

# **The TESOL Guidelines for Developing EFL Standards**

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# **Chapter 1: Assumptions and Values to Guide the Creation of Standards for Quality English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teaching**

The globalization of society and the dynamic role of education in it have given impetus to the development of this document. The globalization of society and economy are manifested in increasing mobility introducing multicultural and multilingual diversity within national borders and consequently within the student and teacher population. Today's societies thus place challenging demands on teachers who are confronted with complexity in professional parts of their lives. How do these demands comply with competencies that teachers have or need to acquire or develop? One way to comply with the demands would be to define the competencies and set (develop) standards that can make an evaluation process a success. Evaluation of competencies, demonstrating that teachers are prepared for these challenges, is inconceivable without a clearly defined and agreed reference point: standards.

In this chapter, we briefly address some assumptions (beliefs or ideas) about the nature of how one acquires knowledge (epistemology). Or in other words, what it is we mean when we say that something (knowledge) exists, and what we mean when we say that we know something. We discuss what knowledge, theoretical and practical, is needed for a teacher to be able to teach EFL, and how knowledge is created in a foreign language.

EFL teaching is a multifaceted activity; it has several dimensions, and it must rise to the challenge of its enhanced responsibilities: First and foremost, the responsibilities are educational but also social (to teach students to respect people of different cultural backgrounds, for example). It is the educational, social, and cultural milieu in which at least two languages and cultures meet—the language and culture of the students and of those who use the target language (English, in this case). EFL teaching is thus a complex endeavor.

It is, however, beyond this document to discuss how culture or cultural segments affect and shape teachers' beliefs and, vice versa, how one's teaching reflects those beliefs in different cultures. Additionally, it is beyond this document to discuss how basic epistemological or ontological beliefs about culture (be it foreign or domestic) change in the process of teaching and learning a language. But passing on general information about the target culture and stereotype models is no longer sufficient. The context in which a foreign language is taught and learned has changed. It is characterized by mobility, migration, and diversity.

Multilingual and multicultural aspects of EFL should thus be integrated into teacher education programs, and should be further fostered and promoted as a value in the classrooms. Multilingualism, multiculturalism and diversity in the center of education present a challenge for EFL. They are changing the role (and identity) of the EFL teacher. As a result, education authorities need to provide quality training and integrated programs that offer knowledge (theoretical and practical), understanding, values, and subject specific and generic competences (intercultural being one of them). Another challenge and an identified need for a multilingual, multicultural, and information and communication technology-driven society is a shift from a monolingual to multilingual paradigm (Canagarajah & Wurr, 2011).

Given all that, a new platform of teaching a foreign language in a multicultural, multilingual (a society/community dimension) and plurilingual (an individual dimension) society is needed. Multilingualism and multiculturalism need to be embedded in the concept of educational values, and as such (will) present a challenge for language education and for the creation of standards for quality EFL teaching.

On its behalf, TESOL International Association encourages respect for diversity, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and individual language rights. The association advocates

the profession, and the rights of teachers—be it native or nonnative speakers (TESOL, 2006)—and teachers’ association to exist (TESOL, 2007).

TESOL fosters means and ends in education in general, and in English language teaching and learning in particular. However, for beliefs to be beliefs they need to be evident in actions, verified by actions and examined and evaluated from time to time. Evidence of need should be added to an assumption or a belief to convert it into knowledge.

In *The TESOL Guidelines for Developing EFL Standards*, TESOL utilizes its resources both human and material, accumulated knowledge, and experience in the field to create a new document, the *sharing* of which, and not exportation, is perceived as a positive result of globalization rather than linguistic, cultural, academic, or educational imperialism. It is the result of TESOL International Association’s continuous work in the creation of teaching and learning standards.

How this document resonates depends on the needs of diverse contexts. And *guidelines* is the key word in understanding and implementing it. The document suggests, does not mandate, parameters for adapting or creating standards that meet the needs of a global society but also takes into consideration local policies, ministries of education, universities, professional associations, and nongovernmental agencies (NGOs). However, neat solutions are neither easily found nor are they within the scope of this document. In other words, this document will neither have the lure of the panacea to guarantee success, nor will it represent a pandemic threat to the local context and academic freedom (Phillipson, 2009).

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## Chapter 2: The Standards Package

When all of the aspects of standards are put together, they form the core of a package that can be used in the process of developing a standards-based teacher preparation program that will be discussed in Chapter 3.

1. *The Theoretical Framework*: First in the package is a theoretical framework, goal, or mission statement. These are usually based on the research that the program, Ministry of Education (MOE), or national government supports as the basis for its teacher education programs.
2. *Organizational Formats for Standards*: The domains or principles that will be used to organize the standards, the larger umbrella, and will include a supporting justification for the domain and/or principle.
3. *Standards*: The standard itself, either a specific or general statement that outlines an aspect of what the teacher needs to know or be able to do within that domain or principle.
4. *Performance Indicators (PIs)*: The standard, typically, is then broken down into PIs. Sometimes the PIs are broken down into even smaller elements.
5. *Standards Use*: Identifying the difference between a program based on standards and one that is based on a collection of courses, and deciding which to use.
6. *Assessment and Evaluation*: The next part of the package is determining how it will be decided that standards have been met, often through the use of PIs to create rubrics, and via portfolios.
7. *References and Glossary*: Finally, there will usually be both a list of references that support the standards, and a glossary so that all those who will use the package will have a common understanding of key concepts.

## **The Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical (or conceptual) framework supports the goal. It will provide the guiding structure for the standards, and represents the vision and direction of stakeholders. While it is usually stated at the beginning of a standards document, it will also be infused throughout them. Examining current research in the area and reading such studies recently done will better prepare those who will create or adapt the standards. It will not only provide the background knowledge needed to produce the standards, but may provide ideas of how to approach the task as well. Examples of such literature reviews include the one done by TESOL when revising the *TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards* (2010).

## **Organizational Formats for Standards**

In general, there are two approaches to standards development: a principles-based and a domains-based approach, the domains being the more common. Perhaps a simple way to explain the difference between a principles-based vs. a domains-based approach is to look at them as being abstract and concrete, respectively. They can also be seen as two sides of the same coin: A principles approach may be more conceptual, and a domains one more specific and practical. As an example, the first Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) has as a principle:

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students. (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p.1)

This principle would be equivalent to the language domain in the *P–12 TESOL ESL Professional Teaching Standards* (2010).

## **The Principles Approach**

A TESOL White Paper by Mahboob and Tilakaratna (2012) discusses principles as a theoretical framework that is needed to set policy. Mahboob and Tilakaratna also present several principles that are needed for successful program implementation that should be used when constructing standards. These include collaboration, relevance, evidence (standards created based on sound research), alignment (with the policies and practices of a country, ministry, etc.), transparency (easily understood, without jargon), and empowerment (takes into consideration the outcomes expected from learning English, such as economics and education).

A different kind of principles-based approach is embodied in the work of a blue-ribbon panel formed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2010). As examples, two of the ten principles are “Clinical preparation is integrated throughout every facet of teacher education in a dynamic way,” and “Candidates learn in an interactive professional community.” These principles would lead to standards on clinical practice and on professionalism and be part of the TESOL Instruction and Professionalism domains.

## **The Domains Approach**

A domains approach focuses on general categories. The standards under each domain, and the PIs (or elements) provide the specificity. Based on current research, TESOL identified five domains in its *TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teaching Standards* (2010) that are needed to prepare English teachers. The five domains are

- Language (foundation domain),
- Culture (foundation domain),
- Instruction (application domain),

- Assessment (application domain), and
- Professionalism (at the intersection of all the domains).

There are a total of eleven standards within the five domains. These are visualized below as intersecting circles, since each is dependent on the others.

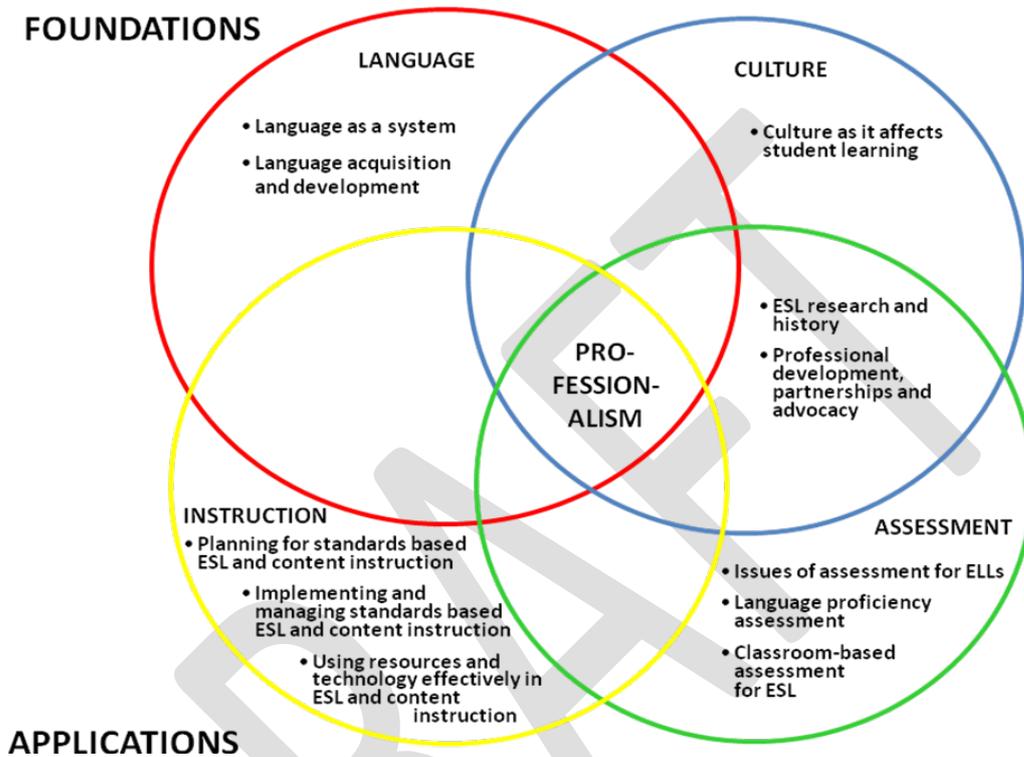


Figure 1. TESOL P-12 Teacher Education Program Standards. *P-12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards*. (TESOL, 2010, p. 19)

The national teacher education accreditation agency in the United States, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, formerly NCATE), identified four domains from which standards should be created: Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, Learning Environments, and Professional Knowledge. TESOL’s Language and Culture domains would fit under “Content Knowledge,” while Instruction and Assessment would fit under “Pedagogical Knowledge,” with Professionalism included in “Professional Knowledge.” “Learning Environments” might include standards from any of the five TESOL domains. The CAEP categories are just a different way of organizing the information.

While the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Council of Europe, 2011) does not include standards per se, the way they organize the Framework of Reference is essentially by domains. These include 1) Structure (how a teacher preparation program is organized); 2) Knowledge and Understanding (similar to TESOL's Language and Culture domains, and CAEP's Content Knowledge); 3) Strategies and Skills (similar to TESOL's Instruction domain, and CAEP's Pedagogical Knowledge); and 4) Values (included in TESOL's Professionalism domain).

In 2005, experts in the People's Republic of China, in conjunction with McGraw-Hill Education, TESOL, and the National Foreign Language Teaching Association (Agor, et al., 2005), came together to create English teacher standards. They organized the standards under eight domains which, again, have similarities to the others cited here: 1) Knowing Students, 2) Appreciating Attitudes, 3) Planning, Delivering, and Reflecting on Instruction, 4) Constructing Knowledge of Languages, Language Learning and Critical Thinking, 5) Exploring and Applying Culture, 6) Assessing Teaching and Learning, 7) Connecting Beyond the Classroom, and 8) Expanding Professional Horizons. While these appear very different from the first two examples, they are really just different in their way of organizing essentially the same information, as are the principles approach examples. The content of the actual standards probably will not vary dramatically.

## **Standards**

It is helpful to first explore what the term "standards" means and then to discuss what it means within the field of education. The term is used in a variety of ways, but one definition from Merriam-Webster seems appropriate: "Something established by authority, custom, or general consent as a model or example." We use standards in our everyday life for things as simple as "meters," and as complicated as criteria for architectural design.

In the case of education, we need to know where we're going (the standard) in order to know how to get there (the curriculum), and when we have arrived at a benchmark (the assessment and evaluation). Standards thus serve as a point of reference and a way of having consistency when needed both in school and in life.

In this context, standards are generally defined as benchmarks for accountability (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996) or goals that students (or teachers) will attain. Standards call for consistency in what is expected from both students and teachers, and tests and other measurements are developed to determine if standards are being met. Darling-Hammond (1997) suggests that unless we move toward keeping more consistent goals rather than always making exceptions to the goals, our educational reforms "will surely evaporate in a very short time, long before good schooling spreads to the communities where it is currently most notable by its absence" (p. 211). Standards are a way to provide the stability and consistency Darling-Hammond advocates. She also states a direct connection between standards for student learning and professional standards for teaching, stressing that both of these are necessary for genuine learning to occur.

## **Types of Standards**

There are several types of standards. Here we will define three types that are specific for teacher education: content, pedagogical and performance standards.

### **1. Content standards**

*Content knowledge* is candidates' knowledge of the content they plan to teach and their ability to explain important principles and concepts that are delineated in professional standards. This might include, for example, linguistics, language acquisition and development, and culture.

- a. *Declarative knowledge* consists of what candidates know, or knowledge of concepts and facts.

b. *Procedural knowledge* is what candidates know how to do.

## **2. Pedagogical standards**

1. Focus on how to teach, how students learn
2. Focus on what is taught (the curriculum)
3. Focus on effective teaching strategies to impart the specialized knowledge of a subject area (e.g. planning, instruction, analysis, and evaluation)
4. Focus on knowledge of how students develop and learn
5. Focus on students' diversity and differing approaches to learning
6. Focus on cultural influences on learning
7. Focus on students' preconceptions that must be engaged for effective learning
8. Focus on familiarity with standards-based instruction, assessment, and learning.

## **3. Performance standards**

Performance standards describe how well or to what extent:

- a. standards are met,
- b. the criteria and evidence document that a standard has been met,
- c. standards demonstrate the level of performance expected to determine progress (this often includes scoring rubrics),
- d. standards include exemplars of learners' work to help teachers align,
- e. instruction and assessment are at the appropriate level of difficulty, and
- f. standards lead to assessments aligned with content standards.

(adapted from Seufert et al., 2005, p. 6)

## Performance Indicators

Depending on how specific the standards will be, the standards can be broken down into more detailed PIs, also sometimes called “elements” or “components.” (The term *PI* will be used throughout this document, even though they may be referred to elsewhere by other names). These are ways to further explain the standard, or to provide ideas for the components needed to meet the standard. All standards can be made more specific, depending on needs, sometimes even having further specificity (e.g., a performance indicator broken down into further sub-parts). A standard on planning instruction may have performance indicators for the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), and under each of them, there may be specific details. Table 1 shows the PI from the rubric for Standard 3.b. from the *P–12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards* (TESOL, 2010) that focuses on speaking skills, with its accompanying rubric.

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Approaches Standard</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Exceeds Standard</b>
<b>3.b.5.</b> Develop students’ speaking skills for a variety of academic and social purposes.	Candidates provide opportunities for students to interact socially.  Candidates monitor and correct student speech as appropriate.	Candidates provide opportunities for students to practice a variety of speech registers linked to academic and social activities.	Candidates adapt activities to assist ELLs’ social and academic speaking skills.  Candidates collaborate with non-ESL classroom teachers to select speaking goals for content areas.

Table 1. Rubric for Standard 3.b., *P–12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards*. (TESOL, 2010, p. 49).

## **Standards Use**

To understand how standards fit into a teacher preparation program, we need to distinguish between programs that are either based on standards or just a group of courses.

### **A Course-Based Program**

A course-based program is a collection of courses, but does not necessarily have an overall goal or conceptual framework (it may, but often does not). There may be no interaction among faculty. (i.e., faculty teach within their specialty, but don't necessarily see the linkages across courses.) Sometimes, faculty will have "territoriality," or, in other words, they will protect what they teach and may not even be aware if other courses overlap. Assignments in these faculty's courses may have no connection with assignments in other courses. Oftentimes, faculty across the program (and even department chairs), have no history as to why or when these courses were created, or even what happens within them. Whether the courses are research-based, completely practical, or even relevant to current needs is kept secret. When more than one section of a course is taught by different instructors, one section may have no similarity to another section. There is no overall cohesion or overall plan. Faculty who are teaching in the course-based system are often totally autonomous.

Prior to the onset of standards-based programs, the majority of teacher preparation programs followed a course-based model of one sort or another. Some came close to a standards based system, while others were just a group of courses with no overall plan.

### **A Standards-Based Program**

In a standards-based program, the overall goal, the conceptual framework, the "big plan," and the standards themselves that go across courses are what holds individual courses

together. Regular interaction among faculty teaching within the program is not only encouraged, but expected. It is assumed that courses build on one another and that content (and standards) in one course is referenced in another course. Common textbooks may be used, in which some chapters are covered in one course to help meet one standard, and other chapters are used in other courses to meet other standards. Standards themselves may occur initially in one course as a foundation for its application in another course; for example, an introductory linguistics course provides the background needed to structure lessons in a methods course.

In a standards-based system, faculty still teach from their strengths. It isn't expected that they will be "programmed" in terms of what they teach and how they teach. Some may use small-group discussion while others may require a great deal of fieldwork. In other words, they will maintain their own individual way of teaching, but they will all reach the same goals: meeting standards and doing so within a common worldview, or conceptual framework.

As an example, in one university that wished to consider a standards-based approach for all of its foreign language teacher preparation programs, it was discovered that those who taught in the various language preparation programs (English, French, German and Italian) had never talked to their counterparts across languages. One of the major accomplishments of that project was that faculty from all four languages sat and discussed what they had in common, for all of their courses (psychology, language, arts, etc.), where there were overlaps and redundancies, and how the courses fit together as a whole.

Table 2 summarizes some of these differences between a standards-based and a course-based program.

Characteristics of a standards-based program	Characteristics of a course-based program
overall plan, macro level, “the big picture”	micro-level, may not see or have connections
standards are developed across different courses, overlapping is expected	each course is autonomous
flexibility in how you “get there,” but could become mandated by education officials if not well planned	usually more autonomy in objectives and syllabi
integrative assessment	individual course assessment
multiple ways of assessing a concept	single assessment of many concepts, accountability at course level

Table 2. Developing Foreign Language Teacher Standards in Uruguay (Kuhlman, 2010).

### **Assessment and Evaluation**

As mentioned earlier, one needs to know where one is going (the standard) in order to know how to get there (the curriculum). However, how do we know when we have reached a benchmark, or the goal? How do we know that we’ve learned something?

It is critical when developing any standards that a well-articulated assessment system is in place. Test scores are not sufficient. They only reflect what is known at one point in time—the product. In other words, they form a summative evaluation. And because most tests are multiple-choice in nature, they only require people to recognize the correct answer. They don’t have to perform anything, which means we don’t know if they can practice what they have learned in the classroom.

A simple example will place the issue in focus. Would you prefer to go to a doctor who has only taken a series of multiple-choice tests about medicine, or to one who has been able to demonstrate his or her knowledge by actually performing in a medical situation? The same applies to a teaching situation. Would you go, or would you send your child, to someone who has taken multiple-choice exams to demonstrate that he or she has the

knowledge to teach, or would you rather have teachers who have demonstrated in the classroom that they can teach?

The problem, of course, is that, in theory, the items in multiple-choice tests are right or wrong. Because one or more people decide what to put on such tests, the only knowledge that is tested is what someone or some group has decided is important. Whether this is done by one person or by a group of people, there likely are biases about what is important; in other words, tests are still subjective.

### **Portfolios**

For these reasons, in teacher preparation programs it is much better to determine the success of the teacher candidates by collecting key assignments, lesson plans, tests, and clinical experiences into a portfolio that provides a broad profile of the candidate. Teacher portfolios have a long history in education and provide both the breadth and depth of a teacher candidate's accomplishments. Parts of a portfolio may include videos of candidates actually teaching in the classroom and projects that demonstrate an understanding of language development and a test of content knowledge, among other things (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996). For performance-based assessments such as are collected in portfolios, there aren't "right or wrong" answers. There are degrees of competency, and in this case they show whether candidates have met standards.

### **Rubrics**

A key to utilizing portfolios is establishing how they are evaluated. Rubrics provide a consistent way to determine the quality of the teacher candidate's portfolio. Carefully constructed descriptions of what it means to "meet a standard," to "approach a standard," or to "exceed a standard" (Staehr Fenner & Kuhlman, 2012) can be used to determine the

readiness of the teacher candidate to become a licensed EFL teacher. Rubrics can also be used when portfolios are not part of the assessment and evaluation of candidates, for example by determining individually if each PI of a standard has been met.

**What are rubrics?** The term rubric refers to a set of rules, guidelines, or benchmarks at different levels of performance. “The word rubric in the field of education refers to a scoring guide designed to provide constructive feedback to students by helping them think more clearly about the characteristics of quality work,” (Burke, 2011). Numbers may be assigned to each level so that the measures can be quantified, although other ways of describing the levels might be used, such as grades of A, B, C. Clear descriptions must be given for what the numbers (or grades) represent (O'Malley and Valdez Pierce, 1996; Burke, 2011) if the rubrics are to be used consistently by various people.

Multiple-choice tests might be a kind of rubric or may or may not function as a scale, depending on how they are constructed. Those multiple choice tests that use choices of “always, sometimes, never” for an answer are a kind of rubric. The key is that there must be clear descriptions of what “always,” “sometimes,” and “never” mean in this case.

Rubrics are most commonly used in performance based assessment, which consists of any form of assessment in which the student constructs a response orally or in writing. (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996). Such assessment can be formal or informal, comprising an observation or an assigned task.

Any test that typically uses only right and wrong answers, such as multiple-choice *norm-referenced* tests used for achievement data, are not using rubrics. These tests typically focus on discrete skills. They may have breadth, but usually not depth. It would be difficult to use rubrics to score them.

Grades for which there isn't a clear description are another example in which rubrics haven't been used. It is not uncommon in these cases for students to not know on what their grades are even based. However, grades which have very specific criteria are a form of rubric.

**Types of rubrics.** Rubrics can be holistic, analytic, or primary trait, depending upon what performance is to be rated (Del Vecchio, A. & Guerrero, M.,1995). The term holistic means that the overall or whole performance is rated with one score. Analytic refers to separating out the key characteristics, or breaking down the holistic score into key parts, such as an essay into introduction, body, and conclusion. These might each form a category themselves. Primary trait rubrics focus on one criterion that overshadows the rest of the work, such as whether an essay is persuasive or not. Holistic rubrics are usually used as summative evaluation, whereas analytic and primary trait rubrics are usually formative. (Arter & McTighe, 2001).

**The parts of the rubric.** There are several parts to good rubrics. First, there needs to be a task or assignment description (i.e., what the students are supposed to do). Next, a scale of some sort (e.g., levels of proficiency, grades) needs to be created. Then, the dimensions of the assignment need to be determined (i.e., what knowledge and skills should be included?). And, finally, there needs to be a description of what is included in each level on the scale (Stevens & Levi, 2005).

Good rubrics are clearly written, consistent in format, detailed, make clear differentiations between levels, don't have too many criteria in each level (unless it's a holistic rubric), and have consistent expectations.

Using rubrics is an excellent way to provide feedback to both the instructor and to the

student, and lets both know where the teacher candidate is along a scale to becoming a new teacher. They provide consistency and allow students to know how they are being assessed and provide their teachers with specific, usable information to inform their instruction. But, no matter how carefully rubrics are constructed, rubrics are still subjective.

### **References and Glossary**

These are helpful in showing educators what supports the standards, as in the case of the theoretical framework. The glossary provides an easy place to check the various concepts and terminology used in the standards.

### **The Standards Package**

These six components provide the framework of what groups wishing to create EFL teacher standards will need to have at hand. The next chapter will provide the step-by-step process needed to create the actual standards.

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## Chapter 3: Process for Standards Development

In this chapter, step-by-step guidelines will be suggested in order to either create or adapt EFL teaching standards to individual contexts that will make up the “standards package” discussed in Chapter 2. The steps are in two parts: decisions that need to be made, and the actual process. These guidelines don’t need to be followed in this order, nor must all of them be followed, depending on the need. Some of the decisions may be made by those overseeing the project, such as who will be involved, and other decisions may be made by the working group or even the subgroups. The process should be followed by the work group (called the “team” here).

In “A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards” (Seufert, et al., 2005), the authors set out the following as the overall plan for creating content standards. It provides a good overview of the general process found in this chapter, although not all are included.

The foundation comprises a number of building blocks that will support a standards-based system, including (1) a vision to motivate the field to work toward a common goal, (2) a strategic plan that articulates the vision, (3) coherent and coordinated policies and procedures that foster a systemic approach to continuous improvement through standards-based education, (4) financial resources that support the initiative, (5) staff to lead the initiative and to develop, review, align, and implement standards, and (6) a mechanism—to communicate to local programs the state’s expectations and policies for standards-based education. (p. 13).

## Decisions

### Decision: Goal and Theoretical Framework

Before standards can be created, someone or group must decide what the overall *goal* will be, including what makes a quality teacher and what research supports this goal.

The theoretical framework supports the goal and identifies the quality teacher. It will provide the guiding structure for the standards, and represents the vision and direction of stakeholders. While it is usually stated at the beginning of a standards document, it will also be infused throughout it. Examining current research in the area and reading recent studies will better prepare those who will create or adapt the standards. It will not only provide the background knowledge needed to produce the standards, but may provide ideas of how to approach the task as well. Examples of such literature reviews include the one done by TESOL when revising their *TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards* (TESOL, 2010) and another by Richards (2011).

### Decision: Domains or Principles Approach

As discussed in Chapter 2, a determination will need to be made whether to take a more conceptual approach to standards (principles) or a more concrete/practical one (domains). This will also help to make the decision whether to use existing standards and adapt them, or to create new ones. If the decision has been made to use existing standards, then the existing standards will determine whether domains or principles will be the organizing format.

### Decision: Use Existing Standards or Create New Ones

Those creating the standards need to decide whether to develop something new, or adapt what exists to meet needs.

The first step is to learn what already exists and if any existing standards can be modified to suit individual situations: whether they meet the approach (domains or principles) and the content needed to prepare a quality teacher. There is no point in starting from the beginning if something already exists that is similar or adaptable to the goals of the stakeholders.

Existing standards can be found on the Internet through searching such key words as *educational organizations, national accreditation agencies, Ministries of Education, and program data bases*. Surveys also can be sent to TESOL affiliates to see which ones have EFL teacher standards.

One set of standards that is domains-based and has been used both within the United States and in other countries, is the *TESOL P-12 ESL Professional Teacher Standards* (2010). The full set of standards can be found on the TESOL website, along with other standards developed by TESOL. Australia and Israel also have such standards, and the EU has the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Council of Europe, 2011), which amounts to standards. Egypt and Mexico have also created teacher standards and Albania, Uruguay, and Ecuador have adapted the TESOL standards (see Chapter 4). There appears to be a great deal of commonality in content among these existing standards or frameworks as they all include topics such as language structure, culture, and language acquisition and development. They also include methods of teaching including lesson planning, practice teaching, and assessing language growth, and most include professionalism in some form.

Those making the decision as to whether to start from scratch or adapt existing standards should also be careful that the conceptual framework of the existing standards matches that of the stakeholders. It is necessary to be aware that standards created in any one country, such as the United States, Australia, or the United Kingdom, may emphasize the

language and culture of those regions over others and that may not meet the stakeholders' needs; consequently, starting from the beginning may be necessary.

### **Guidelines for Evaluating Existing Standards**

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (Council of Europe, 2011) provides guidance that can be used to determine if existing standards are appropriate. The standards in question should be:

1. Open: capable of further extension and refinement
2. Dynamic: in continuous evolution in response to experience in its use
3. User-friendly: presented in a form readily understandable and usable
4. Non-dogmatic: not irrevocably and exclusively attached to any one of a number of linguistic theories or practices

(adapted from Staehr Fenner & Kuhlman, 2012, p. 27)

These four statements will help to determine if existing standards can be adapted to meet needs. In addition, the following questions should be considered:

1. What is the organizing format (e.g. domains, principles) and does it match the goals?
2. If there is to be an emphasis on clinical practice, does the existing set of standards have clearly stated clinical outcomes?
3. If the standards will be for existing teachers who wish to add EFL to their expertise, is there sufficient emphasis on the content knowledge needed to teach English?
4. Do the standards address issues of culture? Emphasis is a telling sign; if culture is embedded in a performance indicator (PI), rather than being a domain or principle of its own, then culture is not an important part of the standards. If there is a principle that speaks to respect for the diversity of cultures in the world, and places an emphasis on such, then culture is important, as it should be.

5. How do the standards address the language proficiency of the teachers? The TESOL standards have language proficiency only as a PI, but these standards were created primarily for U.S.-based teachers. In countries where the primary language is not English, the proficiency of its teachers becomes critical. Many countries use the CEFR as their reference point to determine their teachers' expertise, and their criteria can be modified into standards.

In summary, when determining if a set of existing standards are an appropriate starting place in the situation, it is necessary to determine how closely the standards model the kind of EFL teacher that is needed.

### **Guidelines for Adapting Standards**

Many of the questions posed in the decision to use existing standards will guide adapting existing standards to another context. In addition, whether the original standards were created for ESL or EFL teachers and how culture is treated need be specifically addressed.

#### **ESL to EFL**

First, it is necessary to see to what extent the existing standards are country-specific. This is particularly important if the standards were developed in English-speaking countries. Their focus would likely be on ESL, or what English is needed to survive in an English-speaking country. Learning EFL may be intended simply as enrichment, opening employment and economic opportunities, or providing access to the global media. In these cases, standards would have to be adapted from an ESL context to an EFL one. This would entail examining each standard and asking the question: does this apply to us? That question

is the essential one in adaptation: what applies and what doesn't, and how it can be changed so that it meets the current situation.

## **Culture**

Culture is another area where adaptation of existing standards is often an issue, and it is central to EFL teaching (Meier, 2005). If the standards were created for an audience that is monocultural, in a multicultural or pluricultural country, the standards would need to address teacher preparation both about indigenous cultures within the country that may affect learning English (English may be the third language learned in that case), and the culture of English speaking populations. If a country is monocultural, then the students and teachers will all come from more or less the same background, and the focus may just be on becoming knowledgeable about the culture of various English-speaking contexts. Regardless, in addition, issues of cultural beliefs and how that may affect language learning need to be considered (Meier, 2005).

## **Other Suggestions**

It will be necessary to go through the existing standards, word-by-word, to be sure they fit with the new context in which they will be used. While this can be tedious, it is necessary to make sure the adapted standards will be accepted by those who will use them.

## **Guidelines for Creating New Standards**

### **Decision: Desired Teacher Knowledge and Ability**

As with creating standards from existing ones, the first thing that must be done is to decide on the goal and the theoretical framework that the teacher standards will represent. As mentioned, a good way to start is by researching current studies on quality language teaching

(see for example, TESOL, 2010). Also, review existing standards from a variety of sources, which will provide ideas of what to include, even though they may not all be used as is, or may not be used at all.

### **Decision: Format or Approach**

Will the standards be organized around principles, domains, or something else? Then decide the level of specificity that is needed. If the standards are to be more general, which means that teachers will have more flexibility in their interpretation, there will be fewer PIs. If the desire is to have very specific guidelines or outcomes, then the model used by the People's Republic of China (Agor, et al., 2005) could provide some ideas. In their program, they go from domain to standard to PIs to elements.

### **Decision: Which English Will Be Used**

A decision has to be made early on, regardless if existing standards or new standards will be created, as to what variety of English will be taught by the teachers. This may affect the standards, and will certainly affect how culture is taught. While American and British English have probably had the most influence, and most countries lean toward one or the other, with the advent of English as an international language, there are new varieties occurring that are country-specific. There is no "correct" version of English, nor is there a single agreed upon universal English (McKay, 2012). The decision of which English will be taught, or is being taught and used, may be political, as well. Whatever decision is made regarding the variety of English, it will affect the standards required for teachers, as will be seen in the next section.

### **Decision: Language Proficiency Standard and Evidence**

This is an area of standards development that will be critical. There has been much written lately about native and nonnative English speakers as teachers and about Englishes in general (cf Burns, 2005; Kachru & Nelson, 2001). TESOL has long had an interest group devoted to nonnative English-speaking teachers. With English becoming the international language, many countries have evolved their own varieties of English, making the meaning of proficiency murkier. That said, and regardless of the variety of English used, teachers in many countries still have very low levels of English, so the question becomes: How much is enough?

In order to determine the language proficiency of their teachers, many countries will adopt the CEFR, since it has a thorough coverage of all aspects of English, even though it is based on a European model. The evidence gathered, even if using the CEFR, may differ from country to country, as will what level on the CEFR will mean meeting the standard.

Others will choose to create their own language standards to meet their specific needs. In some countries, speaking and listening may not be part of teacher standards as their goal is to only teach reading and writing. In other situations, only speaking and listening may be required because students are only learning English for oral communication. For that matter, in some countries the English teacher may not actually teach in English, but will teach in the country's dominant language about English, instead relying on EFL textbooks. Ideally, of course, proficiency in all aspects of English will be required.

Evidence for the language proficiency standard may be established via standardized tests such as the TOEFL, the Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET), the Cambridge Proficiency English Language Test (CPELT), or the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency, among others. Some will merely take a written test, while others will be interviewed. Some may demonstrate their proficiency via a video of their teaching while

others will have a portfolio. There are many options to demonstrate proficiency, depending on the standard determined.

### **Decision: Timeline**

Usually, it is helpful if both short- and long-term timelines are made; otherwise, the program development may go on forever. The easiest way to set up a long-term timeline is to work backward. Look at the end-point for approval of the standards, whether it is at the local or national level. If the standards will eventually be submitted to an accreditation agency (or other entity) for approval, what is the target date for doing so? What other types of approval will be needed and by when (e.g., department, college, and university deadlines for curriculum proposals)? Going in reverse order will push the work group to meet internal (short-term) deadlines also.

Starting with short-term timelines can also work. Decide how long your team will take to create each draft, or each part of the draft (and be prepared to extend that time!). These deadlines will fill in the short-term timeline. That time estimate will include feedback on the various drafts from various constituents. Then, fill in how long a local entity will need for approval, and estimate the time needed for national approval. Seubert, et al. (2005) have examples of timelines from various sources in their appendices.

### **Decision: Who Will Be Involved**

One way to determine who is on the team is for whoever is in charge to ask for volunteers, or simply to assign people to the team. However, some of those who volunteer may have their own agendas, which will either conflict with the overall goal, or cause such disruption within the group as to make it become nonfunctioning. On the other hand, volunteers are willing to do the work. If people are required to participate, those that do not

really want to be involved may not complete their portion of the work, which holds the whole project back or means others must make up the work.

**Expertise.** At the very least, the team must include people with expertise in each of the key EFL content areas (e.g. language, culture, instruction, assessment, and professionalism), whether in the role of consultant or as core team members. It also needs to include a broad range of stakeholders so that there is ownership for the product.

**Compatibility.** The compatibility of the team is also important. Team members need to be flexible, congenial, open-minded, and have enough trust in the whole team to feel comfortable challenging ideas that they may not agree with without hurting others' feelings. They also need to be committed to making change.

**Size.** Obviously, there are no set numbers for the team. However, a very small group of just two or three means that decisions may be made without input from representatives from all stakeholders. That said, it is often difficult to come to consensus when too many people are involved. Ideally, a large group will be chosen to elicit ideas, and smaller groups of four to six people will write the initial draft, or be responsible for a single domain or a principle. Regardless of the size of the group, it is important to ensure that all content/domain areas are covered and that all stakeholders (classroom teachers, current and past teacher candidates, administrators, MOE, etc.) have input.

### **Decision: Team Functionality**

As with any cooperative group, each person needs to take on a role. One of those roles will probably be for someone to be at least nominally in charge. Someone will need to

organize meetings, set agendas, be responsible for communicating with others outside the work group, etc. It might be that that person will assign the roles for others, but as much as possible, the whole team needs to take responsibility for the work to be done.

### **Creating or Adapting Standards: The Step-By-Step Process**

#### **Team Discussion**

- a. Discuss the “big picture,” what the goals are, and why change is occurring.
- b. Introduce standards and how they are created/adapted.
- c. Go over the tasks that will be expected to occur, timelines, and other necessary details.

#### **Team Practice: Write and Critique**

After explaining what standards are and looking at and critiquing many examples of existing ones, have the team practice writing a few.

- a. Begin by having the whole team draft one standard (choose any related topic), using existing ones as a model, or start by adapting one to your context.
- b. As a group, critique the standard. Does it meet the requirements described earlier? What type of standard is it (content, pedagogical, performance)?
- c. Once everyone has agreed on the standard, break it down into two to three PIs. Use an existing standard as a model, or make up one.
- d. When the group has discussed these, design a rubric for each one. For this exercise, you might use one such as TESOL uses, “approaches,” “meets,” and “exceeds” to keep the rubric simple. Use the “language for standards” (see Chapter 2, Rubrics) to help.

## **Break Into Subgroups**

If creating or adapting standards using the domains approach, subgroups may be formed by each domain once those are decided upon. If the approach is by principles, then subgroups can be divided into each principle. Ideally, there will be people in each subgroup with a range of expertise.

There are other ways that the subgroups can be formed, too. If different teacher standards will be created for primary school than for secondary school, and those will be different from teachers of adults, then the subgroups may be formed by teaching level. In that case, each subgroup will create or adapt all standards for all the domains and/or principles. If the whole team is large enough, and different standards will be created by grade level (primary, adult), then within each group, subgroups can be formed for each domain or principle. If there are people on the team from both private and public schools and/or universities, it is useful to mix the subgroups so that all voices are heard. If the teacher standards will apply not just to English teachers, but to teachers of other languages, then those with expertise from all languages (linguistics, for example) should come together to work on a domain covering language.

## **Work Within Subgroups**

Decide whether the individuals in each subgroup will work together to decide on content and write standards, or whether, if there are sufficient numbers, pairs within the groups will work on individual standards. Set timelines and meet as a team regularly.

## **Critique Drafts**

- a. Come back together and share one standard from each group.
- b. Create a checklist of what is strong and what needs work.

- a. Trade the rest of the standards among subgroups (with their PIs and rubrics) and critique the standards until the whole group has seen all of the draft standards.
- b. Return to subgroups and make revisions as necessary.

### **Stakeholder Critique**

When all of the standards, PIs, and rubrics are written, and the writing team has shared and reached consensus, a new group needs to critique them. This group should represent those who will be expected to meet the standards, those who are practicing teachers, those who will teach the teachers, and any other relevant stakeholders. A survey form using a simple Likert scale, such as “this is necessary/this is ok/this isn’t necessary” can be used to obtain feedback. Asking questions such as, “How important is...standard?”, “Is it clearly written?”, and “Is it measurable?” will usually obtain good results. Be sure to include a place for additional comments under each standard. Again, Seufert, et al. (2005) has a variety of these types of feedback forms.

### **Subgroups Create the Assessment System**

Having a system for assessing whether teacher candidates have met the standards is critical. A formal assessment plan is made in conjunction with the development of the standards, not as an afterthought, and the plan clearly shows that candidates who finish the program have met the goals and are ready to teach EFL.

What type of evidence will be required to show meeting standards will also have to be decided. As mentioned in Chapter 2, a portfolio might be used and might include a variety of key assignments, including lesson or unit plans, a philosophy of teaching paper, a case study of student language growth, pre- and postevaluations of student learning, a clinical practice

evaluation that may include an outside supervisor, and a self-evaluation by the candidate. A content knowledge test might also be used as part of the evidence.

### **Create or Modify the Teacher Curriculum Coursework**

Once the standards are complete, they need to be aligned to the existing teacher education program and changes should be made as needed, or if a new program is being created, the standards must become key to what courses are developed. Keep in mind that one course does not necessarily equal one standard. Standards may be partially met across courses in a standards-based program. For example, a standard on language development may have its foundation in a basic linguistics course along with a course on language acquisition. The application of this knowledge may occur in a methods course, and a determination whether the teaching is successful would be the focus of a language assessment course and clinical practice.

### **Pilot the Standards**

Now that the standards have been created, and before full implementation, they need to be tried out with a small group to see if they work. A “small group” might be one group of teacher candidates at one university. If there is a 4-year preparation program, then the new program wouldn’t be fully implemented for 4 years, making it possible to make revisions and adjustments along the way as necessary. This may include adjusting courses and revising the rubrics so that they are clear and easy to follow.

In some cases, existing programs will ease in the new courses and standards gradually. There is a benefit to doing this, as minor changes can be made before the standards are completely implemented. Those candidates partially through existing programs usually will meet the old requirements as that program is phased out.

Questions that might be asked during the pilot include:

1. Are the standards fully covered in the curriculum?
2. Is there content in the coursework that is not included in the standards and, if so, which needs to be modified?
3. Are the standards easy to assess as to whether teacher candidates meet them?
4. Do teacher candidates understand the standards, how they will be assessed on them, and do the standards support what EFL teachers need to know and be able to do?

### **Additional Revisions**

After the standards are piloted, further revisions may need to be made, and courses may need to be adjusted.

### **Professional Development**

Having created or adapted standards that will be adopted for implementation in one or all EFL teacher preparation programs in the country, those who will be providing instruction for future teachers need to receive professional development opportunities to introduce them to the standards and to discuss how the new framework will be implemented. This should include a discussion of revising courses, creating ways to show that standards are being met, and delineating what the instructors' roles will be in making sure that all new EFL teachers meet them.

### **Full Implementation**

Once everything is ready, the standards may be implemented slowly or all at once. Usually, teacher candidates already in progress won't be expected to meet the new standards,

but it may be possible to require some of them to, and gradually add more. New teacher candidates may begin their preparation program expecting to meet all of the standards. In a 4-year preparation program, that means that full implementation won't be complete for 4 years.

## **Summary of Steps**

### **Decisions**

1. Decision: Goal and Theoretical Framework
2. Decision: Domains or Principles Approach
3. Decision: Use Existing Standards or Create New Ones

### **Guidelines for Evaluating Existing Standards**

### **Guidelines for Adapting Standards**

### **Guidelines for Creating New Standards**

1. Decision: Desired Teacher Knowledge and Ability
2. Decision: Format or Approach
3. Decision: Which English Will Be Used
4. Decision: Language Proficiency Standard and Evidence
5. Decision: Timeline
6. Decision: Who Will Be Involved
7. Decision: Team Functionality

### **Creating or Adapting Standards: The Step-By-Step Process**

1. Team Discussion
2. Team Practice: Write and Critique
3. Break Into Subgroups
4. Work Within Your Subgroups
5. Critique Drafts

6. Stakeholder Critique
7. Subgroups Create the Assessment System
8. Create or Modify the Teacher Curriculum Coursework
9. Pilot the Standards
10. Additional Revisions
11. Professional Development
12. Full Implementation

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## Chapter 4: Adapting Existing Standards in International Contexts

The following are brief sketches of how the *TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teaching Standards* (2010) have been adapted for use in three countries (Albania, Uruguay, and Ecuador) using the domains approach. Components of the process are discussed with reference to the guidelines in Chapter 3. These include the decision as to whether to use an existing model or start from scratch, language proficiency, how the work groups were organized and worked, and what other adaptations needed to be addressed. The following chart provides an overview of each country

	<b>Albania</b>	<b>Ecuador</b>	<b>Uruguay</b>
<b>Population</b>	3.3 million urban/rural	15 million urban/rural	3.3 million urban, some rural
<b>Culture</b>	Monocultural	Multicultural (14 ethnicities) Culture major issue	European heritage; Border w/Brazil
<b>Work Group</b>	Foreign language faculty at one university (about 25 total)	In-service: 6 MOE English curriculum specialists; Preservice: 30 university representatives	All stakeholders: public/private; primary, secondary, 3 languages (about 30 total)
<b>Organized</b>	By domain across languages	By domain	By domain
<b>Language Proficiency</b>	Pass the Bachelor of Arts CEFR	Test CEFR	Language Standard CEFR
<b>Implementation</b>	In progress	At in-service level; universities in progress	Adopted

### Albania

#### The Context

Albania has reconceptualized its Baccalaureate Teacher's License and Master of Arts

(MA) degrees to be in alignment with the Bologna Process in Europe<sup>1</sup>. Originally, the Teacher's License was subsumed under the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in a 4-year integrated model. These two are now separated into a 3-year BA and a separate 4th year for teacher certification. There also has been added a 2-year MA program, which could include some of the license year coursework.

It was the first country in which the *TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teaching Standards* (2010) were applied for use outside of the United States. The project described here was initiated by the then Dean of Modern Languages, Vilma Tafani, at the Aleksander Xhuvani University in Elbasan.

### **Work Group**

All of the English Modern Language Faculty at the Aleksander Xhuvani University were invited to participate, although the majority of those in linguistics only attended the first few meetings. An expansion of the project occurred as the chairs of the German, Italian, and French departments became aware of the project and asked about their becoming participants. An unexpected by-product of this standards development project was that it allowed the faculty from all four languages to meet and discuss similarities, new ideas, and different ways to prepare foreign language (FL) teachers.

### **How the Project Was Organized**

In order to begin the restructuring process, small groups met to:

1. Discuss what it means to have a standards-based system.
2. Decide if an existing set of teacher standards should be used or a new one created.

This entailed research and studying various existing EFL teacher standards.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bologna Process, begun in 1999, set criteria throughout Europe for how B.A. degrees would be given. See the [European Commission on Education and Training website](#) for more information.

3. Discuss the English language proficiency of teacher candidates and how to assess them.
4. Form smaller work groups to adapt and/or create standards for language teachers.
5. Review the current courses and decide what revisions would need to be made and also what new courses might need to be created.

### **Use an Existing Model or Start From Scratch**

It would be assumed that because most faculty, if they had studied abroad, did so in the United Kingdom, that they would have chosen to follow a European model for their program because they were under the Bologna Process. However, the faculty decided that because the five *TESOL P-12 ESL Professional Teaching Standards*' (2010) domains included the content they felt was necessary for FL teachers to know and be able to do, it would be easier to adapt TESOL's existing set of standards to a foreign language context, rather than to start from scratch.

### **Work Plan**

Groups were formed by discipline (e.g., methods, language, and language acquisition) and by TESOL domain (language, culture, instruction, assessment, and professionalism) with appropriate faculty from each language department taking part. The assignment for each group was to adapt the TESOL standards to the Albanian context and to examine their courses for alignment to the standards. When drafts were completed, the whole work group came together to share what they had done and to receive feedback. Revisions were then made.

## **Language Proficiency**

A major issue that was discussed was the language proficiency of the future teachers. Because the Bologna Process required a 3-year language B.A. before the license year, there was an opportunity to require some kind of language proficiency test in the target language (i.e., English, French, Italian, or German) before candidates were admitted to the license year. There was a serious concern about the poor levels of language of many of those entering the licensure program. Students (who met in focus groups as well) were adamant that some form of language entrance examination be given to licensure students.

While a variety of options were discussed, in the end it was determined that no language proficiency test could be given because some authorities would say that a B.A. was sufficient in itself.

## **Conclusion**

While the Albanian professional standards were completed, courses were revised, new ones created and submitted to the authorities, and lively discussions conducted, the standards have still not been implemented. Some of the courses have changed, but others have remained as before. Politics within the country have changed and still the decision as to whether to follow a U.S. model for the standards, or a European one has not been resolved. The project also has not been extended to the other universities.

As a result, what did happen was that faculty from the various languages collaborated, shared methods and research, and planned future dialogues.

## Uruguay

### The Context

The major teacher preparation institution is the Instituto de Profesores Artigas (IPA), which was previously independent of the universities but has recently become a part of them so that graduates may now receive BA degrees in addition to their teaching licenses.

English has become very important to the country and is now being taught in both elementary and secondary public schools, which are including some immersion and bilingual programs in their curriculum. However, no consistent curriculum, common goals, or programs had been officially put in place prior to December 2009 when this project began, for preparing foreign language teachers in Uruguay. The existing coursework in teacher preparation programs was not necessarily based on the latest research, nor was it based on an overall concept of what a good FL teacher is. The program appeared to entail a group of courses created over the years, which were subsequently unified in a curriculum.

### How the Project Began

The Ministry of Education was concerned with how FL teachers were being prepared and decided that a substantial change was necessary. An outside consultant was invited to Montevideo, Uruguay for three and a half weeks, in the Fall of 2009<sup>2</sup> to facilitate the development of a standards-based EFL teacher preparation program which was to be used nationally. An additional 2 weeks were added as a follow-up in October 2011 to help with the implementation and assessment of the standards that were created.

### Work Group

The Director of Foreign Language Teacher Education for the Ministry of Education in

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<sup>2</sup> The work in Uruguay was supported in 2009 by a U.S. Fulbright Fellowship and the Ministry of Education in Uruguay, and in 2011 by the U.S. State Department's ESL Specialist Program, and the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo.

Uruguay, Gabriel Diaz, gathered together a group of some 30 Uruguayan educators with experience in FL teaching in both public and private, elementary and secondary schools, and who also had experience in teacher preparation, whether at the IPA, or somewhere else. The facilitator suggested that, as in Albania, the educators represent all the languages taught in Uruguay: English, Portuguese, French, Italian, and German. While the group was formed to provide a diversity of input, it also was a challenge in terms of decision-making due to the varied backgrounds and number of participants. And unlike in Albania, the educators in Uruguay were not from just one university.

### **How the Project Was Organized**

The project began in Uruguay much the same as in Albania with time devoted to a variety of background information regarding standards: what they are and how they are created, the difference between a standards-based and course-based system, and some background on the *TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teaching Standards* (2010) as an example of teacher standards. There were also lively discussions about what it meant to be a teacher and long lists were made of the characteristics of a good language teacher.

### **Use an Existing Model Or Start From Scratch**

After an introduction to the *TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teaching Standards* (2010), and how they were adapted in Albania, and examining models from other countries, the Uruguayan IPA project group decided to use the TESOL standards, but with many modifications. In addition, the American Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards for foreign language proficiency were used as TESOL's did not include them.

## **The Work Plan**

The larger group was divided into the five domains of the *TESOL P-12 ESL Professional Teaching Standards* (2010): language, culture, instruction, assessment, and professionalism. Individuals volunteered for which group in which they wished to participate. The guidelines for writing standards outlined in Chapter 2 were reviewed.

## **Standards Implementation**

The standards are now in the hands of all the teacher preparation programs throughout the country, but they are not necessarily being used. In some locations, the new standards have become the curriculum, in others, they sit in the library unread.

## **Conclusion**

After much revision and editing, the standards were published by the Dirección de Formación y Perfeccionamiento Docente in Uruguay in December, 2009.

As a by-product of the standards work, there is now a new project taking place in Uruguay. As the National Administration of Public Education-Central Directive Council (ANEP-CODICEN) has decided to begin teaching English in the elementary grades, a 1-to-2 year in-service certificate program has been created for those wishing to teach English in elementary schools. They will use the Uruguayan standards as goals for the program.

## **Ecuador**

### **The Context**

The situation in Ecuador is different from both Albania and Uruguay. Professional development for in-service English teachers comes under the venue of the Ministry of Education (MOE). Preservice teacher preparation is the responsibility of the universities (and

some teacher institutes), and the universities previously were autonomous and are still outside of the jurisdiction of the MOE. The universities that provide teacher preparation programs are now being required to participate in a process of accreditation by the government. In addition, it will need to be determined who will prepare elementary school English teachers as English is now going to be taught in the early grades.

Up until now, English teaching hadn't begun until the 7th grade. Consequently, in Ecuador the process has had two phases. The first phase was with the MOE to create/adapt standards for in-service English teachers. The intent was to bring their level of teaching strategies, and their own language proficiency to a higher level. The second phase is with the universities, and that is still in progress. They have adopted the MOE in-service standards but have yet to apply them to the preservice context. There is also a third phase where a few universities are planning MA EFL programs, also using the same MOE standards at the "exceeds" level.

### **How the Work Was Organized for In-Service Teachers**

The primary task was for the English curriculum group at the MOE to review draft standards developed by two of the group, and for an outside facilitator sponsored by the U.S. State Department's ESL Specialist program to aid the group to come up with a final draft that could be used with in-service teachers. It was hoped that these standards also might be used as a basis for the universities to create standards for preservice English teachers as well.

As with the models in Albania and Uruguay, the first meetings revolved around several discussions about what standards were, how they could be further explained using performance indicators (rubrics which further describe the standard), and how these would be created.

It was extensively discussed whether to go forward with the standards already drafted, to start anew, and/or to look at other models. The TESOL standards were included in the discussion, as were other standards. Both the Ecuadorian draft and the TESOL standards were structured similarly (standards and performance indicators), which made it easy to compare them. There was also similarity in the content. Consequently, it was decided to base the new standards on TESOL's since it already had a strong research base to it and could be accommodated, if necessary, into the earlier model.

It was also decided to have focus groups of both high school students and their teachers as to what they thought that English teachers should know and be able to do. One of the most important results of these focus groups was how much both teachers and students appreciated being listened to, that their voices were being heard. And, while most teachers in the focus group thought that culture was important, but that they didn't think that students would think so, they were wrong. Students absolutely wanted to know more about the culture of those whose first language was English and about their own.

### **Culture as an Issue**

A major difference between the Uruguayan model and the Ecuadorian one was that Ecuador has some 14 indigenous groups, while Uruguay has none. This meant that some students learning English in Ecuador would have learned Spanish as a second language, and English would now be a third language. Teachers also would need to be generally familiar with issues of cultural conflict, cultural values (though obviously not details of all 14 groups in Ecuador), and how learning English may be seen as in conflict with maintaining the home culture and language. Consequently, the original culture domain was carefully reviewed and revised to meet the needs of Ecuador's context.

## **Conclusion**

Ecuador is moving towards consistency throughout the country both in the way that new teachers will be prepared and how current teachers will receive professional development to raise their level of both English and methods of teaching English. The MOE has completed their standards and are implementing them, while the universities have adopted them and will begin to work together to create the best possible English teachers for their country.

## **Summary for the Three Countries**

There are obvious similarities in how the guidelines outlined in this document were used in the development of standards in Albania, Uruguay, and Ecuador, but there were differences, too. For example, how culture was to be incorporated into the standards in Uruguay and Ecuador was a cause of much debate, while in Albania it was hardly mentioned. Uruguay had already decided to use the TESOL standards as the basis for developing EFL teacher standards, and they have been mandated for the country. Ecuador's universities had been autonomous in how they prepared FL teachers and were now mandated to have not only common standards but also common core courses so that students could transfer easily from one university to another. They chose to use the already created Ecuadorian standards (adapted from TESOL's) as the basis for their programs and accreditation.

What all three projects had in common was the need to address the language proficiency of current and future teachers.

The way in which each country went about its work had many similarities, but differences, too. Uruguay had one large group, broken into smaller groups, as did Albania. Ecuador, for in-service teachers, had a very small group, but for preservice had representatives from nearly 30 universities. Each group made the decision to adapt the

*TESOL P–12 ESL Professional Teaching Standards* (2010) to their context rather than start from scratch.

In all three cases, however, the goal was to create a new avenue of teacher preparation so that their students would become proficient in English and have access to the global society.

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## Chapter 5. Conclusion

TESOL International Association's *TESOL P-12 ESL Professional Teaching Standards* (2010) have aroused a lot of interest around the world. This has come from the perceived and growing need to adapt or adopt the existing documents to a variety of contexts.

This document does not intend to either prescribe its implementation or recommend an approach. It provides possibilities and options, and draws on experiences. But we have a social responsibility—to promote professionalism, multilingualism and multiculturalism, actions, and standards for quality teaching. *The TESOL Guidelines for Developing EFL Standards* may thus act as a model/framework for foreign language teaching standards against which actual teachers' performances can be compared.

It is not a static document, it is meant to be flexible, and may need to be updated, and added to in the future. It can be implemented, adopted, and adapted, and it can be utilized in many ways, and at several levels, such as by ministries of education or universities. The implementation will differ according to the local context, the culture of teaching practice, and the users' specific needs and purposes. The stakeholders should thus consider how they will address the issue of developing professional standards in their setting, whether they will include teachers in the process, what approach in standards development they will adopt, and whether they have the required expertise or should rely on external resources. Whatever they decide, the major challenge will be to adapt or adopt existing standards or write new standards and indicators that demonstrate the level of desired achievement in the profession in their particular context. At the same time, they will be developing a sense of ownership and responsibility at the local level—the scope and structure of the document will directly benefit the users of it. And, consequently, the quality of EFL teachers around the world will continue to improve.

However, there may be barriers to the implementation of *The TESOL Guidelines for Developing EFL Standards*: the lack of knowledge and skills, a possible lack of autonomy of universities, strong existing paradigms in teacher education, university/departmental protection of the status quo in teaching practices, lack of collaboration, and so on. Some suggestions for overcoming barriers to the document implementation are to involve various stakeholders in the process, and to use vignettes as evidence of successful implementation. We are aware that it is a process that takes time and effort.

A final thought: Someone wrote that culture is the intellectual side of civilization. There is thus a strong and important need for a cultural dimension to quality (EFL) education which should neither be impeded nor hampered by international standards nor by central leadership or (current/local) policies. EFL teaching standards may be incentivized by existing international documents, but the implementation of existing or development of new ones needs to be *facilitated* by central leadership (be it ministries of education or universities), professional organizations, or nongovernmental agencies (NGOs).

To conclude with a question and a possible answer to it: does the document meet the sustainability requirements? We would say that the first principle of sustainability is to develop something that is itself sustaining, as “to sustain” means “to nourish” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003). Sustaining the *Guidelines* and methodology this document offers is an approach to standards that matters and engages educational leaders at various levels both intellectually and socially. One way for educational leaders to leave a lasting legacy is to ensure the document is shared by all stakeholders. Furthermore, the sustainability of this document requires the same efforts needed for sustainability in education: “continuous improvement, adaptation and collective problem solving in the face of complex challenges that continually arise” (Fullan, 2005).

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