
English as a Second Language Instruction (ESL)

1. Philosophy

The philosophy towards ESL instruction is one of supported immersion into our Canadian culture, consistent with the Saskatoon Catholic Schools general philosophy of inclusion. The student in need of ESL instruction (for example, refugees, immigrants, foreign exchange students and those from the International Program, and students born in Canada whose first language is not English) should have the opportunity to attend the Catholic School in his or her attendance area. ESL instruction, therefore, is available at all schools, elementary and high schools, in the Saskatoon Catholic School Division. A range of programming options is offered to account for individual student differences and, consequently, the intensity of instruction required.

2. Objectives

The objectives of ESL instruction are to, within a supportive environment based on Catholic principles, assist the students to:

1. Develop an efficient facility to speak, listen to, read and write the English language, for a variety of academic, vocational, and social contexts.
2. Develop a knowledge and appreciation of the Canadian culture and its mosaic nature.
3. Develop a sense of self worth and confidence within the Canadian culture mosaic.
4. Develop within the student the standards of Canadian citizenship.
5. Continue to maintain pride in their own linguistic and cultural heritage.

3. Rationale

1. Principles of Language Instruction

It is recognized that support for learners of a second language through homogeneous, low enrollment grouping is required. In addition, it is beneficial to frequently experience heterogeneous groupings and linguistic models in a variety of natural cultural contexts.

2. Social-Cultural Development

To truly understand, and become part of, the Canadian cultural mosaic, it is necessary to actively, and frequently, participate in the activities and opportunities it presents.

3. Academic Development

To develop a truly efficient academic facility, it is necessary not only to become fluent with the English language but also to experience a variety of instructional styles and procedures.

4. Understanding, Acceptance, and Appreciation of Differences

5. Advantages for all Canadian students

All students receive an expanded and enriched educational viewpoint when they are educated within a culturally diverse environment.

4. Identification Criteria

Consideration is given to each student's level of language proficiency and the amount of time the student has been residing in Canada. Typically a three year ESL instructional period from the student's arrival in Canada, is provided. Continuation beyond this point is decided on an individual student basis.

5. Components

a) Orientation/Reception

A process common to all schools, for welcoming ESL students into our system has been established. This process includes a standard registration which documents the student's educational record. An Information for Parents brochure and a Classroom Teacher's ESL Handbook is available at the Elementary level. (Please see Appendix)

b) Assessment

A comprehensive process of assessing each student's proficiency for speaking, reading, writing and listening to the English language has been developed. Each assessment yields a basic level of English proficiency, and detailed data regarding the student's strengths and weaknesses. The assessment acts as a basis for program development - the establishing of realistic learning objectives and indicators of progress.

It is beneficial instructionally for the ESL teacher to assess personally the students he/she will teach. The ESL teacher may have to be relieved of regular teaching duties whenever a comprehensive assessment is required.

c) Programming

The educational background, language level, learning proficiency, and general knowledge of Canadian culture varies drastically within the ESL student element. A variety of programming options, therefore, is necessary. Options should include:

i) Intensive Programming

A maximum of three hours per day of ESL instruction. In addition, there is involvement in those regular classes that are less intense with respect to language. This type of programming is more typically offered at the High School level. Presently, E.D. Feehan and St. Joseph High Schools are sufficiently staffed to provide an intensive program.

ii) Tutorial

One period per day of ESL support. This type of support typically emphasizes the language that the students' require for academic success. It implies a basic linguistic competence.

iii) Regular Classroom with Modification

The ESL student is assisted, within the regular classroom, with the linguistic aspect of the course content.

iv) Learning Assistance

One period per day (typically) to assist the student with specific learning difficulties.

d) Instruction

To properly respond to the linguistic and cultural diversity that ESL students present to their teachers, it is important that the instructional component remain flexible. There is need, however, for a basic structure within which this flexibility is organized.

i) Content

A scope and sequence of linguistic competencies, and indicators of progress for each level of competency, has been developed. Guidelines are also being developed with respect to what elements of Canadian culture, history, and geography should be emphasized.

ii) Materials

We continue to develop a resource inventory that effectively allows the ESL teachers to achieve their instructional goals. The resources are currently centred at St. James Elementary School, E.D. Feehan High School and St. Joseph High School.

iii) Peer Involvement

The general student population should assist their ESL peers with linguistic and cultural-social learning. Peers represent a significant potential for learning through natural contexts and social processes.

e) Professional Development/Networking

The ESL Teachers are provided with regular opportunity for professional development. The ESL teachers also meet on a regular basis as a professional group to discuss concerns and network ideas.

f) Parental Involvement/Family Support

It is a current practice to encourage parental involvement in their children's schooling and to support families as they adapt to their new culture.

g) Handbook

An ESL teacher handbook that outlines the orientation process, the assessment process, programming options, instructional philosophy and content, a resources inventory, and the auxiliary supports available is presently available for Elementary ESL Teachers. A similar handbook for High School ESL Teachers is being developed.

h) Liaison

It is important, and to our benefit, that we maintain a cordial and collaborative cooperation with such agencies as the Canadian

Immigration and Employment and, in particular, the Open
Door Society.