



**MA Public Adult Education
Professional Development System**
A PUBLIC ADULT EDUCATION OF MA PROGRAM

Transcript: Part 1: Introduction to Massachusetts Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult ESOL

Welcome to the introduction to the Massachusetts Professional Standards for teachers of adult ESOL. This video is part one of a three-part video series. You will be provided with an overview of the revised standards. During these three videos, totaling less than 45 minutes of viewing, it's best to watch them in order, but it's not necessary to watch them all in one sitting. Please feel free to pause the videos to read sections of the document, reflect, or write as you watch. We think you'll get more out of the presentation if you do these activities. In part one, we'll give an overview of the standards, as well as some background about their development and the revisions made to the most recent versions. In part two, we'll take a closer look at each of the standards, and in part three, we'll look at how you, whether you're a teacher or a program director, can use the standards. Now would be a good time to pause the video and download or print the document for reference throughout this introduction. You can find the standards on the SABES ESOL webpage and on the ACLS Educator Effectiveness webpage.

Our goals for the three modules are for you to be able to explain the purpose of the ESOL Professional Standards and key revisions, identify the seven standards, and to begin to use the standards for your professional growth. What are the professional standards for teachers of adult ESOL? They are clearly articulated statements of what teachers of adult ESOL should know and be able to do so that everyone is on the same page about expectations of teachers. The standards are based on research and evidence drawn from the fields of education, linguistics, neurology, psychology, sociology, and workforce development. The standards are intended to serve as a guide for ESOL teachers and directors to help identify strengths and areas in need of professional development. The standards reflect state and national priorities and policies in the adult ESOL field, so they present a consistent message along with ideas on how to implement these policies and priorities.

You may be familiar with the ESOL Professional Standards that were developed in 2014. Like most published documents, these standards needed to be updated and revised to make them more current and to reflect developments and shifting priorities in the field. That's why we're talking about them again. I'd like to take you through a brief timeline to explain where the revisions and the 2021 edition came from. Around the time the original ESOL Professional Standards were released in 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was enacted. WIOA is a federal legislation that requires adult ESOL programs to integrate workforce preparation activities, digital literacy, and civics into instruction. Because of the timing, these mandates were missing from the original standards and needed to be included in the new ones.

The Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Standards, or Mass ALPs for English Learners, were developed and released in 2019. The Mass ALPs increased the standards for rigor in adult ESOL instruction and needed to be reflected in the professional standards. On a practical level, all references to the old curriculum framework for ESOL needed to be switched out. Around the same time, the Massachusetts Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education came out in 2019. While these drew a little from the old ESOL Professional Standards, they raised the bar by including more professional knowledge and up-to-date evidence-based practices so as not to leave ESL teachers behind.

The ESOL Professional Standards were brought up a few notches in these areas. In every profession, there are always developments in research, and the adult ESOL field is no exception. Since 2014, there have been developments in research on second language acquisition, the brain and learning, and evidence-based instructional practices, which meant the standards needed to be updated. Since 2014, there has also been an increased understanding of and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in adult education and to culturally responsive teaching practices. You'll see these reflected throughout the standards and explicitly in one of them. There has also been a significant increase in remote instruction brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is not likely that we will go back to exactly the way things were. The expectations have changed for teachers. We now need to meet a higher standard for digital literacy integration.

Finally, the Teaching Skills That Matter (TSTM) initiative from the American Institute of Research (AIR) and the Office for Career, Technical, and Adult Education (ACTE) in Washington is a national initiative that promotes particular skills, topic areas, and approaches in adult education, including cooperative and collaborative learning and communication. Since we in Massachusetts expect to be using the TSTM tools, it was important that the new standards be aligned to them. With all of this in mind, a team of ESOL educators from the SABES ESOL PD Center, ACLS, and Mass ESOL programs, along with national consultants, revised the standards so that they now emphasize research and evidence-based practices, culturally responsive and sustaining teaching, WIOA and TSTM alignment, increased rigor, coherence and cohesiveness, collaboration, and shared accountability. Overall, the new ESOL Professional Standards raised the bar for ESOL teachers in the same way that the Mass ALPs raised the bar for English learners.

Take a moment now to pause the video and reflect on what you think teachers of adult ESOL should know and do in order to be effective. There are seven standards. Let's see how your thoughts match up with ours. The topic areas of the seven ESOL Professional Standards are: principles of SLA, components of language, culturally responsive and sustaining teaching, curriculum and instructional planning, assessment, instructional delivery, and professional growth. How did your ideas match up? I imagine that much of what you came up with fits into one or more of these categories.

The next slides show the complete standard statement, not just the topic. Pause the video and take a moment to read the next two slides or the "Standards at a Glance" chart on page seven in the document. All of the standards are organized in the same way as in the previous version, although the current version has a much jazzier format with colors and graphics. Each of the standard statements starts each section. Each standard also has three guiding questions designed

to help you start thinking about the standard as intended. Each standard has a supporting explanation of two to five pages, which explains key concepts and the rationale for why and how the standard is important and relevant to adult English learners. It is the why of the what of the standard.

There is also a chart of indicators of knowledge and sample applications, which we call the NO and DO chart. The indicators of knowledge are a distillation of the supporting explanation in bullet points. The sample applications are examples of what teachers do with this knowledge and how they can apply it in practice. At the end of the document, after all of the standards, there are three appendices: the summary of the standards, a summary of the revisions, and references. Finally, there is a self-assessment found on the ACLS and SABES websites using the same link that takes you to the standards.

That's it for Part One, the overview and background. In Part Two, we'll take a look more closely at each of the seven standards. To prepare for that, we suggest that you take the self-assessment and peruse the standards document, both available through the link on the slide. Move on to Part Two, and we'll see you there.