

Position Statement on Multilingualism

In a global community that is increasingly interconnected through the media, international trade, commerce, and technology, the ability to speak and communicate in more than one language is a valuable asset and skill. While the demand for English language teaching continues to grow, and English is becoming a common global language of communication, the importance and value of multilingualism is increasingly underestimated. Language and culture are interconnected, and the learning of another language exposes one to different cultures and ideas, and promotes mutual understanding. Because of our interconnectedness and dependency, the ability to communicate in more than one language is more important than ever in promoting international cooperation and goodwill, and in dispelling misunderstanding and mistrust.

Although TESOL's mission is to advance excellence in English language teaching, TESOL values and encourages multilingualism in all learners at every age and level. As research shows, multilingual capabilities have positive effects on development and learning. TESOL supports and encourages programs that foster skills in both first and additional languages.

In addition, TESOL supports individual language rights for all peoples and strongly encourages governments and countries to promote policies that recognize and value the languages in their population - whether they are indigenous, dominant, or foreign. Moreover, TESOL strongly encourages policies that promote and enhance multilingualism by recognizing and building upon national language resources.

*Approved by the Board of Directors
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