



## Introduction to the ESL/ESOL Standards

## Maryland Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL Introduction

In the spring of 2000, the ESL/ESOL Workgroup, whose members represented a variety of programs across the state, began the process of brainstorming, designing, and developing the *Maryland Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL*. After considering the diversity of adult learners and programs in Maryland, the group began gathering, comparing, and contrasting models that had been developed in states such as Arizona, New York, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Florida. While some states have provided very detailed standards and curricula, the members of the workgroup decided that Maryland's ESL/ESOL standards should be a resource, not a prescription, for all programs across the state and that, the manual should provide an appropriate framework for EL/Civic instruction as defined in the Federal Register dated November 17, 1999.

The *Maryland Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL* is designed to help programs with instruction by defining "everything a student should know and be able to do". In other words, content standards describe the range of desirable knowledge and skills within a subject area (National Council on Education Standards and Testing, 1992). The standards are written in the form of a general outline so that local programs and instructors will be able to develop curriculum, plan instruction, and design classes to meet the local and individual needs. And, since many adult ESL/ESOL instructors teach part-time and are new to the field, the workgroup created a document that would be practical and user-friendly for both experienced and inexperienced instructors.

Consistency is provided through the standards by offering an outline of the language skills for each proficiency level. These levels help instructors plan lessons that will help learners reach higher levels of proficiency as required by the federal mandate for continuous improvement. The ESL/ESOL standards align with the formal (standardized tests) and informal (goal attainment, interest inventories, monitoring progress and evaluation) assessments programs use to identify the topics and skills the learners need to learn, which helps instructors plan effective instruction.

The additional sections of the manual will help instructors refine the content for unit and lesson planning while integrating the language skills. Local programs and individual instructors can design curriculum based on the standards and supplementary material. Programs should maintain the ESL/ESOL standards as a complete package that addressing all the elements of effective instruction including both language skills and content area skills.

The ESL/ESOL standards are reviewed and revised frequently. The latest revised edition and the *Maryland Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL Training Guide* is available on the Maryland Adult Literacy Resource Center website, [www.umbc.edu/alrc](http://www.umbc.edu/alrc). In addition, the website houses the *Maryland Technology Standards* and the *Maryland Adult ESL Program Standards*. **All ESL/ESOL instructors are required to complete the *Maryland ESL/ESOL Content Standards Training*.**

A brief description of each the eleven sections included in the manual can be found on the next page. To learn more about each of the sections of the manual, turn to or click on the title and a full explanation is provided.

## Section Descriptions

ESL/ESOL Standards by Level	Provides level descriptions, standards, assessment scale score, language skills, and indicators.
ESL/ESOL Standards by Skill	Provides a sequenced list of indicators for each language skill from Beginning ESL/ESOL Literacy to Advanced ESL/ESOL.
Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Lists competencies that describe what the learners should know and be able to do.</li><li>- Provides the context for language learning.</li></ul>
Cultural Skills	Promotes the use of cross-cultural topics to strengthen the understanding and appreciation of cultural similarities and differences to facilitate community and civic participation.
Workplace Skills	Outlines skills to help learners improve employment status.
Technology Skills	Shows the range of technology skills that learners may develop based on their needs and interests.
Metacognitive Skills	Outlines the skills essential for lifelong learning and helps learners understand how they learn.
Unit Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Describes the process for planning an unit.</li><li>- Provides a sample unit plan.</li></ul>
Lesson Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Explains the steps for planning a lesson</li><li>- Describes how a lesson fits within a unit</li><li>- Provides a sample lesson</li></ul>
Ten Strategies for Success	Explains effective strategies for instructors to help adults learn, practice and use the English language.
Blank Forms	Provides unit and lesson planning forms for instructors to copy and use.