

Introduction and Philosophy

The purpose of the Wilmington Middle School ESL program is to meet the needs of the rapidly changing population of our school. Our goal is to provide students with the experiences needed to communicate proficiently in English and to attain content area knowledge.

The middle school years are a crucial time of growth for all children and middle school students represent a tremendously diverse population. We interact with students who may be close in age, but at very different developmental levels. A simple look around the halls will show the wide range of physical development to be seen in students of this age. Not so visibly obvious is the range of cognitive and social development among middle school students. Our students are in a time of tremendous growth and development in all of these areas. At the same time, they are at a salient time in their development of personal and cultural identity. This is a complicated process for any student, made more so for those who have been recently relocated to a new country. They must adjust not only to the American culture and English language, but to the subculture of American middle school, a difficult culture for anyone to navigate.

Within the last three years, a large number of immigrant families have moved into our school district. Of the 800 students currently enrolled in WMS, 125 have been identified as ELLs. Within this group, every level of English language proficiency is represented. ESL teachers are overburdened and subject teachers are concerned about the number of students who don't understand the content.

Our philosophy is one of caring and relational teaching. Teachers and students will get to know each other through activities, lessons, field trips, interviews with each other, and simply communicating their everyday experiences. There will be cultural learning days which may involve a field trip or a class on navigating the hallways, reading their schedule, or getting lunch in the cafeteria.

The program will offer courses to meet the everyday life needs as well as the academic needs of a multicultural group of students. Our approach is communicative and learner-centered. Students will be immersed in a language-rich environment for two hours each day. The first hour will be devoted to language arts, in which we will employ an integrated skills approach. Speaking and listening to one another is an example our relational philosophy of teaching. Readings will integrate social studies and current events followed by discussions of historical and social issues presented in the readings. Students will have opportunities to write about what they read and discuss as well as opportunities to describe their thoughts and observations from simulated experiences and actual field trips to local places of interest. These opportunities for experiential learning will include information about the community, the culture, and the traditions that represent the people of the United States.

The second hour of instruction will take place in the afternoons and will cover science from a task-based approach to learning. Cooperative learning and hands-on projects will encourage language use between students. The four language skills will be emphasized together to promote both English proficiency and the content of a middle school science class. The specifics of this part of the program can be seen in the scope and sequence portion of this paper.

In addition to the academic goals presented in this program, we will also address affective goals for the students. Increased confidence will be evident in students' classroom relationships, including the ability to ask for help from teachers and peers. Students will keep a portfolio of their work throughout the year. This will give the student a visual representation of how they have improved over time.

Another important aspect of the program is family involvement. Parents will be involved in the initial needs assessment, completing an interview about their student and their family. There will be open communication between teachers and parents.

Keeping in mind that our students are at various levels of English proficiency, assignments and worksheets will be differentiated to meet the needs of each level present in the class. Examples of differentiated assignments are available during the presentation.

Collaboration between the two ESL teachers is essential for the success of the program. Teachers will meet at the beginning and end of each unit to discuss their plans and the issues that arise in their classrooms. The ESL teachers will advocate for the students and work cooperatively with classroom or content area teachers.

Our philosophy leads to the following general goals for the program.

Program Goals

1. Students will demonstrate command of appropriate academic language
2. Students will build confidence for interaction in and outside the classroom
3. Teachers will be empowered to support ELLs through the use of MTSS
4. Collaboration between the two ESL teachers

What every Week would look like	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	10am: L.A.				
	2pm: Science				

Science Course

Goals:

Students will demonstrate command of appropriate academic language

- SWBAT interpret charts and graphs
 - SWBAT look at charts and graphs and use them to interpret data
- SW demonstrate improvement in reading comprehension of scientific texts
 - SWBAT use unit vocabulary to describe, compare and contrast text-based articles and current events in science around the world.
 - SW interpret the impacts of scientific findings on people around them
- SWBAT recognise and follow verbal and written instructions to complete assignments
 - SW complete all assignments and submit them to the instructor

Students will build confidence for interaction in and outside the classroom

- SW collaborate with peers to execute group projects and experiments
 - SWBAT formulate and explain their opinions and reasoning for personal responses while acknowledging the facts in the text (we can scaffold by using sentence frames for differentiation)
 - SWBAT demonstrate their knowledge about their experiments by completing lab reports and presenting their results to the class.
- SW develop language strategies for navigating the native speaker classroom
 - SW keep a journal of strategies that they develop per unit to help them in the four language domains
- SWBAT describe their experiences with experiential learning (i.e. field trips, etc).
 - SW complete reports of their experiential learning activities through journaling and making photographic collages of their experiences and presenting one report in pairs to the class during the semester.

Movies, bi-monthly field trips, process america together/american culture days ex. What is the super bowl? Thanksgiving, Memorial Day, Independence Day

Needs Analysis Tools:

- Informal Assessment (Classroom observation)
Choose two (or maximum number possible) mainstream classrooms to observe for a week (or maximum time possible). Observe and take notes in the following areas. If possible, these questions can be modified and used as interview questions for teachers, ELLs and NES students.
 - Academic:
 - How many ELLs are there in the class? What percentage are they of the class?
 - What level of proficiency are the particular ELLs in the room at?

- Do the ELLs in the classroom seem to be following what is going on? Do they seem to understand the material? How do they respond to instructions? What is their homework like?
- What is ELL class participation like?
- How do ELLs respond when they do not understand? What strategies do they use?
- How does the teacher accommodate ELLs (if they do anything)?
- What observable academic needs do ELLs encounter in the mainstream classroom?
- Social:
 - How do ELLs interact with each other?
 - How do ELLs interact with NES students?
 - How do ELLs interact with the teacher?
 - What are NES attitudes toward ELLs?
 - What are ELL attitudes toward NES?
 - What is the teacher's attitude toward ELLs? ELLs' attitudes toward the teacher?
 - What observable social needs do ELLs encounter in the mainstream classroom?
- If possible, these questions can also be addressed in interviews with teachers, ELLs and NES students to get the emic understanding of the dynamics?
- Interviewing students and their families:
Interview both parents and students in the following areas.
 - For Parents:
 - Name:
 - Parent Background:
 - What is your country of origin?
 - What is your native language?
 - What other languages do you speak?
 - What languages can you read and write in?
 - What is your highest level of education completed?
 - How comfortable are you in English?
 - Conversation
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Do you work? If yes, how many hours per week? How much time do you spend at home?
 - Child background:
 - What is your child's educational background? (i.e. where has s/he been to school before, what was that school like, what language was it in)

- What exposure does your child have to English?
- What exposure has your child had in the past to English?
- Rate your child's comfortability in English in the following areas:
 - Understanding TV, music, social media, etc.
 - Conversation with friends
 - Reading
 - Writing
- How is your child doing? Does s/he seem happy at school? Does s/he have friends? Who are his/her friends? Does s/he like his/her teachers?
- Home/Family:
 - How many children do you have and how old are they?
 - Where is the student in question in the birth order?
 - How many people live at home?
 - What language does your family use at home?
 - Homework:
 - How much time does s/he spend on homework?
 - Where and when does s/he do homework?
 - Who help her/him?
- Other
 - What needs do you perceive your child having for English?
 - What are your goals for your child's education/English skills?
 - What support would you like to see from Wilmington School ESL Program?
 - Any questions?
- For Students
 - Family/Home:
 - How many siblings do you have?
 - Who works in your family?
 - Who is usually at home?
 - What do you usually do at home? (responsibilities, TV, homework, etc.)
 - What language do you speak at home?
 - Background:
 - What language are you most comfortable speaking? Reading? Writing?
 - Where, when and with whom do you use English the most?
 - What was your school like before? How is it similar or different to the school you are in now?
 - Social:
 - What situations do you use English in?
 - Who are your friends (at school, outside school, NES, ELLs, etc)? What language do you speak with them?

- What is your favorite and least favorite thing about school?
- How do you feel interacting with interacting with teachers?
- How do you feel interacting with NES students at school?
- What social situation at school is most comfortable for you? Why?
- What social situation at school is least comfortable for you? Why?
- Academic:
 - Rate your comfort level in English in the following areas:
 - Conversation with friends
 - Watching TV at home
 - Understanding classroom instructions
 - Reading a paragraph
 - Writing a paragraph
 - Homework:
 - Where and when do you do your homework?
 - Do you understand it?
 - Who helps you?
- Perceived needs/language desires:
 - What situations do you use English the most?
 - Do you think it is important to learn English? Why?
 - What are your goals for learning English?
 - How do you feel you could be best supported in English learning?
- Diagnostic test to determine level placement (administered either before start of the year or at the beginning of the year)

Recommended Resources

Chamot, Anna Uhl., De Mado, John., & Hollie, Sharroky. Longman Keystone. White Plains, NY. Pearson Education, Inc.

This text is a research-based program designed to ensure that students master academic and language skills that can be used across the curriculum. While the readings are written at an intermediate level, the book incorporates built-in differentiation. This will be crucial in our program which draws students from a wide range of English Language proficiency. The textbook also has a supplementary Reader's Companion and Workbook as well as a DVD and audio CD.

Richards, Jack C., Barbisan, Carlos., & Sandy, Chuck. 2009. Cambridge Connect Series. Cambridge, United Kingdom. Cambridge University Press.

This engaging, 4-level, multiskill course is especially designed for young adolescents. Students will be motivated by high-interest topics, lively activities, and opportunities to communicate about their lives and experiences.

The Teacher's Guide Website. 2013. www.theteachersguide.com/virtualtours
This website provides links to "virtual field trips." These could be an excellent supplement to our language arts and science classes and to any off-campus field trips we do. The virtual field trips include tours of the American Museum of Natural History, Plymouth Plantation, and more. Our language arts class incorporates social sciences, history and current events. Virtual tours of places that are too far for travel will allow more experiential learning and opportunities to use English as they discuss and describe what they learn.

Benwell, Tara. 2015, May 27. *25 Field Trips for English Language Learners*. Retrieved from <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2015/05/27/ell-field-trips/>
This is a list found at The ESL Library. It lists over 25 field trips that can be educational for ELLs: a scavenger hunt in a toy store, a visit to an ice cream shop (along with a lesson plan), a walk around town looking for surveillance cameras (and a discussion afterwards, etc). Many of these are very cost-effective or even free and will allow students to practice their emerging English skills. This list, as well as the rest of the website will be a useful resource for the language arts class.

Kagawachi, Karen. *Every Teacher's Toolkit: Closing the Achievement Gap for English Learners*. Pearson Longman 2010.
Every Teacher's Toolkit has 86 mini-lessons organized by skill areas: Newcomers, Vocabulary, Grammar and Spelling, Listening and Speaking, Reading, Writing and Critical Thinking Skills. The lessons are based on language and content objectives (language arts, mathematics, science and social studies) as well as learning strategies. The flexible design allows the teacher to pick and choose lessons that students need at different levels for different content areas. The Toolkit includes sample lessons, graphic organizers, help in content areas, useful websites and a CD Rom.

