# English Mastery Council: Report on TESL Courses from the Nevada System of Higher Education

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University of Nevada, Reno
UNLV
Nevada State College
Great Basin College

*Presenter:*
Kenneth Coll, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor
College of Education

# Background:

- 2013 Legislature passed Senate Bill 504 (Chapter 515, Statutes of Nevada) to create the English Mastery Council
- Section 1.5 of S.B. 504 charges this Council with the duty to review courses of study offered by the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to teach English as a second language (TESL).

**TESL = Teach English as a Second Language**

# Specifically, the Council must:

- Review any course of study offered by the Nevada System of Higher Education for training to teach English as a second language
- This review will determine if the course of study, including, without limitation, student teaching, is sufficiently rigorous to provide teachers with the tools necessary to improve the English proficiency and academic achievement and proficiency of pupils who are limited English proficient.

# The Review Process:

- Review NSHE's TSEL course of study at all 4 state Institutions of Higher Education granting Bachelor Degrees and above
  - University of Nevada, Reno
  - UNLV
  - Nevada State College
  - Great Basin College

# The Review Process:

- Review consists of:
  - Courses taught
  - Student teaching and /or practicum offered
  - Key strengths and weakness of programs
  - Future plans to enhance and increase the rigor of the programs

# Special
# Specific to the Grade level of the Base Teaching License
# Endorsement to English as a Second Language (TESL)

To receive an endorsement to teach English as a second language (TESL), a person *must* possess and have completed:

1. A valid elementary, middle school/junior high school, secondary or special teaching license (excluding Business and Industry and Special Qualifications); and

1. Twelve (12) semester credits to include three credits from each of areas below:
   A. Methods and materials for teaching English as a Second Language
   B. Theories for the acquisition of a second language
   C. Testing and evaluation of pupils studying English as a second language; or
   D. Developing a curriculum for pupils studying English as a second language

# Key Findings:

1. All institutions have established courses to meet the current state requirement for the TESL Endorsement

Courses focus on:

- Language Development and Acquisition
- Methods for ELLS/ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) instruction
- Curriculum Development
- Assessment and Evaluation

# Key Findings:

2. Not all Institutions require ELL/ESOL coursework for all licensure programs.
3. Not all Institutions require field placement and practical experience at the undergraduate or graduate levels.
4. No specific literacy course(s) offered to meet the literacy needs and challenge of Academic literacy/English throughout the content areas.

# Summary:

- Institutions meet the state TESL (Teach English as a Second Language) endorsement course requirements
- There is much room for programmatic improvement across institutions to better prepare preservice and inservice teachers to teach the increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse student population of Nevada

# Summary:

- There is a need across the institutions to provide all licensure candidates with an ELL/ESOL endorsement
- NSHE institutions are ready and willing to work with the Council on improving the structure and rigor of the course of study offered to undergraduate and graduate students to better serve the ELL student population of Nevada

# Pilot Study:

To address the question about sufficient rigor, a pilot study was conducted in February 2014 in cooperation with Wahsoe County School District in which 1st year graduates from an NSHE institution was compared with those from a variety of other institutions (e.g., private, out-of-state universities) for at schools with more than 50% diversity using teacher evaluation scores related to diversity.

# Results of Pilot Study:

Results indicate that the NSHE institution graduates performed slightly better, especially in the areas of setting outcomes suitable for diverse learners and understanding cultural differences as evaluated in their first year of teaching.

# WCSD 1st Year Teachers for F'12-S'13

Teacher Evaluation Scores (random sample)

(average scores on annual evaluation by standard/category)

**1=ineffective 2=minimally effective 3=effective 4=highly effective**

| Teachers | Institution | Knowledge and skills, including language proficiency, cultural heritage, and special needs | Setting instructional outcomes suitable for diverse learners | Understanding cultural differences (especially with families) | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Teachers at schools with student populations GREATER than 50% minority** | | | | | |
| 55 | NSHE Institution | 3.036364 | 2.981818 | 2.909091 | 2.975758 |
| 48 | other | 3.083333 | 2.91667 | 2.875 | 2.958333 |

# TESL IN NEVADA