

## Washington English Center's ACCESS Standards

**Achievement (of goals):** Each lesson should be focused on a specific goal or goals, which should answer the question “What can students do at the end of class that they couldn’t do before?” These goals, which can be found in your textbooks as well as on the syllabi, should be communicated to students at the beginning of each lesson and all of the activities in class that day should contribute to the students’ achievement of the goal(s).

**Centered on Students:** Research shows that adult ESL students learn best when they are given ample time to engage with their peers and practice new language (as opposed to listening to teacher-led presentations). With this in mind, it is essential that teachers aim to spend less than 30% of class time doing teacher-centered activities and 70% of class time engaged in student-centered activities such as pair/group work, dialogues, hands-on practice activities, etc.

**Corrective Feedback:** Providing corrective feedback can be tricky but is a very important part of language learning. Some general guidelines for corrective feedback are:

- Focus on correcting errors that are relevant to the material you are covering in class that day or has been covered earlier in the semester.
- If many students are making the same error, take a few minutes to give a “mini-lesson” on the concept they are struggling with.
- Consider correcting errors in a variety of different ways, focusing on ways to elicit student-generated corrections (recasts, asking for clarification, prompting them to think about the correct form, making a questioning face until they self-correct, etc.)
- Remember, as a teacher you see giving feedback as neutral—it’s part of your job. However, students will often feel it as a criticism. Try to balance “correcting” with praising students for their effort or empathizing (e.g., “ohhh, anybody could make that mistake, but...”)

**Explanation:** Knowing that students will not comprehend everything teachers say, it is very helpful for students when teachers use alternative ways of explaining concepts and keep language input at an appropriate level for the students in your class. Some of the best ways to do this are modeling concepts and activities, using visual supports, giving plenty of examples, and presenting the same material in a variety of different ways. Also, keep your pace of speaking slowly and consider writing key concepts and instructions on the board for visual learners.

**Sequencing:** Good lessons follow a specific order of activities that allows students to gradually build towards achieving the goal of that day’s lesson(s). Proper sequencing is helpful to students because it ensures that they are adequately challenged throughout the lesson without becoming overwhelmed. The lesson plans in your textbooks do a great job providing guidance on how each lesson should be structured. Generally, this sequence should be:

1. Warm-up/Review
2. Presentation
3. Practice I (less complex task done with teacher’s guidance)
4. Practice II (more complex task done more independently from teacher)
5. Application (most complex task done independently from the teacher, as authentic or situational and relevant to students’ real lives as possible)
6. Wrap-up/Evaluation

**Silence and wait time:** Language learners benefit tremendously from having ample time to process information in their second language. Native speakers tend to become uncomfortable after about 2 seconds of silence, whereas ESL students may need up to 8 seconds to respond to a question.

The concept of wait time also applies to assigning students independent practice: teachers should always be available to answer student questions, but it can make students anxious if a teacher approaches them to look at their work soon after assigning it.