

TLL 2257/1257: Teaching English Language Learners

COURSE RATIONALE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to teach you about how to best meet the needs of the K-12 English learners (ELs) or now referred to as Multilingual Learners (MLLs) in our nation's schools. MLLs are a diverse population of individuals who differ in respect to nationality, race, ethnicity, age, ability, socioeconomic status, native language, educational background, and experience with and proficiency in English. The uniting factor among this population is that all MLLs are in the process of acquiring and expanding academic language proficiency in English in all content areas. Throughout this course, you will learn about the legal responsibilities of teachers of MLLs, strategies for teaching MLLs, cultural issues, ways to involve and support parents and families, and specific language and literacy instructional approaches to best support and assess the MLLs in your classroom.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After reading, discussing, and completing assignments during the course, you will be able to meet the following course objectives:

1. Identify different types of MLLs and instructional practices that can support them in mainstream classrooms.
2. Identify, discuss, and find ways of dealing with academic and socioemotional factors that may influence MLLs' performance in schools.
3. Recognize programming options and instructional modMLLs that can meet the needs of students with limited or interrupted formal education.
4. Become familiar with the legal responsibilities of educators towards MLLs concerning federal and state legislation.
5. Evaluate and understand how Social Justice issues affect the MLLs population and how liberation pedagogies can enhance MLLs school success.
6. Learn how to plan culturally responsive and culturally aware lesson plans for a culturally and linguistically diverse population of students.
7. Build an understanding of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards, the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) English Language Proficiency Standards, and the standards for English Language Development for the state of Pennsylvania (PA ELD standards).
8. Use instructional talk and tasks that are effective and necessary for culturally and linguistically diverse students.
9. Explore learning theories and research that support scaffolding learning through group work and language-based strategies.
10. Apprentice MLLs to reading and writing the genres they are likely to encounter in specific subject areas.

11. Modify and adapt instruction and assessments for MLLs at various levels of English proficiency.
12. Plan and critique lessons with content and language objectives and adaptations that address speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills and incorporate WIDA, TESOL, and PA ELD standards.
13. Observe, discuss, respond to, and reflect upon recorded examples of teachers working with MLLs in classrooms.
14. Understand how to advocate for MLLs in your classroom.
15. Discuss socio-cultural characteristics of different populations of MLLs and explore connections between cultural values and practices and school experiences.

COURSE SITE PRESENTATION

- In [Modules](#), you will find a link to each week's learning module. Once you select a particular module, you will find an overview of key concepts and the readings and assignments for that module. Each module begins on Monday and ends on Sunday.
- In [Discussions](#), you will find the discussion prompts for each week. Dialogue Journal group discussions will take place every Wednesday and Sunday.
- In [Assignments](#), you will find the instructions for each assignment and the link to submit your work. All assignments are due by Sunday at 11:59 p.m. on their due dates.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Gibbons, P. (2015). *Scaffolding language scaffolding learning: Teaching English language learners in the mainstream classroom* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Additional required readings will be available digitally within the modules of the course.

COURSE EVALUATION

ASSIGNMENTS

[PackBack discussions](#) You will be using the platform PackBack for your weekly online discussions. Packback is an AI-supported online discussion platform for developing critical thinking, curiosity, and writing skills. (Please see the presentation in the Getting Started Module to learn how to use it). You will have to pay a subscription to the platform for the semester, but it will be completely integrated to CANVAS. I made sure to offer you most of the books and articles that you need for the course online so that we can use this tool to help you improve your critical thinking and academic writing skills.

You will be expected to write questions, ideas, and issues that are related to the weekly readings (By the Wednesday of the assigned week). Please note that the discussion questions are meant as a starting point for discussion, then, by the Sunday of each assigned week you are expected to answer to two or three of your classmates' questions. As future teachers, you should engage and interact with your peers consistently and extensively in the discussion. There are many ideas to explore in every reading, and you should feel free to introduce these ideas in the discussion as

well as to ask questions that you have. It is important to connect concepts to your own experiences as a preservice teacher or student where applicable. In an online course, this dialogue takes the place of discussion that would occur in the classroom. This course design supports a community of practice, so you are also encouraged to share resources in the form of articles, podcasts, TedTalks, blogs, and YouTube videos.

You are expected to communicate ideas with your group through 2–3 exchanges each week. Please make the first post (a question) by Wednesday, 11:59 PM, each week so that there is ample time for responses within your group by Sunday. Please indicate your name at the beginning of your post and make every effort not to wait to post until the weekend. The timing of your initial post is important, so failing to make the weekly initial post by Wednesday at midnight will affect your grade.

Dialogue Journal: You will be using PackBack for your weekly online discussions. You will be expected to write a thoughtful question that is related to the weekly readings and then answer to two of your classmates question. Packback utilizes artificial intelligence (AI) to identify:

- **Plagiarism**
- **Closed Ended Questions** (e.g. “What is the definition of mitosis?”)
- **Class Logistics Posts** (e.g. “When is the next test?”)
- **Low Effort/Low Detail Posts**

As university students, you should engage and interact with your peers consistently and extensively in the discussions using critical thinking on what you read. There are many ideas to explore in every reading, and you should feel free to introduce these ideas in the readings as well as opportunities to receive questions that you have. It is important to connect concepts to your own experiences as a preservice teacher or classroom teacher where applicable. In an online course, this dialogue takes the place of discussion that would occur in the classroom. This course design supports a community of practice, so you are also encouraged to share resources in the form of articles, podcasts, TedTalks, blogs, and YouTube videos.

You are expected to communicate ideas with your group through 2–3 exchanges each week. Please make your question by Wednesday, 11:59 PM, each week so that there is ample time for responses by Sunday. The timing of your initial post is important, so failing to make the weekly initial post by Wednesday at midnight will affect your grade.

Each student will earn full credit weekly by writing 2–3 paragraph-level exchanges that exemplify thoughtful, reflective, critical thinking about each week’s readings between Wednesday and Sunday.

Grading Rubric	Points

Posting by Wednesday at midnight and completing 2–3 exchanges by Sunday	5
Posting on Thursday and completing 2–3 exchanges by Sunday	4.5
Posting on Friday and completing 2–3 exchanges by Sunday	4
Posting on Saturday and completing 2–3 exchanges by Sunday	3.5
Posting on Sunday and completing 2–3 exchanges by Sunday OR Posting by Saturday and completing 1 exchange by Sunday	3
Posting on Sunday and completing 1 exchange OR Completing 2–3 exchanges only by Sunday	2.5
Posting by Sunday only OR Completing 1 exchange only by Sunday	2

I will occasionally join in the discussion with each group throughout the course. However, I will read all exchanges!

Video Reflections: You will complete two video reflections throughout the semester. For each reflection, first view the video clips so that you can see different teachers using different instructional techniques to make content accessible to MLLs. Please note that each video reflection assignment has a different focus and a different video. For each video reflection, watch the video and submit a written reflection.

Undergraduate level: half a page single-spaced Word document using a 12-point font.

Graduate level: one-page single-spaced Word document using a 12-point font.

Investigation-Assignment:

There is one individual investigation assignment in Module 1. It is designed to help you to apply what you are learning and to deepen your understanding of key concepts. Submission of this mini-assignment should be a one-page, single-spaced Word document using a 12-point font.

Comprehensible Input Script:

Because one of the biggest difficulties for MLLs is to understand what the teachers say mostly because teachers speak "too fast" and do not use adequate techniques to be comprehensible, you will practice designing a detailed plan with instructional moves that enable MLLs to succeed in your professional context. For example, a teacher might plan a 45-minute lesson for their 2nd-period class that is culturally and linguistically diverse, whereas a social worker might plan a 45-minute meeting with MLLs who are under their direct guidance.

In this assignment, you will design a Script that includes four MLLs with the following profiles:

- a level 2 emerging student from Argentina (Spanish speaker) who has been in the U.S. for four months.
- a level 2 emerging student from Vietnam (Vietnamese speaker) who has been in the U.S. for six months.
- a level 3 developing student from Guatemala (Spanish speaker who also speaks an indigenous language) who has been in the U.S. for two years.
- a level 3 developing student from Somalia (Maay and Arabic speaker) who lived in a refugee camp for four years before arriving in the U.S. two months ago and has had limited formal schooling.

Your lesson, and thus your script, will be situated within a theme or topic in a content area of your choice: science, math, social studies, world languages, or English language arts. The comprehensible input script should be based on the [ELD PA Standards \(Links to an external site.\)](#) for your chosen content area and grade level cluster, contain appropriate adaptations and modifications for MLLs of emerging level 2 and developing level 3, and incorporate effective comprehensible input strategies for MLLs learned from this course.

Assignment Point Values

ITEM EVALUATED	POINT VALUE	WEIGHTED PERCENTAGE OF FINAL GRADE
PackBack Discussions (13)	65	65%
Video Reflection (2)	10	10%
Video introductions	5	5%
Immigrant and Refugee Picture Book Assignment	5	5%
Investigation Assignment	5	5%
Comprehensible Input Script	10	10%
Total	100	100%

ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Submission deadline and grading of the weekly Dialogue Journal will adhere to its Grading Rubric. All other individual assignments, i.e., Video Reflections, Investigation assignments, Comprehensible input script, must be submitted in Canvas before their due dates. 25% of the point value of an assignment will be deducted every day for individual assignments that are

turned in after the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted after 3 days past the original due date unless you have obtained written permission from the instructor in advance. Any missed coursework will receive a grade of zero.

GRADING SCALE

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	96-100
A-	90-95
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
F	Less than 70

Below 70 is failing. Working towards “B-” or better is expected in graduate classes.

COURSE POLICIES

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Active participation in this course is essential. Active participation entails logging into your Canvas course site, interacting with instructional materials, and completing and submitting learning activities by specified due dates and times.

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The course aligns with the School of Education's mission to ignite learning and deliver a respective, inclusive, and equitable learning experience. We behave professionally, and we communicate respectfully, so we create an inclusive learning environment for all members of the course.

Preferred Names and Pronouns: Please feel free to email me privately if you want me to address you using a name or pronoun that you prefer.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, at 412-648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible, but no later than the fourth week of the term or visit the [Office of Disability Resources website](#) as early as possible, but no later than the 4th week of the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

ACCESSIBILITY

Ensuring an accessible and pleasant experience for all users, regardless of disability, is a key focus of Canvas. The Canvas platform was built using the most modern HTML and CSS technologies and is committed to W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative and [Section 508](#) guidelines. Read more about [Accessibility within Canvas](#).

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RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

The observance of religious holidays (activities observed by a religious group of which a student is a member) and cultural practices are an important reflection of diversity. As your instructor, I am committed to providing equivalent educational opportunities to students of all belief systems. At the beginning of the semester, you should review the course requirements to identify foreseeable conflicts with assignments, exams, or other required attendance. If at all possible, please contact me (your course coordinator/s) within the first two weeks of the first class meeting to allow time for us to discuss and make fair and reasonable adjustments to the schedule and/or tasks.