



# **TExES English as a Second Language Supplemental (154) Exam**

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- These slides overview information for each domain within the ESL 154 Exam. This test is designed to assess whether an examinee has the requisite knowledge and skills that an entry-level educator in this field in Texas public schools must possess.



# TutoringEZ



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# ESL 154 Test Overview

**01.** Domains I–III

**02.** 5 hours

**03.** 80 selected-  
response questions



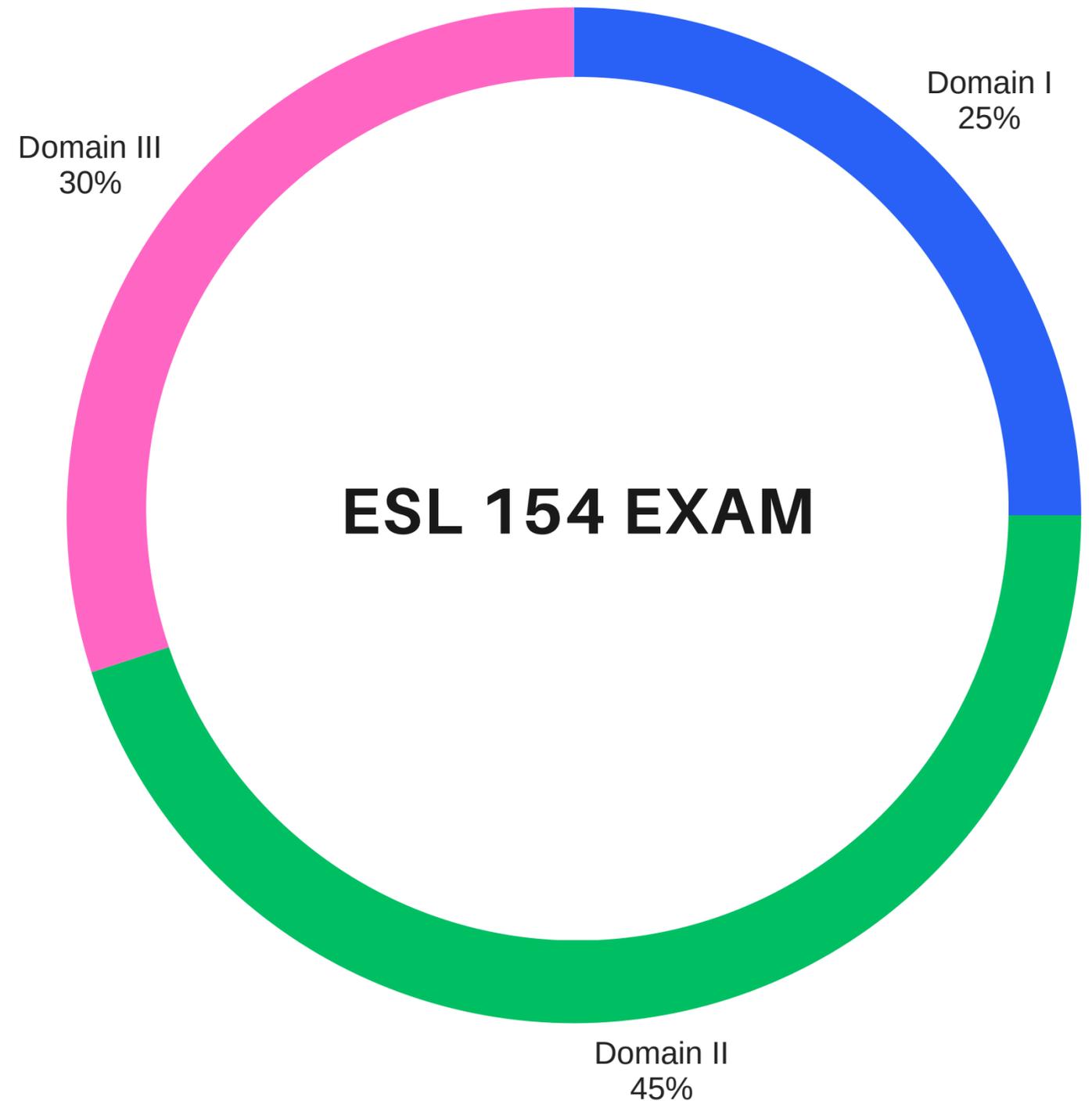
**I Language Concepts and Language Acquisition**

**II ESL Instruction and Assessment**

**III Foundations of ESL Education Cultural Awareness and Family and Community Involvement**

## English as a Second Language Supplemental

Each section is made up of a number of competencies. Explore each section to learn the breakdown of the competencies and understand the type of questions in that section.



Domain I



# Language Concepts and Language Acquisition

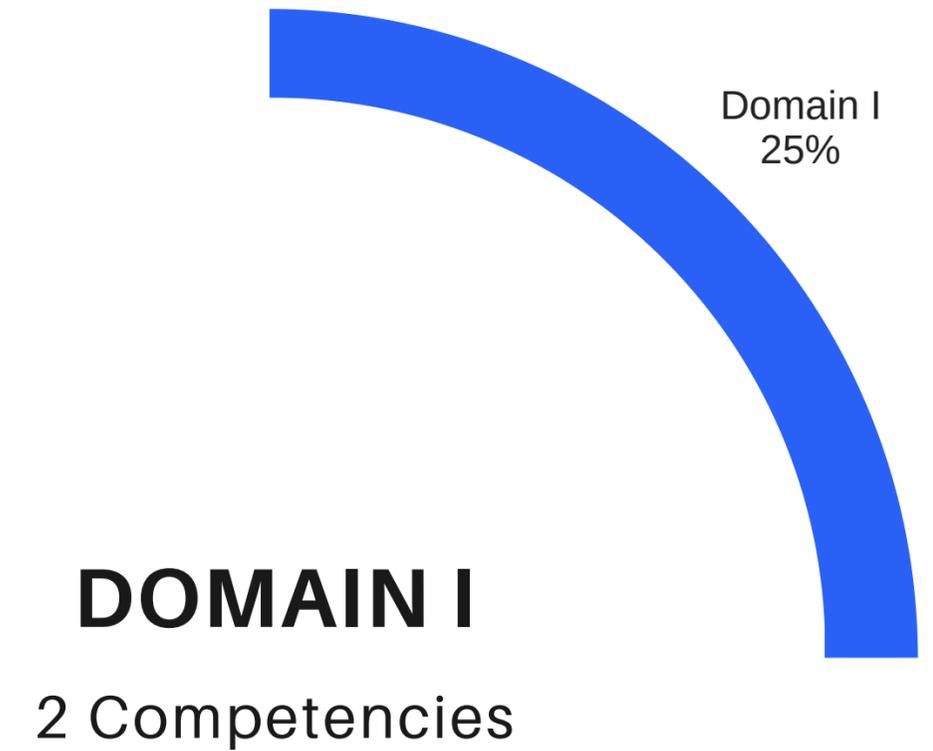
# Domain I Competencies

1.

LANGUAGE CONCEPTS AND  
STRUCTURE

2.

FIRST AND SECOND  
LANGUAGE ACQUISITION



## Language Concepts and Language Acquisition

This domain covers the foundational understanding of language systems, English language structure, and the theories and processes of first and second language acquisition.

# Language Concepts and Structure

The ESL teacher understands fundamental language concepts and knows the structure and conventions of the English language.

## Overview of Competency 1

- Understands the nature of language and basic concepts of language systems (e.g., phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, semantics, discourse, pragmatics) and uses it in the ESL classroom
- Knows the functions and registers of language (e.g., social versus academic language) in English and uses this knowledge to develop and modify instructional materials and deliver instruction
- Understands the interrelatedness of listening, speaking, reading and writing and uses this understanding to develop ESL students' English-language proficiency
- Knows the structure of the English language (e.g., word formation, grammar, vocabulary and syntax) and the patterns and conventions of written and spoken English and uses this knowledge to model and provide instruction in accordance with the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS).



# Language Concepts and Structure

## Sample Question for Competency 1



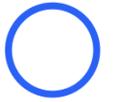
Which of the following best demonstrates a teacher's understanding of pragmatics in the ESL classroom?

- A) Teaching students the difference between the /th/ sound in "think" and "this"
- B) Explaining how the prefix "un-" changes the meaning of words like "happy" to "unhappy"
- C) Helping students understand when to use formal language versus informal language
- D) Showing students how to form plural nouns by adding "-s" or "-es"



# Language Concepts and Structure

**Answer: C**



Pragmatics refers to how language is used in different social contexts and for different functions. Understanding when to use formal versus informal registers demonstrates knowledge of pragmatics. Option A relates to phonology, B to morphology, and D to syntax/grammar.



# First & Second Language Acquisition

The ESL teacher understands the processes of first-language (L1) and second-language (L2) acquisition and the interrelatedness of L1 and L2 development.

## Overview of Competency 2

- Knows theories, concepts and research related to L1 and L2 acquisition
- Uses knowledge of theories, concepts and research related to L1 and L2 acquisition to select effective, appropriate methods and strategies for promoting students' English-language development at various stages
- Knows cognitive processes (e.g., memorization, categorization, generalization, metacognition) involved in synthesizing and internalizing language rules for second-language acquisition
- Analyzes the interrelatedness of first- and second-language acquisition and ways in which L1 may affect development of L2
- Knows common difficulties (e.g., idiomatic expressions; L1 interference in syntax, phonology and morphology) experienced by ESL students in learning English and effective strategies for helping students overcome those difficulties



# First & Second Language Acquisition

## Sample Question for Competency 2

A third-grade ESL teacher notices that a Spanish-speaking student consistently writes "I have 8 years" instead of "I am 8 years old." Which of the following best explains this error?

- A) The student has not yet developed metacognitive skills necessary for self-correction
- B) The student is experiencing L1 interference, as Spanish uses "tener" (to have) to express age
- C) The student is at the memorization stage of cognitive processing and needs more practice
- D) The student has difficulty with idiomatic expressions common in English

# First & Second Language Acquisition

**Answer: B**



This is a classic example of L1 interference where the structure from the student's first language (Spanish: "Tengo 8 años" = "I have 8 years") transfers directly to L2.

Understanding how L1 affects L2 development is a key component of Competency 2.

Option A relates to cognitive processes but doesn't explain this specific error pattern.

Option C oversimplifies the issue. Option D is partially true but doesn't identify the root cause as L1 transfer.



# Domain II



# Creating a Positive and Productive Classroom Environment

# Domain II Competencies

3.

ESL TEACHING METHODS

4.

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

5.

ENGLISH LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

6.

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

7.

ESL ASSESSMENT

This section has 5 competencies. Review the following slides to understand each competency on the test.

## DOMAIN II

2 Competencies



Domain II  
45%

# ESL Teaching Methods

The ESL teacher understands ESL teaching methods and uses this knowledge to plan and implement effective, grade-level appropriate instruction.



## Overview of Competency 3

- Understands and applies TEKS and ELPS to design instruction across listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains
- Selects appropriate instructional methods, resources, and materials based on student characteristics and needs
- Provides content-based ESL instruction that promotes critical thinking and communicative competence
- Integrates technology effectively to enhance student learning
- Applies classroom management and teaching strategies for various ESL environments



## Sample Question for Competency 3



An ESL teacher is planning a mathematics lesson on fractions for intermediate-level students. Which instructional approach best aligns with effective content-based ESL instruction according to ELPS?

- A) Using manipulatives to demonstrate fractions while teaching mathematical vocabulary, then having students work in pairs to solve word problems using sentence frames
- B) Teaching fraction vocabulary through direct instruction and visual aids, then having students practice computational skills independently
- C) Providing bilingual glossaries of mathematical terms and allowing students to complete assignments in their native language before translating to English
- D) Pre-teaching fraction concepts in simplified English, then gradually increasing linguistic complexity as students demonstrate understanding



# ESL Teaching Methods

## Answer: A

This integrates content and language development simultaneously through scaffolded support (manipulatives, sentence frames) and communicative interaction (pair work), which aligns with ELPS. Option B separates language from content practice. Option C delays English development. Option D sequences instruction linearly rather than integrating language and content.

# Communicative Language Development

The ESL teacher understands how to promote students' communicative language development in English.

## Overview of Competency 4

- Designs instruction aligned with ELPS proficiency level descriptors (beginning, intermediate, advanced, advanced-high) for listening and speaking
- Creates a rich linguistic environment with supported opportunities for communication in English
- Develops students' oral language proficiency through effective strategies and materials
- Provides focused, targeted instruction for grade 3+ students at beginning/intermediate proficiency levels
- Helps students transfer language skills from L1 to L2
- Gives appropriate feedback on developing English-language skills

# Communicative Language Development

## Sample Question for Competency 4



A teacher has intermediate-level ESL students who can participate in social conversations but struggle with academic discussions. Which approach would most effectively develop their academic oral language proficiency?



- A) Providing explicit instruction on academic vocabulary and discourse markers (e.g., "however," "in contrast," "furthermore"), then engaging students in structured academic discussions with these language tools
- B) Creating opportunities for students to engage in authentic academic discussions and providing corrective feedback on their language use afterward
- C) Having students listen to and analyze examples of academic language from podcasts and videos before attempting their own academic discussions
- D) Gradually increasing the complexity of discussion topics while providing sentence starters and thinking time before students respond

# Communicative Language Development

**Answer: D**



This approach scaffolds both content complexity and linguistic support while addressing the proficiency gap between social and academic language through systematic progression and wait time. Option A focuses heavily on explicit teaching but may not provide enough contextualized practice. Option B lacks proactive scaffolding. Option C is too receptive and delays productive language use.



# English Literacy Development

The ESL teacher understands how to promote students' literacy development in English.

## Overview of Competency 5

- Designs reading and writing instruction using ELPS proficiency level descriptors across all levels
- Develops phonological knowledge, phonemic awareness, letter-sound associations, and sight-word vocabularies
- Facilitates reading comprehension by addressing vocabulary, text structures, and cultural references
- Supports literacy transfer from L1 to L2
- Provides targeted instruction for grade 3+ students at beginning/intermediate literacy levels
- Addresses personal factors affecting literacy (interrupted schooling, primary language literacy status, prior experiences)

# English Literacy Development

## Sample Question for Competency 5

A third-grade Spanish-speaking ESL student reads fluently in Spanish and decodes English text accurately but demonstrates poor comprehension of English texts. Which factor most likely explains this difficulty?

A) The student lacks sufficient English vocabulary and background knowledge about topics commonly found in English texts

B) The student has not yet developed metacognitive reading strategies for monitoring comprehension

C) The student is applying Spanish text structures and reading strategies inappropriately to English texts

D) The student needs more practice with English phonics and decoding skills to improve automaticity

# English Literacy Development

## Answer: A

- Since the student decodes well, the issue is comprehension-related. Vocabulary and cultural/background knowledge are critical factors affecting ESL reading comprehension. Option B could be true but is less specific to ESL learners. Option C is possible but less common than vocabulary limitations. Option D is incorrect since decoding is already strong.



# Academic Language Development

The ESL teacher understands how to promote students' content-area learning, academic-language development and achievement across the curriculum.



## Overview of Competency 6

- Provides linguistically accommodated content-based instruction (communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded) appropriate to students' English proficiency levels
- Facilitates application of learning strategies (preteaching vocabulary, activating prior knowledge, metacognition, hands-on learning, visual supports)
- Selects instructional strategies and resources based on individual student differences
- Addresses personal factors affecting content-area learning (prior experiences, familiarity with academic vocabulary and textbook structures)



# Academic Language Development

## Sample Question for Competency 6

- When teaching a science unit on ecosystems to beginning-level ESL students, which strategy best develops cognitive-academic language proficiency while ensuring content learning?
- A) Using labeled diagrams and visual organizers to teach vocabulary like "producer," "consumer," and "decomposer," then having students create their own food chains using these terms with sentence frames
- B) Teaching ecosystem concepts primarily through hands-on activities and experiments, allowing students to demonstrate understanding non-verbally
- C) Providing translations of key scientific terms and allowing students to complete assignments in their native language with English word banks
- D) Simplifying the academic language by using everyday terms like "plant," "animal," and "things that break down" instead of scientific vocabulary



# Academic Language Development

## Answer: A

This develops both content knowledge and academic language simultaneously through visual scaffolding and structured language practice, which builds cognitive-academic language proficiency. Option B prioritizes content over language development. Option C doesn't develop English academic language. Option D avoids rather than develops academic language.



# ESL Assessment

The ESL teacher understands formal and informal assessment procedures and instruments used in ESL programs and uses assessment results to plan and adapt instruction.

## Overview of Competency 7

- Understands test design, development, and interpretation to select and adapt assessments for various purposes (diagnosis, program evaluation, proficiency)
- Applies knowledge of formal and informal assessments, including their characteristics, uses, and limitations
- Interprets standardized tests commonly used in Texas ESL programs
- Implements state-mandated LEP policies and LPAC procedures for identification, placement, and exit
- Understands relationships among state standards, instruction, and assessment
- Uses ongoing assessment to plan and adjust instruction for individual student needs

## Sample Question for Competency 7



An ESL teacher reviews TELPAS data showing that a student scored at the intermediate level in reading but beginning level in writing. The student performs well on multiple-choice comprehension questions but struggles with written responses. What instructional focus would best address this discrepancy?

- A) Provide more writing practice across content areas with consistent feedback on grammar and mechanics
- B) Focus on developing the student's ability to express comprehension through scaffolded writing activities, including sentence frames, graphic organizers for planning, and models of written responses
- C) Continue building reading comprehension skills since strong reading typically leads to improved writing over time
- D) Assess whether the student has had interrupted schooling or limited literacy experiences in their primary language that may be affecting writing development



# ESL Assessment

**Answer: B**

The data shows receptive skills exceed productive skills, requiring targeted scaffolding to help the student express what they understand in writing. Option A lacks scaffolding for a beginning-level writer. Option C doesn't address the immediate writing need. Option D gathers more information but doesn't provide instruction.



# Domain III



Foundations of ESL  
Education Cultural  
Awareness and Family  
and Community  
Involvement

# Domain III Competencies

8.

FOUNDATIONS IN ESL  
EDUCATION

9.

MULTILINGUAL LEARNING  
ENVIRONMENTS

10.

ADVOCACY AND FAMILY  
ENGAGEMENT

Domain III  
30%

**DOMAIN III**  
3 Competencies

This section has 3 competencies. Review the following slides to understand each competency on the test.

# Foundations in ESL Education

The ESL teacher understands the foundations of ESL education and types of ESL programs.

## Overview of Competency 8

- Knows the historical, theoretical and policy foundations of ESL education and uses this knowledge to plan, implement and advocate for effective ESL programs
- Knows types of ESL programs (e.g., self-contained, pull-out, newcomer centers, dual language, immersion), their characteristics, their goals and research findings on their effectiveness
- Applies knowledge of the various types of ESL programs to make appropriate instructional and management decisions
- Applies knowledge of research findings related to ESL education, including research on instructional and management practices in ESL programs, to assist in planning and implementing effective ESL programs



# Foundations in ESL Education

## Sample Question for Competency 8



A district is considering implementing a new ESL program for elementary students and is evaluating different program models. The district has a large population of Spanish-speaking students, many of whom enter school with limited English proficiency but strong literacy skills in Spanish. Which program model would research suggest is most effective for promoting both academic achievement and bilingualism?

- A) A pull-out ESL program where students receive 45 minutes of daily English instruction outside the regular classroom
- B) A dual language/two-way immersion program where English learners and native English speakers learn together in both languages
- C) A newcomer center program that provides intensive English instruction before transitioning students to mainstream classrooms
- D) A sheltered English immersion program where all content is taught in English with specialized instructional strategies



# Foundations in ESL Education

## Answer: B

Research consistently shows that dual language programs are highly effective for students with strong L1 literacy, promoting both academic achievement and bilingualism/biliteracy. Option A provides limited language support and separates students from content instruction. Option C is designed for recent arrivals with interrupted schooling, not the described population. Option D develops English but not bilingualism, despite students having strong Spanish literacy.

# Multilingual Learning Environments

The ESL teacher understands factors that affect ESL students' learning and implements strategies for creating an effective and multilingual learning environment.

## Overview of Competency 9

- Understands linguistic diversity in the ESL classroom and other factors that may affect students' learning of academic content and language (e.g., age, developmental characteristics, academic strengths and needs, preferred learning styles, personality, societal factors, home environment, attitude, exceptionalities)
- Knows how to create an effective multilingual learning environment that addresses the affective, linguistic and cognitive needs of ESL students and facilitates students' learning and language acquisition
- Knows factors that contribute to classroom disparities and knows how to create a positive learning environment
- Demonstrates sensitivity to students' varied backgrounds and shows respect for language differences
- Applies strategies for creating among students an awareness of and respect for linguistic backgrounds

## Sample Question for Competency 9



A fifth-grade teacher notices that several intermediate-level ESL students participate actively in small group work but rarely volunteer responses during whole-class discussions. Which approach would best address the affective and linguistic needs contributing to this behavior?

- A) Implement a system where students submit written responses before whole-class discussion, then call on students to share what they've already written
- B) Provide sentence stems and allow students to rehearse responses with a partner before opening the discussion to the whole class
- C) Create a supportive environment by praising students publicly when they do participate in whole-class discussions
- D) Arrange heterogeneous groups that mix proficiency levels so advanced students can model participation for intermediate learners



# Multilingual Learning Environments

## Answer: B

This addresses both affective needs (rehearsal reduces anxiety) and linguistic needs (sentence stems provide language support), helping students bridge from comfortable small-group to more intimidating whole-class participation. Option A shifts to writing rather than developing oral participation. Option C may increase anxiety about public performance. Option D focuses on grouping but doesn't directly address the participation gap between settings.



# Advocacy and Family Engagement

The ESL teacher knows how to serve as an advocate for ESL students and facilitate family and community involvement in their education.

## Overview of Competency 10

- Applies knowledge of effective strategies advocating for educational access for ESL students (e.g., participating in LPAC and Admission, Review and Dismissal [ARD] meetings, serving on Site-Based Decision Making [SBDM] committees, serving as a resource for teachers)
- Understands the importance of family involvement in the education of ESL students and knows how to facilitate parent/guardian participation in their children's education and school activities
- Applies skills for communicating and collaborating effectively with the parents/guardians of ESL students in a variety of educational contexts
- Knows how community members and resources can positively affect student learning in the ESL program and is able to access community resources to enhance the education of ESL students

# Advocacy and Family Engagement

## Sample Question for Competency 10

An ESL teacher learns that a beginning-level English learner in third grade is being recommended for special education evaluation due to low reading scores. The student has been in U.S. schools for only 18 months and is making steady progress in English acquisition. What would be the most appropriate advocacy action?

- A) Request that the LPAC committee review the student's English language proficiency data and progress before proceeding with the special education referral
- B) Contact the parents directly to explain that their child does not need special education services and suggest they refuse the evaluation
- C) Recommend postponing the evaluation until the student has been in U.S. schools for at least three years
- D) Attend the ARD meeting to provide input on the student's language development and suggest alternative interventions before formal evaluation

# Advocacy and Family Engagement

## Answer: A

The LPAC has the formal responsibility to consider whether academic difficulties stem from limited English proficiency versus a learning disability. Involving the LPAC ensures proper procedures are followed and prevents inappropriate special education referrals. Option B circumvents proper procedures and undermines collaborative decision-making. Option C arbitrarily delays without proper assessment of the situation. Option D occurs too late in the process—the issue should be addressed at the LPAC level before ARD.



# Additional Resources

BBreakdown of ESL 154 Test



Thank You

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