



Position Statement on Teacher Credentialing for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages in Primary and Secondary Schools

English language learners, whether in an English as a second or additional language (ESL/EAL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) setting, deserve and have the right to be taught by qualified and appropriately trained teachers. It is critical that all English language learners receive instruction from educators who have received specialized training and education in second/additional language development and its implications for instruction and assessment of linguistically and culturally diverse language learners.

In order to provide English language learners with access to all school curricula, educational authorities should require specific training in instruction and assessment of English language learners during preservice and inservice programs and for all teachers. Moreover, to ensure that English language learners are being taught by appropriately qualified educators, educational authorities (whether at the state/provincial, regional, or national level) should establish and require unique credentialing procedures and programs for qualified and trained ESL/EAL/EFL and bilingual educators and specialists working in public schools.

In the United States specifically, every state should establish full certification for qualified ESL and bilingual educators working in public schools, with consistency in credentialing and requirements for ESL and bilingual educators across states. In addition, states should provide separate credentialing for mainstream and content-area teachers who are qualified to work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Moreover, the field of TESOL is a specialized academic discipline, ESL and bilingual educators should be highly qualified under No Child Left Behind.

As the professional organization for educators in the field of ESL/EAL/EFL, TESOL has worked intensively to establish credentialing guidelines by working with the National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE.) This document can serve as a resource and starting point for high-quality ESL/EAL/EFL teacher preparation and credentialing programs in both the United States and countries outside the United States.

No matter the context, it is critical that all English language learners receive instruction from educators who have received specialized education qualifying them as ESL/EAL/EFL educators. As stated in its *Position Statement on Teacher Quality in the Field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (2003), TESOL holds that qualified ESL/EAL/EFL educators should demonstrate not only a high level of written and oral proficiency in the English language (regardless of native language), but also

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teaching competency. Moreover, qualified ESL/EAL/EFL educators should be able to apply, in their classrooms, knowledge of the following: research findings that are relevant to teaching and curriculum development and the accompanying instructional implications in the fields of linguistics, applied linguistics, second/additional language development, sociolinguistics, language pedagogy and methodology, literacy development, curriculum and materials development, assessment, and cross-cultural communication. Most important, ESL/EAL/EFL educators, like all teachers, require ongoing professional development and should receive both the resources and support for continued professional growth and achievement.

*Approved by the Board of Directors
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