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Acknowledgments

A number of people have helped make this book possible. Many were not directly involved with the creation of the book but have worked with the TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards Program Team in one way or another over the years. Their assistance has helped to provide the background we needed to write the book.

Support for the project actually began with the development of the Standards themselves in 1999, when the TESOL Board of Directors had the foresight both to join the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and to create the task force (now a program team) that wrote the original TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards. The task force worked for 3 years to produce the first TESOL-and-NCATE-approved version of the Standards. We thank Lydia Stack (chair), Keith Buchanan, Eric Dwyer, Cheryl Huffman, Mary Lou McCloskey, and Beth Witt. We also wish to thank Cathy Day, Connie Thibeault, Joaquin Vila, and Sara Waring, four people who replaced the original task force members and whose contributions impacted our work.

We have been supported by TESOL International Association and have learned a great deal from TESOL staff over the years. These TESOL staff members include Chuck Amorosino, TESOL’s executive director when TESOL first joined NCATE, and TESOL’s current executive director, Rosa Aronson. We would like to extend a special thanks to Rosa, who had the vision for this book, and who has strongly supported the work of the TESOL/NCATE program team. Also, our TESOL staff liaisons, John Donaldson and John Segota, have been very supportive of the work of the program team. In addition, the TESOL Standards Committee has consistently provided the program team with feedback and has long suggested that we begin publishing aspects of our work.

Early in the work of the task force, the TESOL Board of Directors assigned TESOL Board liaisons to our program team. These included Denise Murray, Nancy Cloud, and Lynn Diaz Rico, who provided support and feedback. We also have had TESOL staff assigned to work with our team. We thank Molly Kirby, Jason Majesky, and Katie Parrish.

Throughout the last 12 years a TESOL member has served on the NCATE Board of Directors, providing much of the feedback that supplied the groundwork for this book. Denise Murray and Connie Thibeault have served NCATE in this capacity on behalf of TESOL.

There have also been key people at NCATE without whose keen insights and answers to our many, many questions we could not have written this book. We thank Margie Crutchfield, NCATE’s former Vice President for Program Review, who attended many of our first trainings for universities and reviewers. We also thank Elizabeth Vilky, NCATE Accreditation Associate for Program Review, and Monique Lynch, NCATE Vice President for Program Review, for their collaboration and support.
We are thankful ourselves to have been able to serve the field in several capacities, including as a member of the task force that wrote the original TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards (Natalie Kuhlman), as TESOL/NCATE Program Coordinator (Diane Staehr Fenner), and as a member of the NCATE Board of Directors representing TESOL (Natalie Kuhlman).

We also wish to thank all of those volunteers who reviewed and audited NCATE reports for TESOL.

Approximately 200 universities that submitted TESOL reports over the years have also provided us with background knowledge essential for writing this book. We give a heartfelt thanks to them. We have used several institutions’ programs and assessments as examples throughout the book and have cited them individually as their program’s examples appear.

We also wish to thank the Ministries of Education and educators in Albania, Uruguay, and Ecuador, who have supported the development of standards in those countries, and the U.S. State Department ESL Specialist Program, which supported Natalie Kuhlman’s work in Albania, Uruguay, and Ecuador. Also the Fulbright Association supported Natalie’s work in Uruguay in the development of standards. The chapter on the application of the Standards in international settings could not have been written without these institutions’ support.

Last, but not least, we must give a very special thanks to Carol Edwards, TESOL’s Publishing Manager. She has provided a great deal of feedback from the inception of the idea for this book, through the chapter writing, to the review process, and finally the publication of the book. We also wish to thank her reviewers and copy editors for their help.

And finally, we wish to thank our families, colleagues, and friends who have supported us in this process.
Preface

In the past 25 years, the way in which we educate our nation’s children, and in particular, children whose first language is not English, has come under fire by the media, by the general public, by parents, and others. It has been during this time that education has moved from a competency-based to a standards-based system. In general, the introduction of different sets of standards has raised expectations for both students and teachers alike. Unfortunately, standards have most often led to only one way of determining if they have been met: standardized multiple-choice tests.

The focus of this book is not multiple-choice tests but rather how professional standards for teachers (in this case the TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards) can be used to prepare teachers so that their English language learners will meet student standards by demonstrating what they know and can do in the classroom. The book explores how high-quality preparation of preservice teachers through program development and effective in-service professional development will better prepare today’s teachers to meet the needs of their diverse students. In addition, the book addresses the unique needs of those English as a second language (ESL) teacher preparation programs that will apply for national recognition from the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)/Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The intent is to provide an aid to those involved in ESL teacher education to better prepare current and future teachers.

We began this project after years of working with and holding workshops for those who develop ESL teacher preparation programs and were submitting their programs for NCATE recognition. We listened to the kinds of questions they asked about how to improve their programs, and which topics needed clarification in the TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards and supporting documents. We reviewed the kinds of assessments that were needed for ESL teacher education program recognition and then looked for examples of good models from our extensive database (approximately 200 programs have applied for NCATE recognition since 2007). We looked to our own experience in teacher education and practice as well, both within and outside the United States, to glean what might be useful for our three audiences: ESL teacher education program developers, those compiling NCATE/CAEP reports for national recognition, and professional development leaders at the K–12 level.

We hope that this book will be of use in the preparation of preservice and in-service teachers who will ultimately make the difference with English language learners everywhere.