A Kaleidoscope of Models and Strategies for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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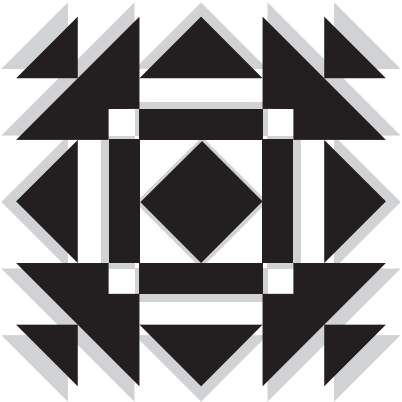

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Preface

This kaleidoscope is a collection of various ESOL (English to speakers of other languages) methods and models or orientations for those who teach or will teach English-language learners (ELLs). ESOL teachers may come in contact with these or wish to learn them for future reference. The methods and models are not just those that we, the authors, practice or recommend. In fact, we have tried to list as many strategies and models or orientations as possible in the hope that readers will be able to evaluate and discover which methods and models will work best for their particular teaching situations.

In an attempt to be as inclusive as possible, we have tried our best to cover the diverse realms of ESOL teaching. We have included methods and orientations that are practiced in K–12 schools, at the college and university level, and in adult education programs. A number of these methods and orientations may have different names in different situations, and we have tried to list the variations of these names. No doubt, however, there are terms for these methods and models that we have not encountered. In fact, there may be methods and models that we have not included, although we have tried our best to cover as much territory as possible. No methods, strategies, models, or orientations have been purposely left out. You may also notice that some of the methods/strategies and models/orientations may not be in current fashion. In an attempt to be inclusive we have incorporated these, but with comments regarding what we see as their inherent caveats.

Suggestions for Using the Text

The ESOL models and methods are listed in alphabetical order in the handbook. Variations on the orientations' and methods' names are listed next to the name we most commonly found attached to the method or orientation. We have then included a brief background on the method or model that includes when possible, a theoretical summarization of the method, its development, and its current use and application.

This is followed by the general strategy frequently used to teach and/or prepare curriculum using this method or model. In an attempt to make the strategy easily accessible we have presented the strategy in steps. Nevertheless, it is possible that in different situations certain steps might be eliminated or other steps added. In order to help readers conceptualize the method or orientation we have included some examples and applications. Again readers should be aware that these examples may not always be appropriate as is for their particular situation. But we would hope such examples would give readers the guidance needed to develop their own applications.

Although our goal is to present a resource of methods and models with objectivity and limited bias, we nevertheless feel it necessary to present caveats regarding the methods and models as we see them. In addition, we want readers to be aware that all methods and models may be inappropriate in certain situations, and thus, we have made comments in the "Weakness/Modifications" section regarding limitations of the methods and orientations as well as modifications that can be made in different situations.

In the process of accumulating these methods and orientations we have discovered that many of them overlap, and are definitely not entities in and of themselves. Thus, we have included a "See also" section that lists other methods which are compatible. At the end of each method and orientation we have included a list of materials in which readers may find more information regarding the method or model. Some of these materials give the theoretical and developmental background regarding the method or model. Others are collections of models for lessons and other applications. The lists are by no means exhaustive. The materials listed were chosen to give readers initial entry into the method or model presented.

Introduction

What Is ESL?

The acronym ESL stands for English as a second language. In the United States, ESL refers to the teaching of those students for whom English is not a first language. Some people don't like the term ESL, pointing out that in many cases English may be the third or fourth language of the students. In addition, in some countries, like India, Singapore, or Kenya, ESL has a slightly different meaning. In those places, it refers to the fact that English is a second official language that is learned in school and often used in government and business but may not be the first language of the majority of people.

In fact, a number of other terms are used to describe ESL. You may see the term ESOL (English for students of other languages). The acronym TESOL refers to "teaching English to students of other languages." TESOL is also the name of the professional international organization of teachers of ESOL. You may also see other terms such as ELL (English language learning) and ELD (English language development) used to describe students and programs that serve students who are learning English as a second language. You may also see the term LEP (limited English proficiency) to describe ESL students. However, most ESL practitioners dislike this term because they do not feel that ESL students are limited.

You may also see the term EFL, which stands for English as foreign language. Generally, EFL is used to describe English teaching that occurs in places where English is not the native language, and ESL is used to describe English teaching that occurs in places like the United States, Canada, England, and Australia where the first language of most people is English.

Who Are ESL Students?

In the United States, many different people are ESL students. Many are K–12 students, often immigrants who have recently arrived with their families. In other cases, they and their families may have been in the United States for a longer period of time. Many immigrant children, especially from refugee families, may have resided in a number of countries before arriving in the United States. Some of them may have limited schooling. Some of them may not know how to read and write in their native language. But other ESL students may have had very good schooling and may already be able to read and write in more than one language. Other students who may need ESL services are children adopted from overseas by American parents.

There are also native-born non-English students who may receive ESL services under the umbrella of bilingual education. These may include Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and many Hispanics. Another group that sometimes receives language services under the umbrella of ESL are dialect-different students. These are students who speak a dialect of English different from the standard English used in a school or job setting in the United States. Many of these students may come from the Caribbean or countries such as Hong Kong and Malaysia where English is spoken but the dialect may be different enough to cause communication problems in the United States.

Many ESL students are adults. In some cases, they are international students who have come to the United States to study in higher education but need to improve their English skills before enrolling at a college or university. In other cases, they are already enrolled but need English support to help them improve their English. In other cases, adults immigrate to the United States. Like children, they have a wide range of education and language levels. Some adults may not be literate in their own language. In other cases, adults may have advanced degrees from their own countries and already know a number of other languages. Other adults come to the United States as visiting professionals in business or government. While here they may want to improve their English. Thus, the needs of ESL students can vary widely.