**ESL Frequently Asked Questions**

Q. **Don’t you have to speak the students’ language to teach them English?**

1. **No!** **ESL methodology uses English to teach English. Many ESL classes are composed of students speaking a dozen or more different languages-even if a teacher could speak all of the languages, to do so would probably be chaotic. For example, this district has had ESL students from the Ukraine, Turkey, China, Russia, Puerto Rico, Bosnia, Brazil, Taiwan, and Moldova.**

Q. **How on earth do you teach someone whose language you don’t speak?**

A. **Comprehensible Input-we find ways to make the language *comprehensible* to the student (by simplifying, adding context clues, scaffolding, gesturing, etc.) so that it can serve as *input* to the language-learning part of the brain. The human brain seems to be wired, somehow, to acquire language. Give it plenty of data, and it will sort out the patterns of language.**

**You acquired English as a child through comprehensible input-people used language around you and helped you understand its meaning. ESL students can acquire English in much the same way. (Actually you can still acquire a new language this way, too, if you are in the right environment.)**

Q. **What does an ESL Teacher do, anyway?**

A. **An ESL Teacher is a Language Development Expert who teaches literacy (ELA) :Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and American Culture.**

**ESL teachers follow the Common Core curriculums and teach 21st Century skills.**

[**http://www.ocmboces.org/tfiles/folder1149/5%20Most%20Important%20Areas%20Associated%20with%20ESL%20%28Itinerant%29%20Teachers.pdf**](http://www.ocmboces.org/tfiles/folder1149/5%20Most%20Important%20Areas%20Associated%20with%20ESL%20%28Itinerant%29%20Teachers.pdf)

**Five Most Important Areas Associated With ESL Teachers**

Q. **Is ESL a support or a remedial service?**

A. **No.** **ESL is a developmental English Language Arts program. ESL programs have NYS ESL (New Language Arts) Progressions and their own annual assessment (NYSESLAT). The ESL teachers will integrate literacy and content to teach language. In a coteaching situation, ESL teachers and classroom teachers co-plan and co-teach lessons together equally. The SIOP Model is often used in a co-teaching situation.**

**The ESL Teacher administers the annual NYS ESL Assessment called the NYSESLAT. This is a four part N.Y.S. Assessment given over four days each April/May to all ESL students in NYS. It consists of Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening sections. The scores are used to determine the language proficiency level for the following school year: Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding & Commanding. See our NYSESLAT Page.**

Q. **Do ESL students need ESL services every day?**

**There are specific *weekly* time requirements for ELLs depending on their proficiency level: Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding & Commanding.**

[**http://www.ocmboces.org/tfiles/folder1739/ESL%20in%20a%20Nutshell2.pdf**](http://www.ocmboces.org/tfiles/folder1739/ESL%20in%20a%20Nutshell2.pdf)

**Minutes can be distributed across the week as scheduling allows (as opposed to a certain number daily), keeping in mind the best interest of the student.**

Q. **Where are the NYS ESL ( New Language Arts) Progressions located?**

A. **New Language Arts Progressions (which will replace ESL Learning Standards) are located here:** [**http://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-bilingual-common-core-initiative**](http://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-bilingual-common-core-initiative)

Q. **Do ESL students have testing accommodations?**

A. **Yes**. **They are located here:**

[**http://www.ocmboces.org/teacherpage.cfm?teacher=1603**](http://www.ocmboces.org/teacherpage.cfm?teacher=1603)

Q. **How are ESL students identified?**

A. **The procedure:**

[**http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/pub/LEPproc.pdf**](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/pub/LEPproc.pdf)

Q. **Does the Dignity for All Act apply to ELLs?**

**Yes. The Dignity for All Act took effect on July 1,2012.**

**It seeks to provide students with a safe and supportive environment**

**free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment and bullying**

**on school property, a school bus, and/or at a school function.**

Q. **Does an ESL Teacher Also Serve As a Translator or Interpreter?**

A. **No, an ESL teacher teaches (English Language Arts)**

**A Translator or Interpreter is a completely different job description requiring the person to be bilingual and fluent in a specific language. Translators are hired by the school district on a part-time basis to translate key documents to parents into the student’s home language. They may also be used to translate NYS assessments into rare languages.**