

# Welcome to TELL

Welcome to the Teaching English Language Learners (TELL) Program or the K-12 TESOL Minor. In each course, participants learn key theories, principles and research-based best practices for teaching English Learners (ELs-- sometimes called Emergent Bilinguals, EBs). The course readings and assignments support participants in achieving the program's overarching purpose which is to advance the education of language minority students through teacher education. The program meets this purpose by educating teachers so that they know how to differentiate instruction and transform their teaching and maximize the learning of the ELs they teach. As a result of this program, teacher candidates are prepared to work with linguistically and culturally diverse learners in their regular classroom in ways that reflect pedagogic practices that are inclusive of all learners. The completion of the entire TELL Program results not only in teachers being able to adjust curriculum to develop the academic language and literacy of ESLs in their regular classroom, but also results in an ESL Endorsement. The course supports teachers in developing a series of [conceptual tools](#) that can guide their thinking and practice.

## Inclusive Pedagogy Conceptual Framework

The [Inclusive Pedagogy Framework](#) was central in guiding the design of the program and is a way of learning about language minority students. Inclusive Pedagogy is a conceptual framework for professional growth that enables educators to respond in educationally appropriate ways to the linguistic, cultural, and learning diversity of students in their classrooms. It serves as the lens through which we examine factors impacting the school experience of language minority students in the United States.

Inclusive Pedagogy consists of a series of five questions that can guide teachers in developing understandings of students within the context of their teaching and thus provides guidance to teachers in planning a response that will promote learning. It begins with the question: *Who is this child?* Notice this question is at the center of the framework and is surrounded by the statement *collaboration for common understanding and united advocacy*. The next question, *What are this child's strengths?*, asks teacher to explore what knowledge and skills the child already has. The third question is *What programs and practices are available to support this child in this school setting?*. This question guides teachers to uncover school, community, and district programs, policies and legal requirements that can be used in the advocacy for and education of this child. The fourth question, *How can I collaborate to support this child's learning?*, asks teachers to consider what they know about teaching (their content, the school game, language and literacy, participation in a democracy) and apply it as they teach this child. The last question asks *How can I position this child for success in my classroom?* This reminds teachers that the curriculum constructed, the opportunities to perform, and the classroom support of materials, students, and other adults can be orchestrated, designed and implemented by the teacher with the focus being the learning of the child. While in the TELL Program our focus is on ESL students, the Inclusive Pedagogy Framework can be used to address the needs of all special population students: ESL, multicultural, learning disabled, and gifted/talented.

Each question is related to one of [five characteristics of Inclusive Pedagogy](#) are as follows:

- **Collaboration:** Meeting the needs of today's language minority students demands collaboration across academic disciplines, institutions, and school-home cultures.
- **Critical Learning Domains:** Learning involves development in cognitive, social/affective, and linguistic domains.
- **Essential Policy:** Essential policy, including standards, classification issues, and legalities, must be an integral part of advocacy for language minority students.
- **Guiding Principles:** Effective instruction for language minority students must be guided by theoretical and moral principles.
- **Classroom Strategies:** Teachers must understand the what and the why of effective classroom strategies for language minority students.

In this course, you will learn about SIOP, Standards for Effective Pedagogy, and learn to integrate what you know about language and literacy development and content instruction in designing a Multiple Simultaneous Diverse Learning activity. Developing an MSDLA requires that you integrate and plan for the use of best practices for educating ELs in your classroom. This, as well as other class activities, allows you to demonstrate your understanding of language minority students through completion and presentation of a major project that communicates your knowledge of course content and your deep understanding of Inclusive Pedagogy.

## Sociocultural Theory

A sociocultural theory of learning undergirds all of our TELL coursework. From the first session of the first course, participants are engaged in a learning community designed using the principles of sociocultural theory. We believe that learning occurs best in social activity in which both teachers and learners participate. In these courses, each facilitator develops a community of learners who focus on learning about culturally and linguistically diverse students and altering, improving, adjusting their practice to better meet the needs of ELs and promote the development of language and literacy (particularly academic literacy) in a second language. The courses take an asset-based orientation supporting teachers in building on learners strength as they promote their language and literacy development.

Although video segments and CD-ROMs provide interesting and provocative content, most of the learning occurs in course activities and discussions in which teachers try out and apply the things we teach. The activities teachers engage in are immediately transferable to their own teaching with ELs. The videos and readings provide scientific conceptions for the ideas, while the activities cause participants to confront how they might adjust their teaching in relationship to what they learn. The learning activities and assignment help participants' knowledge, images, and conceptions of themselves as asset-based teachers emerge regularly as they apply them in their teaching and thinking. The facilitator's interactions and the design of the course materials support cognitive, social, and linguistic development, modeling what is needed in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. We ask participants to work together because we respect their quality and depth of knowledge about teaching and know they can scaffold each others' learning. Most importantly, we believe that the best opportunities to learn involve opportunities to integrate new learning with prior knowledge. The TELL courses consistently ask participants to take responsibility for learning in environments that provide access to new information and the tools to learn and apply it.

In this course, we emphasize the [Standards for Effective Pedagogy](#) for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. These five standards have emerged from research on teaching and learning based in sociocultural theory. These standards are:

- **Joint Productive Activity:** Teacher and students producing together
- **Language and Literacy Development:** Developing language and literacy across the curriculum
- **Contextualization:** Making meaning: Connecting school to students' lives
- **Challenging Activities:** Teaching complex thinking
- **Instructional Conversation:** Teaching through conversation

By [using these standards](#) to create a model for teaching, we engage teachers in environments that orchestrate their productive participation in a variety of activities that produce meaningful learning and enable them to provide more

productive learning environments for their ELs.



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