

**Position Statement on the Preparation of Pre-K–12 Educators
for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in the United States**

As the United States continues to become more culturally and linguistically diverse, nowhere has this change been more acutely reflected than in the nation's classrooms. Recent statistics have shown that the number of English language learners in pre-K–12 classrooms has increased as much as 95% since 1991. As the number of English language learners has grown, so too have the challenges faced by schools and teachers in providing all students an appropriate, effective, and meaningful education.

TESOL holds that all pre-K–12 educators need to receive specialized training and preparation in the skills necessary to effectively manage culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. All teacher preparation and training programs at colleges and universities should include coursework developed and taught by qualified instructors for mainstream and content-area teachers on meeting the needs of English language learners in an academic setting. The *TESOL/NCATE Standards for the Accreditation of Initial Programs in P–12 ESL Teacher Education* can serve as a guide for institutions seeking to incorporate such courses into their general education programs.

In addition, all pre-K–12 counselors, teachers, and administrators should be familiar with the principles of TESOL's *ESL Standards for Pre-K–12 Students* and understand the basic issues of second language acquisition, bilingualism, the difference between social and academic language proficiency, and the roles that language and culture play in learning. Furthermore, all pre-K–12 educators need to understand the importance of native language support in achieving academic success and the sociocultural issues English language learners face when dealing with the demands of mainstream education.

Under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, accountability for all students is a whole-school responsibility. Therefore, all mainstream, content-area, ESL, and bilingual education teachers need to work collaboratively with administrators to meet the needs of English language learners. Ample time is needed for extensive planning and coordination among all teachers in order to support all students. Moreover, professional development plans should be designed so that all content-area teachers can benefit along with their ESL and bilingual education colleagues from the latest trends and research relating to the education of English language learners.

*Approved by the Board of Directors
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