

# Syllabus: Understanding Language Acquisition

## Course Description:

Through engaging in the first course (Foundations of Education for Emergent Bilinguals), you learned to use the Inclusive Pedagogy Framework to examine EL students in your classes and plan your instructional responses. You learned about culture, including how it plays out in your own life, the lives of your students, and the assets you can draw forward into your teaching. Most importantly you considered your ELs and their process of language acquisition as a resource for your teaching. You uncovered the strengths, supports and assets in your school community. You explored the realities behind myths about ELs that many teachers hold and the legal and moral obligations you and your school have toward these children. We introduced you to WIDA as a resource for your teaching.

Now in this course, we explore the role of English language development for English learners. Specifically, the course focuses on expanding your understanding of second language development and you can support second language learners' literacy and content learning in your regular classroom teaching. This course builds on your previous learning and relies on the following tools:

- The Inclusive Pedagogy Framework ([IP](#) and [Explanatory Document](#));
- The Standards for Effective Pedagogy ([SEP](#) and [Explanatory Document](#));
- A Theory of Instruction for Teaching ELs: Communication, Pattern, and Variability ([CPV](#) and [Explanatory Document](#)).

## Course Goals and Objectives:

This course is designed to meet ESL Standards:

- know, understand, and use the major concepts, theories, and research related to the nature and acquisition of language and linguistic systems to support English language learners' development of literacy.
- knowledge and skills to construct learning environments that support development of English language proficiency: literacy, academic, and cognitive development.

In this course teachers will:

1. Acquire and employ knowledge of language as a system and the ways in which languages are different and similar.
2. Employ theories of acquisition of a primary and new language in instruction.
3. Employ theories of first and second language acquisition in teaching literacy
4. Employ theories of first and second language acquisition in teaching content area subjects.

## Textbooks:

*Understanding Language Acquisition.* This is the main textbook for this course, an instructional guide found in an open access online platform developed by Royce Kimmons (EdTech Books). The book includes all

the learning activities, homework activities, and major projects you will be using for the course.

Wright, W. E. (2019). *Foundations for teaching English language learners: Research, theory, policy, and practice, 3rd edition*. Caslon Pub.

## Digital Resources:

Pinnegar, S. (2006). *Developing second language literacy*. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University.  
(<https://equitypress.org/-HbB>)

*Second Language Acquisition Case*, Provo, UT:BYU

## Learning Activities:

A variety of learning activities and assignments will be used to help students understand course concepts. Students become active participants through the use of self-assessment, reflective writing, jigsaw readings, concept application logs, portfolio work, student profiles, response papers, and technology. Assignments will focus on active learning and require individual, paired, or group work to enrich learning. These activities model the planning, teaching, and assessment strategies that can be used with language minority students. There are also homework activities that, when completed successfully contribute to the points accrued for grading.

## Attendance Policy:

This course is grounded in the belief that learning is a socially constructed process. In fact, active learning is a central feature of the course. Furthermore, the concepts presented through the video segments promote a conversational approach to learning. Concepts are immediately explored and applied through learning activities. As a result, much of the learning will take place through discussion and group activities that ask you to apply the research and theories about the teaching of English learners to your daily practice. Class discussion allows you to learn from your colleagues and to contribute to their learning; the insights of class members will be invaluable in your learning.

The experiences within the classroom cannot be reconstructed outside of class time with the facilitator or independently. Therefore, while attendance in and of itself does not count as part of your course grade, it is an important factor since recovering and reconstructing learning that occurs during class time will be difficult, if not impossible. Further, you will often be given credit for products developed during class time, and your presence is highly valued. In addition, students will usually work with colleagues and will frequently present findings and analysis during class time. For these reasons, it will be very difficult to make up class periods missed.

## Grading Policy:

For the above reasons, full credit is only available to those students who attend each session and are present for the entire session. We recommend that if a teacher has to miss more than one of the eight sessions, they should be advised to take the course at another time.

In this course, your grade is based on participation in a learning process (i.e., process points) and the creation of individual and group products (i.e., individual and group product points) that emerge from participation in learning activities and homework. In addition, you will be asked to complete independent major assignments that will be evaluated for evidence of how you are learning and growing as a professional. Finally, you will present your professional development in relation to educating students of cultural and linguistic diversity in the final session of the course.

## Grading Summary:

Type of Points	Description	Points
Process	Points for participating in learning activities during class	
Homework Individual Product	Points for individual products produced for homework assignments	
Practicum	Points for individual or group products produced for practicum assignments	
Total		

**In the next chapter in this book, you will find a Total Points sheet you can copy and use to track your points earned throughout the course.**

**Grading Scale: You must earn at least a B- to pass this class.**

Percentage	Grade
94-100%	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-

Explanation of the Template:

Total Points Sheet





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