



Maryland Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL

*English as a Second Language
English for Speakers of Other Languages*

Maryland Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL

Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
Services 1100 North Eutaw Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Alexander M. Sanchez
Secretary

Andy Moser
Assistant Secretary, Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning

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The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation recognizes the commitment and dedication of the following individuals who assisted with the creation of the “*Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL*”. The ESL/ESOL Workgroup met to research, draft, expand, review, and revise the Content Standards.

ESL Workgroup Contributors

Kay Ahmad
ESOL Coordinator
Montgomery Community College

Bridgette Devaney
Adult ESL Instructor
Somerset County Public Schools

Diane Hawkins Elizabeth
Instructional Specialist
Fredrick County Public Schools

Nancy Hutchison
Adult ESL Instructor
Howard Community College

Donna Kinerney
Supervisor Adult ESOL & Literacy
Department of Alternative Programs
Montgomery County Public Schools

Becki Maurio
Adult ESL Coordinator
Carroll Community College

Pat Petrlik
Director ESL
The Resource Center for Language and Culture
University of Maryland Baltimore

Sara Rose
ESOL Professional Development
The Resource Center for Language and Culture
University of Maryland Baltimore County

Stephanie Shultz
Adult ESL Instructor
Somerset County Public Schools

Susan Stevenson
Adult ESL Instructor
Wicomico County Public Schools

Michelle Wichman
Instructor
Frederick County Public Schools

Virginia Yildirim
Adult ESL Instructor
Washington County Public Schools

Barbara Denman
ESL Coordinator for Adult Education
Prince George’s County Public Schools

Karen Gianninoto
Project Director, Training for All Teachers Program
Salisbury University

Holden Wagenheim
MSDE ESL Specialist (2000-2001)
Instructor Prince George’s Community College

Kathy Ira
Instructional Technology Coordinator
University of Maryland Baltimore County

Becky Lessey
Coordinator of Basic Skills & Foreign-Born Programs
Howard Community College

Dawn Nabulsi
The Resource Center for Language & Culture
University of Maryland Baltimore County

Rebecca Price
Program Administrator
Howard Community College

Peggy Seufert
Coordinator Adult ESL Specialist
Maryland State Department of Education

Joan Smuck
Adult ESL Instructor
Charles County Public Schools

Mary Vargo
Instructional Specialist
Charles County Public Schools

Emma Wilson
Adult ESL Coordinator
Montgomery County Public Schools

For more information, contact:
Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning
Office of Adult Education and Literacy Services
Phone: 410-767-0535
Fax: 410-255-7207

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Preface

“According to the 1992 Report by the National Council on Educational Standards and Testing, content standards define ‘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.

...While content standards may be the result of broadly inclusive efforts to achieve consensus on ‘what’ students should know, in the end, they simply describe what ‘ought to be’ not what ‘must be’.

...Content standards are meant to serve as general guides for curriculum and should ideally be general, visionary, and not at all prescriptive.”

Stites, Regie. *A users guide to standards-based educational reform: From theory to practice*. In Focus on Basics, Volume 3, Issue C (September 1999). Boston, MA: World Education/NCSALL. Reprinted with permission.

In the spring of 2000, the ESL/ESOL Workgroup began the process of brainstorming, designing and developing the “*Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL*” for the state of Maryland. The group began by 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.

Members of the ESL/ESOL Workgroup knew the “*Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL*” had to take into consideration the incredible diversity of programs and the learner population in Maryland. Some programs serve in large metropolitan and suburban areas while others work in rural areas, and many programs work with transient or seasonal learner populations. Some programs serve less than twenty ESL/ESOL learners while others serve thousands. Some learners enter programs with advanced university degrees while others enter with very limited educational experiences. The Workgroup also noted that some local programs had curriculum in place while others left the responsibility of curriculum to up to individual instructors. Finally, based on the realization that many adult education instructors in Maryland teach part-time and are new to the field, the *Content Standards* needed to be practical and user-friendly for both experienced and inexperienced instructors.

The workgroup recognized that the creation of such a document would take a substantial amount of work and commitment. Everyone agreed that it would be extremely valuable for all programs to have a simple description of the ESL/ESOL proficiency levels based on the National Reporting System (NRS) being implemented across the nation. Based on the level descriptions and their own expertise, the members began the arduous task of outlining the content language skills for each level. Simultaneously, members also researched and selected information related to the other essential skills for effective language teaching – competencies and skills related to culture, workplace, technology, and metacognitive development.

Finally, in the winter of 2001-2002, the ESL/ESOL Workgroup proudly completed the First Edition of Maryland’s “*Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL*”.