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Preface

The *Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults* addresses the central issue, What does the profession of English language teaching consider to be effective teaching? This book is a culmination of years of study and discussion on the qualities and expertise necessary to be an effective teacher of English as a second or foreign language to adults. The standards have been developed to foster student success through effective teaching. Prospective teachers and seasoned veterans alike will find opportunities for professional development and self-reflection in the application of the standards. Teacher education programs and teacher trainers can give direction to their curricula by adopting the standards. The standards can also be used to establish hiring criteria for evaluating candidates and to assess teacher performance.

There has been a move toward performance-based assessment to measure a program's or a teacher's successes and failures. In response to this trend in education, teacher educators (e.g., Diez, 1998), researchers (e.g., Darling-Hammond, Diez, Moss, Pecheone, Pullin, Schafer, & Vickers, 1998), and teacher certification (e.g., INTASC¹, 2001) and accreditation agencies (e.g., NCATE²) have focused on outcomes of teacher education programs, rather than input (such as course content). This approach is characterized by

- describing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for effective teaching
- having teachers demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions
- assessing teacher performance of knowledge, skills, and dispositions by
 - linking assessment to performance
 - developing authentic assessment tasks
 - using multiple assessments
- recognizing the developmental nature of teaching
- acknowledging that teaching must have a positive effect on student learning
- recognizing that teaching and learning are context based

The global association Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL), has been engaged in developing standards for teachers of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). The first set of standards was developed for P–12 teacher education in the United States. These standards have now been adopted by the NCATE, so that when teacher education programs in the United States apply for accreditation, they are required to address the TESOL standards if they have an ESL program at their institution. This book focuses on how applying the standards to develop the expertise of an instructor can foster learning by adult students in various ESL settings.

¹Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium

²National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

History

In 1999 the TESOL Board of Directors appointed a task force to develop a framework of standards for teachers who work with adult ESL learners in the United States. To initiate the project, the task force requested two white papers from the TESOL Teacher Education Interest Section to review research on teaching in formal and nonformal settings and the design of successful teacher education programs. A draft set of core standards and progress indicators was developed, and the task force collected feedback from various sectors of the field. The response from the field was that (1) such standards were needed in the profession, and (2) the draft standards were applicable in settings outside the United States as well. The draft standards were subsequently revised to be applicable in global settings.

The project was put in abeyance for a period of time. After the TESOL Standards Committee was created in 2002, the project was revived under the auspices of the committee. In 2004, the Standards Committee commissioned a team of writers versed in different settings for teaching English to adults. The team was to develop vignettes and other explicatory material for a complete volume. As the standards and progress indicators had already received considerable input and revision, the standards framework was approved by the TESOL Board of Directors in October 2006. *Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults* reflects the effort of these two groups, in consultation with the community of English language teachers, to use the standards for identifying the necessary qualifications of teachers of adult English learners in various settings: in the workplace, at the college level, in intensive English programs (IEPs), and in EFL programs.

Introduction

The mission of the global professional association TESOL is to ensure excellence in English language teaching to speakers of other languages. One of the methods TESOL has pursued to fulfill this mission is through the development of standards for English language teachers, learners, and programs. The current standards movement in the United States establishes the knowledge and skills that a teacher or student should possess (performance objectives) and states these objectives in the standards. The standards in this book, consistent with those of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), are performance based: They define what teacher candidates need to know and be able to do in order to teach effectively in particular settings.

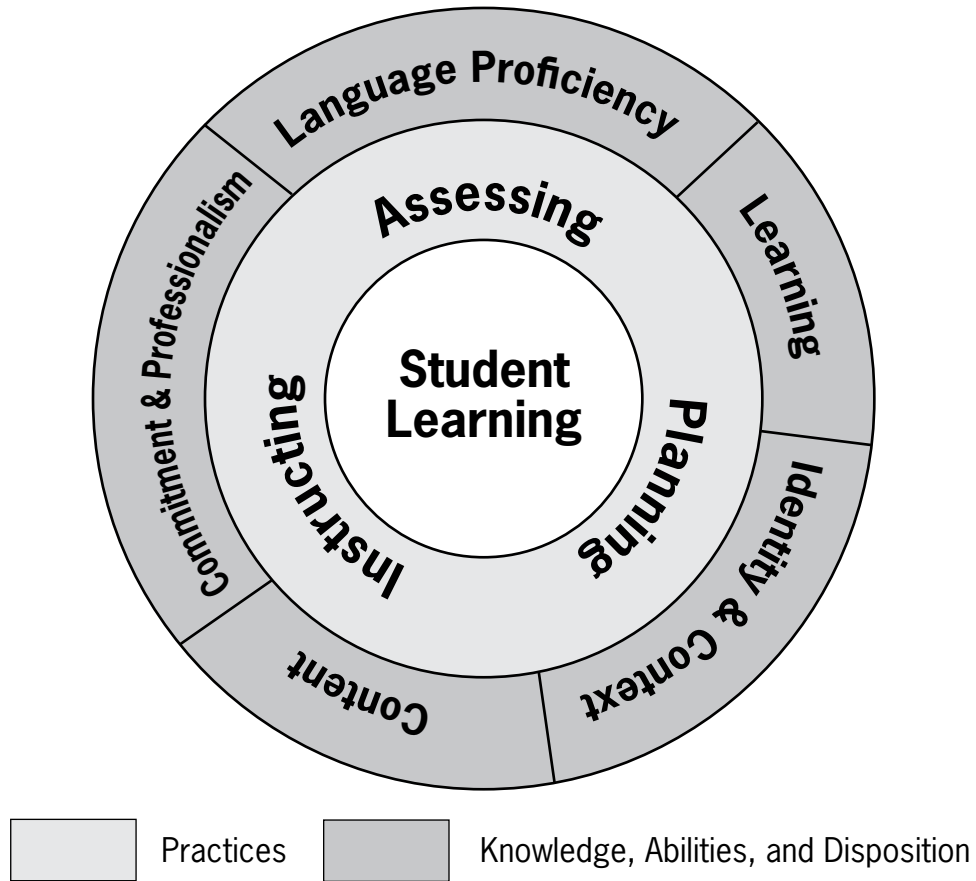
Performance-based assessment differs from earlier teacher assessment designs, such as competency-based teacher education, because the standards set forth guidelines for effective teaching. Performance-based standards follow the logic that

- teachers can demonstrate the standards in their teaching
- teaching (teacher performance) can be assessed through what teachers do in their classrooms or virtual classrooms
- this performance can be detailed in “indicators,” evidence that teachers can meet part of a standard
- the processes used to assess teachers need to draw on complex evidence of performance. In other words, indicators are more than simple how-to statements
- performance-based assessment is an integrated system rather than a checklist or a series of discrete assessments
- each assessment within a system has performance criteria against which the performance can be measured
- performance criteria identify to what extent the teacher meets the standard
- student learning is at the heart of teachers’ performance

This approach clearly defines what TESOL considers effective teaching.

The standards for ESL/EFL teachers of adults are presented visually in Figure 1. At the center of the model is a circle, representing student learning. Learning is the central concern for all teachers and therefore occupies the center of the performance-based teacher standards. Surrounding student learning in two concentric circles are the eight standards for ESL/EFL teachers of adults. These standards support and sustain student learning. *Planning, Instructing, and Assessing* are the first three standards in the middle circle, defining teacher practices. *Planning* is the way in which a teacher plans for, adjusts, and follows up on instruction.

Figure 1. Model of Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults



Instructing is what teachers do in a classroom setting. *Assessing* is the way in which a teacher uses knowledge and student performance to make a decision for future planning and instruction.

The outer circle contains five standards defining teacher knowledge, abilities, and disposition: *Identity and Context*, *Language Proficiency*, *Learning*, *Content*, and *Commitment and Professionalism*. *Identity and Context* focuses on who the learners are and how their communities, backgrounds, and goals shape their learning. Also included in this standard are sociocultural and sociopolitical environments that create and influence identity and, therefore, learning. *Language Proficiency* refers to an understanding of what language is and how it is used. *Learning* addresses an understanding of the learning process in formal and informal settings and the specific requirements and role of language in that process. *Content* refers to the teacher having content expertise, knowing how to collaborate with content-area teachers, or being able to facilitate the independent learning of content. *Commitment and Professionalism* focuses on the nature of ESL and EFL teaching as part of, and in relation to, the community: the teaching community at large and the community of English language teaching professionals. Collectively, these eight standards represent the core of what professional teachers of ESL and EFL to adult learners should know and be able to do.

Organization of Standards in This Book

The purpose of this book is to present the eight standards for ESL/EFL teachers of adults in a useful and concrete way, by providing examples and discussion prompts to address issues and stimulate thought. Each section has the same format:

1. title of the standard and a brief description
2. extended narrative, which elaborates the standard's theoretical justification
3. performance indicators that describe mastery of the standard; each numbered for easy identification
4. vignettes showing a clear example of many of the performance indicators in each setting
5. forum for discussion, including
 - a comprehension question that offers the reader an opportunity to return to the indicators and the vignette in order to identify key issues
 - discussion questions that are open ended and provide stimulus for thought about the vignettes, performance indicators, and the standard itself
 - a final application question

The volume concludes with a glossary and three appendixes:

- Appendix A: papers written by TESOL experts that were influential in the development of the standards
- Appendix B: performance criteria (the indicators) presented in order to facilitate program development, teacher hiring, self-review, and teacher-training programs
- Appendix C: resources and additional reading

Who Should Use This Book

The standards for ESL/EFL teachers of adults have been developed to describe effective teaching and can be applied to most settings with adult English as a second language or foreign language learners. The standards address the most important aspects of instruction and teacher performance and can benefit educators and administrators in a variety of settings.

- **Teacher-training programs** communicate the basic principles of language teaching, inspire a commitment to teaching, and model professionalism. Teacher-training programs can structure their curricula around the standards, which offer opportunities for classroom discussion and exposure to different teaching environments to inform prospective teachers'

career choices. Students in teacher-training programs should understand and regularly apply the standards because educational institutions may also use the standards to evaluate faculty.

- **Educational institutions** with ESL programs will benefit from the extensive research, discussion, and feedback about effective teaching and student learning that resulted in the standards. Educational institutions may also choose to use the standards in hiring decisions, and both the standards and performance criteria (Appendix B) in teacher review policies.

The standards also address how institutions and individuals can achieve personal goals.

- **Institutional professional development** has been streamlined because of shrinking funding in the United States. Nevertheless, with special attention to Commitment and Professionalism (Standard 8), institutions can develop productive coaching relationships to improve instruction and student performance.
- **Personal professional improvement** results from a commitment to students and the acknowledgment that there is room for improvement at every stage of a person's career. The vignettes and the Performance Criteria in Appendix B can facilitate self-evaluation and re-energize experienced instructors.

Special Note

Teachers may not meet every performance indicator listed with each standard. Applying principles in the classroom leads to effective instruction, but dedication and time are also essential components. Administrators should recall this when hiring new teachers, and should acknowledge commitment and professionalism when evaluating performance. The standards for ESL/EFL teachers of adults are not meant to be discrete assessments that underscore shortcomings, but are meant to help teachers and administrators identify and develop elements of effective instruction.

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