

Unit 1 Introduction  
**The Big Picture: English Language Learners (ELLs) in Context**

Welcome to ESOL Curriculum & Materials. We are so happy that you have registered in this important ESOL course. We know that most of you did not opt to enroll in this course but rather, did so as a part of your certification requirements. Don't worry. We're not offended. In fact, we think that you will be in for a pleasant surprise. We are busy teachers too, so we appreciate how valuable your time is. As writers, our main goal was to make this course relevant and beneficial to our colleagues in our ever-diversifying school climate. So, if you complete this course saying to yourself, "Man, every teacher should take this course!" then we have met our goal!

We know that our profession, by nature, necessitates our own learning and growth. And so we continue, relentlessly, to push ourselves further in order to make ourselves better at our craft. We do this while balancing our personal lives, school demands, and other obligations. Why? Because we want to be the best we can be at what we do. And while we love teaching and we love our students, we know that it is not always easy. In fact, we believe it is one of the most challenging (albeit rewarding) jobs out there.

As educators that are dedicated to our students, we embrace this opportunity to converse with one another about how research and personal experience have informed our practice and made us the best professionals we can be. One of the components we have found to be absolutely essential in our own professional growth has been the strategic practice of reflection. By asking ourselves simple, yet profound questions like, "What did I do that worked?" and "What could I have done differently?" we create the opportunity to see ourselves from our students' perspectives, and allow for honest dialogue about how we are affecting the young people that we are responsible and accountable for.

This course is all about sharing approaches and ideas that research and our own experience have proven to work –for ELLs and native English speakers alike. There are opportunities for you to stop and reflect upon the things you think, say, and do in your classrooms. The objective is to continue on your journey of personal and professional

Unit 1 Introduction  
**The Big Picture: English Language Learners (ELLs) in Context**

greatness. We know that there is always room for growth. We encourage you to ask questions about your journey.

You will see both content (what we teach) and context (where and how) of ELL instruction. Take a look at ELL demographic trends and our roles as educators in a diverse and evolving educational climate. Analyze the affective effects of various learning environments and reflect upon the atmosphere that we foster in our own classrooms and schools. Explore the research-based approaches and strategies that provide rigorous, comprehensible instruction that is accessible to all students. Beginning with our grade and content specific standards, you will design goals and learning tasks at various levels of cognitive complexity, language readiness, and learner profiles that meet and exceed our learning goals.

Let's dive in! We have a lot to cover in a short period of time. This week you will explore who your English language learners are and how their diverse learning needs affect your school policies and approaches. You will consider the work of five theorists whose study of social issues, dual-language proficiency, and language policy has helped to redefine educational views on language policy and equity. You will analyze the layers of language used in our schools and investigate the concrete and subtle power messages within the social, cultural and language policies of our schools and classrooms.