs within the parameters, goals, and stipulations of the Florida Consent Decree.
2. Recognize the major differences and similarities among the different cultural groups in the United States.
3. Identify, expose, and reexamine cultural stereotypes relating to LEP and non-LEP students.
4. Use knowledge of the cultural characteristics of Florida's LEP population to enhance

instruction.

5. Determine and use appropriate instructional methods and strategies for individuals and groups, using knowledge of first and second language acquisition processes.
6. Apply current and effective ESOL teaching methodologies in planning and delivering instruction to LEP students.
7. Locate and acquire relevant resources in ESOL methodologies.
8. Select and develop appropriate ESOL content according to student levels of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, taking into account:
 - * Basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS)
 - * Cognitive academic language proficiency skills (CALPS)as they apply to the ESOL curriculum.
9. Develop experiential and interactive literacy activities for LEP students, using current information on linguistic and cognitive processes.
10. Analyze student language and determine appropriate instructional strategies, using knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and discourse.
11. Apply essential strategies for developing and integrating the four language skills of listening comprehension, oral communication, reading, and writing.
12. Apply content-based ESOL approaches to instruction.
13. Evaluate, design, and employ instructional methods and techniques appropriate to learner's socialization and communication needs, based on knowledge of language as a social phenomenon.
14. Plan and evaluate instructional outcomes, recognizing the effects of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion on the results.
15. Evaluate, select, and employ appropriate instructional materials, media, and technology for ESOL at elementary, middle, and high school levels.
16. Design and implement effective unit plans and daily lesson plans which meet the needs of ESOL students within the context of the regular classroom.
17. Evaluate, adapt and employ appropriate instructional materials, media, and technology for ESOL in the content areas at elementary, middle and high school levels.
18. Create a positive classroom environment to accommodate the various learning styles and cultural backgrounds of students.
19. Consider current trends and issues related to the testing of linguistic and culturally diverse students when using testing instruments and techniques.
20. Administer tests and interpret test results, applying basic measurement concepts.
21. Use formal and alternative methods of assessments/evaluation of LEP students, including measurement of language, literacy and academic content metacognition.
22. Develop and implement strategies for using school, neighborhood, and home resources in the ESOL curriculum.
23. Identify major attitudes of local target groups toward school, teachers, discipline, and education in general that may lead to misinterpretation by school personnel; reduce cross-cultural barriers between students, parents, and the school setting.

24. Develop, implement, and evaluate instructional programs in ESOL, based on current trends in research and practice.
25. Recognize indicators of learning disabilities, especially hearing and language impairment, and limited English proficiency.

Appendix B

EDG 4323 Professional Teaching Practices ESOL Modules Standards 13 and 16



ESOL STANDARDS

- * Standard#13: Evaluate, design, and employ appropriate instructional methods and techniques appropriate to learner's socialization and communication.
- * Standard#16: Design and implement effective unit plans and daily plans, which meet the needs of ESOL students within the context of the regular classroom.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

Select ONE activity for each standard. Attach the rubric, if provided, to the assignment.

STANDARD #13: ACTIVITY 1

Take a look at the following on-line resources that explain and demonstrate some instructional methods and techniques for ESOL students:

Site #1: Reading Strategies that Assist Content Area Reading

<http://www.sarasota.k12.fl.us/sarasota/interdiscrdg.htm>

Site #2: Best Practices for Multi-Level Teaching for Elementary School ESOL

<http://www.mindspring.com/~mlmcc/BestPrac.htm>

Select two of the following strategies and explain in a narrative description an example of how you would use each for students with limited English proficiency.

KWL	Story Frame	Paired Verbal Fluency
QAR	Venn Diagram	Flow Chart
Clock Buddies	Think-Pair-Share	Stand and Deliver
Double Entry Journal T-Chart		

STANDARD #13: ACTIVITY 2

Select a concept that you would normally teach. Identify the grade level and subject area. Using the Inspiration 6.0 (available in the Curriculum Materials Center), create a concept map that represents an adjustment for a limited English proficient student.

Concept Map Rubric	
Concept appropriate for grade level	1
3 Levels	1 2 3
Shapes Symbols	1 2 3 4
Clip Art	1 2
Total Points	

STANDARD #16: ACTIVITY 1

Take a look at the following on-line resource that has a collection of unit and lesson plans for teachers of limited English proficiency students.

Site #1: ESL Lesson Plans and Resources

<http://www.csun.edu/%7Ehcedu013/eslplans.html>

Select a concept that you would normally teach. Identify the grade level, subject area, and concept. Through a narrative description, explain a sequence of activities that helps students understand the concept that you are teaching and how you would adjust the instruction for students who have limited English proficiency. Categorize the instructional adjustments that you make in one or more learning modalities (i.e., Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic).

Sequence of Activities Rubric	
Grade level	1
Subject area	1
Concept	1
Examples of instructional adjustments	1 2 3 4
Learning Modalities	1 2 3
Total Points	

STANDARD #16: ACTIVITY 2

Using one of the following searching engines, conduct a search for three Web sites with lesson plans that could assist teachers with limited English proficiency students in their classrooms. Copy the name and URL for each site. Explain three adjustments for LEP students presented in these Web sites. Explain the rationale for your selection using the 3 R's of reflective writing (reaction, relevance, and responsibility).

Alta Vista (Simple Search)

Google

Go Network

Excite

Lycos

Profusion (Intelliseek)

Web Site Adjustments Rubric

URL address

Search engine name 1

3 adjustments 1 2 3

3 R's 1 2 3 4 5 6

Total Points

Appendix C

University of Central Florida College of Education
EDG 4323 ESOL Module Survey

Your input is very important to us. Please complete this survey so that we can assess this assignment and make modifications, if necessary. Thank you for your assistance.

Check only one response per question	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	
<p>1.How would you rate the ESOL assignment overall?</p> <p>2.The two ESOL standards were clearly communicated.</p> <p>3.The ESOL online module was easy to access.</p> <p>4.The directions for the online module were easy to follow.</p> <p>5.The link “Reading Strategies that Assist Content Area Reading” in Activity 1 for Standard 13 was instructional.</p> <p>6.The link “Best Practices for Multi-level Teaching for Elementary School ESOL” in Activity 1 for Standard 13 was instructional.</p> <p>7.The link “ESL Lesson Plans and Resources” in Activity 1 for Standard 16 was instructional.</p> <p>8.I felt that the time commitment to access Inspiration 6.0 in the Curriculum Materials Center for Standard 16, Activity 1 was beneficial to my future teaching.</p> <p>9.The activity I completed for standard 13 adequately prepared me to “evaluate, design, and employ appropriate instructional methods and techniques appropriate to learner’s socialization and communication.”</p> <p>10.The activity I completed for standard 16 adequately prepared me to “design and implement effective unit plans and daily plans, which meet the needs of ESOL students within the context of the regular classroom.”</p> <p>11.The ESOL activities are relevant to my future teaching.</p> <p>12.I enjoyed the online nature of the ESOL assignment.</p>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable

13.How might this activity be improved to make it a richer learning experience?

14.What did you enjoy about this activity?

Use the back of this survey if needed.