



CS TEACHING ESL STUDENTS IN THE NEW STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSES

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What course should ESL students be doing?

Students who have been educated in English for five years or less at the beginning of the Preliminary course may enrol in the English (ESL) course. This is the new course written specifically for students of English as a Second Language (ESL) and it meets all the Board of Studies requirements for the study of English for the HSC. (See Course Entry Requirements on page 58 of the Stage 6 English syllabus.) All students who are eligible should be strongly advised to take this course because the ESL course:

- includes many of the same outcomes as the Standard course plus additional language outcomes, so you can assure your students and their parents that it is just as rigorous as the other English courses
- is counted in the UAI as an English course and fulfils mandatory requirements of English for the UAI. (Specific faculty requirements should be checked with individual universities.)
- has a completely different assessment scale from the common Standard/Advanced scale.

Are you teaching any ESL students?

Many students still in need of some ESL support will not be able to enrol in the English (ESL) course. Also,

if the course is not running at your school, a nearby school or an accessible TAFE college, some eligible students may not be able to do the course. Therefore, if you are teaching Year 11 English this year, you may have some ESL students in your class, especially if you are teaching the Standard or Fundamentals courses. Most ESL students will be in need of some degree of ESL support, although this may not always be apparent from their spoken English.

Of course, if you are teaching English (ESL), your class will be made up entirely of ESL students who will be at varying levels of English achievement.

You may even have some ESL students in your Advanced course. Most of these students will have been learning English for some time and they may have a particular interest in or aptitude for English. They may speak with an Australian accent. They will have done well in Year 10 English but may still need occasional ESL-type support. This could be particularly so when it comes to explaining certain vocabulary, grammatical structures or cultural references. A good example of this is the reading passage on chokoes in the 1998 2 Unit General HSC paper. This culinary “delight” that Aussie-born children of my generation grew up with was totally outside the experience of the ESL candidates.

The main thing is **not** to assume that ESL students know everything that native speakers know. Be prepared to offer the needed explanations. This is an important principle for supporting all ESL students.

How can I best address the needs of my ESL students?

The basic principles of ESL programming and teaching will be just as important in the new courses as they have been in the past, and if applied properly they should benefit the native English speakers in the class as well. Whether or not you are trained to teach ESL, the following key points will help in your planning and programming for any of the new courses.

Don't assume

We have already looked at this important principle of ESL teaching. Don't assume that everyone understands everything you are talking about. On the other hand, don't assume lack of ability. Try to predict what may be unfamiliar to your students who are from different educational and cultural backgrounds, and build ways of addressing this in your programming and teaching. Always contextualise new information and language.



Analyse the English language needs of your ESL students

Before you can begin your programming, use the *ESL Scales* to find out what language your students need. All schools with ESL students should have a copy of this key document, which enables you to identify what English language skills and knowledge students already have, and what they need to be taught next.

Recognise and build on prior learning

Remember that your ESL students will already have knowledge and understanding in another language and may only need to be shown the English for describing what they already know. Plan activities which use the unique resource of their prior experiences, perspectives and cultural knowledge.

Teach language features explicitly

This is one of the most important elements of ESL programming and pedagogy, and a specific focus on language is a key element of the new English syllabus. Remember that language includes much more than vocabulary lists or sentence-level grammar. You will also have to make explicit such text-level features as text structure and cohesion and the significance of social factors, such as the relationship between text, audience and purpose.

Provide opportunities for your ESL students to use and practise their English

You will need to identify the specific language features you will teach, and program a language teaching sequence which builds in the specific introduction of new language. This should be followed by activities in which the students can use this both orally and in writing in familiar contexts, and finally give tasks which provide new contexts in which to use the same language features. Language teaching activities will follow a sequence from teacher-controlled through teacher-guided to tasks done by students independently.

Teach skills in all language modes

(See Stage 6 English syllabus, pages 68–70 and 79–81)

Teach listening and speaking skills as well as literacy skills for both social and academic contexts. Also, show students how spoken English differs from written English. Your program needs to include viewing and representing. (Refer to the definitions in the glossary of the syllabus.) Check the broadened definition of “text” and don’t forget that body language and visual literacy may differ from one culture to another.

In the classroom the ESL students will learn best when you:

- **paraphrase.** If an instruction is not readily understood the first time, look for other ways of expressing it and give as many concrete examples as possible.
- **provide visual support.** To paraphrase the adage, it can save a lot of words to draw things on the board. Even if, as is my problem, you are blessed with minimal artistic ability, a diagram, flow chart or sketch with stick figures can suggest objects and ideas easily, as well as causing a lot of mirth. (Have you ever tried using the game, *Pictionary?*) It also pays to be unselfconscious enough to mime or act something out. Always write new words, definitions and instructions on the board; don’t rely on oral communication alone.
- **provide a resource-rich environment.** Make sure that your classroom has several dictionaries for reference, including translating dictionaries for the most common languages spoken in your class, and also make sure that those students with electronic dictionaries know how to use them properly. Especially important for ESL students, as in any classroom, are a thesaurus or two, a good map of the world, a computer with CD-ROM and Internet access, newspaper articles, videos, photographs, posters, Venn diagrams, graphs and lists. Even selected objects can help explain a concept, illustrate or summarise a topic, or give useful reminders.

Can I use any of my old resources?

You will be relieved to know that you are not being asked to “throw out the baby with the bath water”. A strong word of warning, however: when using resources from any of the previous courses, changes will definitely be needed. For a start, everything you teach must relate explicitly to the course outcomes and content as set out in the syllabus. Printed with this article are two examples of materials I have used before. One is a section of a Supplementary English program I taught to ESL students, and the other is a Contemporary English assessment task. First, look at the syllabus to see which section of the ESL course they may relate to, and consider whether they may relate to any aspects of Standard or Fundamentals as well. Then, read the hand-written annotations. This will give some idea of what I would change before I could use these for the new English (ESL) course.



Course outline for term 1

Outcomes section needed.

Term 1	Section of Course	Course Content
Week 1 2 hours	Core Module	Course introduction and structure - student analysis of own skills and needs
Week 2 1 hour core 1 hour module	Core Module and introduction to Module A: <i>- Language of Argument</i>	Literacy skills: reading - purpose and structure of argument essays - language features of arguments
Week 3 2 hours	Core Module	Literacy skills: writing - contrast between spoken and written language - writing an argument essay (first draft)
Homework task		Literacy skills: listening and writing - introduction to note-taking
Week 4 2 hours	Core Module	Literacy skills: listening and writing - note-taking Literacy skills: writing - second draft of argument essay Reflection on learning so far
Week 5 2 hours	Core Module <i>ESL Course Outcome 5, 6</i>	Literacy skills: reading - skimming and scanning - identifying purposes of different texts - recognising main idea and topic sentences - cohesion and vocabulary extension
Week 6 1 hour core Homework task 1 hour module	Core Module and introduction to Module 1 - <i>Reading More Effectively</i>	Literacy skills: reading and writing - note-making - summarising - learning styles Reflection on learning and individual needs
Week 7 1 hour core 1 hour module	Core Module and introduction to Module C - <i>Listening and Speaking Skills</i>	Listening and speaking skills: - survey and interview skills - cross-cultural communication - discussion and debate
Week 8 2 hours	Core Module Module A	Speaking skills: - persuasion - bias - speaking task
Week 9 2 hours	Core Module	Assessment of progress during term Negotiation of further modules for study

Handwritten notes in margins:
 - Week 2: Could be ESL course elective or Module C - Fundamentals (ESL Course Outcome 2)
 - Week 3: Could possibly relate to an 'concept' or to a thematic elective unit in preliminary courses.
 - Week 6: ESL course preliminary elective or HSC elective English for Study or Fundamentals Module C
 - Week 7: Could be ESL course elective in preliminary or Module B or E in Fundamentals.
 - Week 8: Could also fit some Standard outcomes.
 - Right margin: Questions would need revision for an Area of Study. Should relate to context (text) but no questions on 'how'!

Riverside Girls' High School
2 Unit Contemporary English: Year 12 1998
ASSESSMENT TASK NO. 4

Within weighting guidelines for ESL and Standard courses
 Date due: Term 2, Week 10 - Wednesday 1st July, 1998
 Weighting: 20%

The task is in two parts:
 1. Writing - 10%
 2. Speaking - 10%

Both parts relate to your study of the Contemporary Issue 'Peace and War'.

PART 1: WRITING
 Task: Prepare a written analysis of FIVE items of material you have collected (that relate to the issue 'Peace and War').
 Submit: copies of your five items of related material and approximately one page of analysis for each item. The items chosen must be additional to material given to you in class by your teacher. → *could relate to independent study skills*

Your analysis should include:
 • a summary of the content of each item of related material
 • your own commentary on the events and opinions in each item
 • an explanation of what each item shows about the issue - *could be changed to a 'concept'.*
 You will be assessed on how well you have done these three things.

PART 2: SPEAKING
 Task: (Prepare and contribute to a class seminar) on the issue 'Peace and War'.
 Questions you should be prepared to speak about are:
 What have you read and viewed about the issue?
 • Do you agree with everything you have read? Why/why not?
 • What have you learnt about the issue from your study?
 • Which aspects of the issue are most important to you, and why?
 • Have you found more material about war than peace? Why do you think this is?
 • Is it harder to make peace than war? Why/Why not?
 • Is war inevitable? How can it be avoided?
 • Can anything good come out of war? Give some examples.
 • Is peace just the absence of war?
 • What is needed to make peace?
 • Who are some famous peacemakers? What did they achieve?

Authentic academic English cannot be an oral task. Could relate to ESL course elective 'English for Study' or Fundamentals Module B.

Difficult topic needed.

You may bring any materials you wish, including materials which you have studied in class, and you may refer to your notes during the seminar.
 You will be assessed on your ability to:
 • answer questions from a teacher or from other students
 • give examples and evidence to support what you say
 • ask for or provide clarification where necessary
 • ask relevant questions of other students in the group
 • take turns appropriately in the discussion
 • speak clearly so that others can understand you.
 • stick to the point.

** List Outcomes to be assessed*

Check these against list of language modes in ESL course.

More legible versions of the above materials may be found on the New HSC web site under Resources later this term.

Where should I start with the ESL course?

You may start either with an area of study or an elective unit, depending on your preferences and the needs of your students. An elective might be easier for some classes as an introduction to the course, because it focuses on one aspect of language use, whereas an area of study synthesises several aspects. Some teachers have chosen to begin with an area of study to give students an early introduction to the more complex requirements of this part of the course.

As you would have noticed by now, 60% of the preliminary course and 50% of the HSC course is "Language study within an area of study". This cannot be equated with either Contemporary Issues or the Topic Area from the previous courses. Both of these focused on what particular writers and texts said about an issue or topic, but there was no requirement to look at how they said it. The area of study in the new syllabus includes both the "what" and the "how" and requires us to explore the relationships between composer and responder, text and context. In addition, we have to teach all other aspects of the academic and social English language that our ESL students need at varying levels. In the preliminary course you should, by the way, plan more than one area of study.

Where can I get further help?

- Phone your district office and ask for the secondary ESL consultant, who can help with advice, resources, inservices and school visits.
- Arrange consultation between English and ESL staff at your school; for example you could arrange a joint faculty meeting to discuss the ESL course, or plan regular consultation times for particular English and ESL staff.
- Attend T&D sessions conducted by professional associations. Both the ETA (English Teachers Association) and ATESOL (Association for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) are planning support for Stage 6 English during 2000. Contact details are available from the Professional Teachers Council on 9564 3322.
- Look for the sample ESL course units of work which will be sent to schools for trialling this term.

During Term 1, I am available full-time to support schools introducing the ESL course. I am based at the Multicultural Programs Unit in the city. Contact me on 9244 5352. After Term 1, I can be contacted at Blacktown District Office on 9624 9156.

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Multicultural Programs Unit