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A Change in the State-Approved English Language Proficiency Assessment Instrument for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

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In the Superintendent of Public Instruction's Superintendent's Memorandum, Administrative, Number 67, dated December 19, 2003, school divisions were notified of the use of the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) as the state-approved ELP assessment instrument. Since that time, states have been notified by the management team for the assessment, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), that the ELDA will not be available for implementation as a census field test instrument for spring 2004. Field-

testing for the ELDA will be conducted with a sample of selected school divisions.

Since the ELDA will not be available for census field testing in spring 2004, a change in the state-approved ELP assessment was required. The state-approved English language proficiency assessment for the 2003-2004 school year as required in Section 1111(b)(7) of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001*, will be the Stanford English Language Proficiency (ELP) test. The Stanford ELP test will assess the speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills of all LEP students as required by NCLB. The Virginia Department of Education will pay for the administration costs associated with the Stanford ELP for the 2003-2004 school year.

The Stanford ELP test has been developed by Harcourt Assessment. A separate form of the test has been developed for each of the four grade clusters defined in Virginia's English Language Proficiency Standards of Learning: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Additionally, each form of the Stanford ELP contains four components: 1) speaking, 2) listening, 3) reading, and 4) writing as required in Section 1111(b)(7) of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The Stanford ELP will yield a score for each of these four components as well as a composite score. Additionally, as required only for Title III sub-grantees in Section 3121 (d) of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, the listening and reading components of the Stanford ELP will be combined to yield a comprehension score.

The reading component of the Stanford ELP test will serve as a substitute for the English: Reading Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment for the LEP students at the lower levels of English proficiency (Level 1 and Level 2 as determined by Virginia's English Language Proficiency Standards of Learning) in grades 3 through 8. Decisions regarding LEP students participating in the state assessment program must be guided by the school-based committee convened to make LEP determinations as described in the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, 8 VAC 20-131-30 G. LEP

students' scores on the reading component of the Stanford ELP test will be used to calculate adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools, school divisions, and the state.

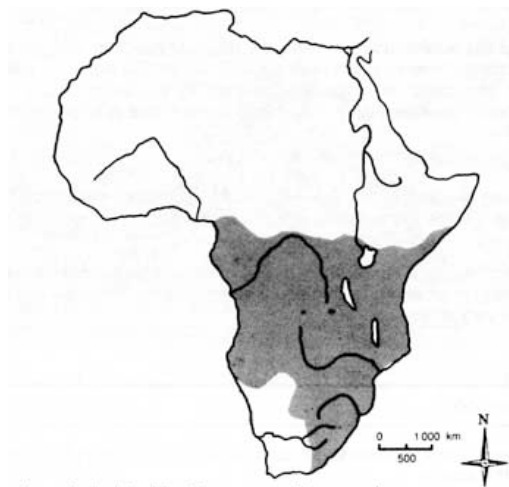
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Areas inhabited by Bantu-speaking people

Somali Bantu Families Arrive in Roanoke

Alice N. Duehl, Education Coordinator
Refugee and Immigration Services

Refugee and Immigration Services has welcomed the first three Somali Bantu families. The first two that arrived on January 20th and 21st are single woman (widows) with children. One has her grandson with her and the other has two sons and a daughter. The third arrival came on January 28th. This is a husband, wife and four children. Out of all the children, five are school age. They have all been settled in their respective apartments and will soon receive tutors to help with English.

The homebound instruction will focus on pre-literacy and literacy skills while also teaching basic survival English skills. The children will be enrolled in

school as soon as they have been to the Health Department and have had their immunizations. A few of the children, most who were born in the refugee camps, show evidence of having learned English while in the camp. In one of the families, both husband and wife know the English alphabet and numbers, though they tell me they "have never studied English".

The Roanoke community has come forth with volunteers, household goods and other donations. We are overwhelmed with the positive, generous and enthusiastic response that we have gotten from the community as a result of the newspaper's coverage of their arrival and initial resettlement. After a rather negative letter to the editor from someone who was opposed to bringing in these Somalis, the responding letters have been welcoming and positive. It makes one proud to be a member of this community, witnessing the kindness, love and open arm attitude that most people in the Roanoke and surrounding areas share.

UPDATE Newsletter

Family Services and Involvement Section
Fairfax County Public Schools

The Winter 2004 edition of this Newsletter is devoted to the theme: Reaching out to African Families. The newsletter is available in PDF format on the VATESOL website at:

<http://vatesol.org/winter2004%5b1%5d.pdf>

Ann Ulmschneider of Fairfax County Public Schools has given VATESOL members permission to download this excellent resource.

Laying the Ghosts to Rest: Using Writing with Children of Trauma

Sheila Weston, Fairfax County Public Schools
ESOL Teacher

(Originally published in the WATESOL Newsletter)

Today's educators are increasingly challenged to work with children who have experienced trauma. Immigrant children may enter our classrooms after witnessing atrocities related to civil unrest, being displaced from their homes, living in refugee camps, and/or having been separated from parents or other loved ones. A 2003 report by the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies found that traumatic life experiences are more common in childhood than educators may realize. In fact, research suggests that 14 to 43% of children have

experienced at least one traumatic event in their lifetime.

One group of students who may enter our classrooms having endured hardships and trauma beyond what most of us will ever experience is the World English (WE) speakers, those students from the West African countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Nigeria. The people of Liberia and Sierra Leone, especially, have suffered tremendously due to political and social war and instability. Nigeria and Ghana, too, have experienced periods of political instability, and, like Liberia and Sierra Leone, have a history of human rights abuse by their military leaders.

That these WE students may have experienced trauma has important implications for their academic, peer, and family functionings. Students may have experienced or witnessed such atrocities as persecution, torture, mutilations, amputations, or rapes. Refugee children may have experienced the violent death of one or both parents or other family members, been forced to participate in violent acts or to join the rebel army, or have suffered physical or sexual abuse.

"During the war, many people were killed and their houses were burned down. Little children were kidnapped by the rebel soldiers and forced to join them. The girls that were kidnapped by rebel soldiers were raped. When the rebel soldiers attacked a town, they didn't care who you were. They were brutal murderers."

Thomas,* a 6th grader from Sierra Leone who came to the United States in 1999, wrote in his journal these memories of life in his country: "During the war, many people were killed and their houses were burned down. Little children were kidnapped by the rebel soldiers and forced to join them. The girls that were kidnapped by rebel soldiers were raped. When the rebel soldiers attacked a town, they didn't care who you were. They were brutal murderers." And yet, children like Thomas are expected to come to class each day ready to learn, to fit in socially, to pay attention in class, and to pass challenging standardized tests.

Recognizing that students from these West African countries represent a steadily growing percentage of the Washington area's immigrant population, Fairfax County's World English Speakers' Team (WEST) was organized during the 2002-03 academic year to study the unique cultural and linguistic characteristics of WE students from English-speaking West Africa in an effort to provide better services and instructional programs. As a member of this team and

the teacher of a small but very challenging group of students from West Africa, I began exploring ways to offer some relief to these children, whose parents often refuse to seek counseling services for them.

The symptoms that some of these children were exhibiting in the classroom seemed to be similar to those of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), including depression, aggressive behavior, lack of confidence, anxiety, concentration and memory impairment, sleep disorders, and learning difficulties. Researching the topic of trauma brought me to the work of Judith Herman, M.D., Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Harvard University, a pioneer in the study of PTSD. In her groundbreaking book, Trauma and Recovery, Dr. Herman discusses the importance for victims of trauma of "bearing witness." She notes that important elements of survival and recovery include providing a zone of safety, allowing victims to remember and tell their story, and offering opportunities for connection. I began to explore how I could offer such opportunities in a classroom setting.



Thinking back to how journal writing had offered me opportunities for personal growth and reflection over the years, I wondered about its potential as a tool for helping children who had experienced trauma. Interestingly, research by James Pennebaker, Ph.D., professor of psychology at the University of Texas, found that those who write reflectively have more robust immune systems, function better in day-to-day tasks, report lower levels of pain, use fewer medications, go to the doctor less, and score higher on tests of psychological well-being. Research confirmed what I had thought to be true about journal writing; that most people, from grade-schoolers to nursing-home residents, medical students to prisoners, feel happier and healthier after writing about deeply traumatic memories. Perhaps providing children from painful pasts with opportunities to write about their traumatic experiences would offer

them some relief and help them to begin to heal, change, and grow.

Since I am not trained as a psychologist and was fearful that writing about bad memories might be painful for my students, I began with structured writing exercises which related to the subject of their coming to a new land. The "New Pilgrims to America" project, which was initiated in the months leading up to the Thanksgiving season, offered students opportunities to write short stories about why they had come to this country and to describe what their homeland had been like by having them answer prompts such as the following:

1. Please write a story about how you felt when your family decided to move to America. Were you sad? Happy? Excited? Nervous?
2. What did you think life would be like in America? What has surprised you about life here?
3. Are you glad you came to America? What do you miss about life in your country? Do you ever wish you could go back?
4. Write about the people in your family who still live in your home country. Do your grandparents still live there, or some of your brothers and sisters? How do you keep in touch?

Students took the prompts for homework and were encouraged to spend time discussing their responses with their parents and other family members. They were invited to share their responses with the class but were never required to do so.

Much to my surprise, students began asking for multiple copies of the prompts, explaining that their mom, older brother, or grandmother wanted to share memories, too. Sometimes my students became transcribers for other family members, translating their stories from their native tongue into English. Students who had previously been reluctant to write and share suddenly had a forum for self-expression and were eager to participate.

Marcus,* a 4th grader from Liberia who had narrowly escaped capture by the rebel soldiers, a child who frequently "tuned out" and often dove under a table when schoolwork became overwhelming, gradually began sharing his story. Amazingly, the level of trust rose in the classroom, resulting a closeness and a sense of community among these students beyond what I had imagined possible. Many beautiful books were used to support the "New Pilgrims to America" project, such as Marianthe's Story: Painted Words, Spoken Memories, by Aliko; How Many Days to America, by Beth Peck; and From Far Away, by Robert Munsch.

The "New Pilgrims to America" project resulted in a publication, which students edited, typed, and prepared artwork for, which was shared among the participating families, the school community, and on a national level through the efforts of Communities in Schools NoVa (CISNoVa), an independent, nonprofit organization which connects community resources with schools. In addition, WEST has recommended its implementation throughout Fairfax County as a means of increasing students' literacy skills as well as providing them an opportunity to release stress.

Research confirmed what I had thought to be true about journal writing; that most people, from grade-schoolers to nursing-home residents, medical students to prisoners, feel happier and healthier after writing about deeply traumatic memories.

Journal or memoir writing is another forum for creating a bridge between the past and the future. Kathleen Adams, LPC, founder and director of The Center for Journal Therapy and advocate for the healing power of writing, describes journal therapy as "the purposeful and intentional use of reflective writing to further mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health and wellness, and an effective means of providing focus and clarity to issues, concerns, conflicts, and confusions."

In my classroom, students are encouraged to use their daily writing journal as a place to reflect private thoughts. Students are assured that no one will read their journal except for me, unless they choose to share it with others, and that I will respond to each entry they make. I seldom "correct" or edit students' journal writing; rather, its function is to provide an outlet for students to write about anything they want. Students are given general instructions on what to write about, such as:

1. describe something that you are thinking or worrying about too much, and what you can do to cope with this situation;
2. write about a difficult time in your life and how you handled it in a positive way;
3. think about a time when you lost something valuable or someone close to you, and how you keep important and happy memories of that thing or person alive.

Through journal writing, students are able to work through an emotional event and to articulate how they

coped, thus reinforcing their belief in their own resilience, a key factor in healing victims of trauma.

It is critical that a caring adult read and respond appropriately to what the student has written, because, as Kathleen Adams notes, "the greatest moment of healing occurs not during the actual writing, but when the writing is shared with others." An appropriate response if a student describes something traumatic which occurred in his or her life includes affirming that you believe what the student wrote is true; acknowledging that what he or she experienced was horrific and unfair; encouraging the student to write more; and assuring the student that you believe in his or her strength, resiliency, and goodness.

Knowing that a caring adult is going to read and to respond to their writing affords children who have been traumatized with the three elements of recovery described by Judith Herman; i.e., a zone of safety; the opportunity to share meaningful stories; and genuine opportunities for connection. Whether the children share their writing in a publication, in a classroom setting among peers, or privately in a journal meant to be read by only one teacher, memoir writing helps children to work through emotional events, to learn to be at peace with themselves, and to connect in important ways with caring adults and peers. Psychologists who work with victims of trauma emphasize that survivors cannot recover in isolation, and that writing provides a means to begin the healing process.

Aminata,* a 7th grader from Liberia, gave permission for the following to be shared about how journal writing helps her to keep alive the memory of her father: "We came to America because there was a big war in our country and there was a lot of killing. My father was killed and my family was left with no one to protect us. I thought my heart was broken and I began to forget him. Writing helps me to remember the good memories about my father and to keep him alive in my heart."

If we can help WE speakers like Aminata and others who have suffered trauma to put back the pieces of their lives, we educators give a gift that comes back to us many times. As the winner of WATESOL's Jim Weaver Scholarship for Professional Development in 2003, I am very grateful and feel very privileged to have been given the opportunity to research and give presentations on the topic of using writing with children who have experienced trauma. I encourage others to apply for the scholarship and to explore other avenues for helping such children.

*Names changed

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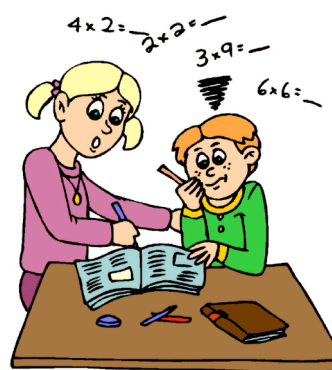
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Using the Internet to Support Grades 3 and 5 Math Standards of Learning (VESA workshop 1/31/04)

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As the Commonwealth of Virginia now requires levels I and II ESL students to take a plain English version of the



SOL math tests in grades 3 and 5, those students' math skills will be tested along with native English speaking students' skills. The Internet provides an exciting and engaging resource for students to practice their math skills on line. The following is a list websites that have interactive activities for

teachers and students to use in preparation for the math SOL tests.

www.aaamath.com: This is most comprehensive site with skills broken down by grade level; this site is a good resource for drill and practice of nearly all SOL tested skills.

www.aplusmath.com: Basic skills are covered with flash cards and java games; topics range from the four basic mathematical functions to basic geometry.

www.coolmath4kids.com: Interactive java games utilize math skills on varying levels of difficulty.

www.mathplayground.com: Interactive games are available at many thinking skill levels.

www.brainpop.com: Animated movies present higher-level math topics and quizzes; this site is more appropriate for fifth grade students.

Using Project CRISS with LEP Students: Power Mapping and Power Writing

By Julie Dauksys,
Hanover County Reading Specialist/ESL Teacher,
South Anna Elementary School

Project CRISS, which stands for CReating Independence through Student-Owned Strategies, was designed to help students learn through reading, writing, talking, and listening. It uses specific strategies that are applied in the content areas. Students play an active role in guiding their own thinking and the meaning they make from text. With Project CRISS, three key principles on which teachers continuously focus are developing background knowledge, keeping the students actively involved in the lesson, and maintaining a metacognitive direction to create meaning. I have found that these main principles are the very ideas that a fourth grade LEP student at my school needed in order to be more successful in his classroom.

Rafael, a student from Colombia, South America, came to our school two years ago. Since then, he has made great strides in oral language, reading, and math. At the beginning of this school year, I tested Rafael using Ballard and Tighe's Idea Proficiency Tests. He scored well on oral vocabulary and reading, yet still he struggled to convey his thoughts on paper. I made arrangements with his classroom teacher to provide two kinds of assistance to help him. We decided that Rafael would meet with me weekly to review vocabulary, both in reading and in content areas. We also decided that I would work collaboratively with his teacher to provide writing instruction for her whole class, with one-on-one time given to Rafael. I planned to use the Project CRISS strategies, because the key principles were exactly what Rafael needed in order to learn.

I began the year by introducing the students to the Writing Toolkit. This toolkit contained "writing tools," such as the steps to the complete writing process as well as tips for revising and editing. Then I decided to share Project CRISS strategies, starting with brainstorming techniques. We began with the easiest, which is mapping. To map a concept, students place the main idea in a center circle. Then, they create stems going outward from the circle to more circles, wherein they list the details of the theme. I let the students have some freedom, allowing them to choose their own topics. Rafael seemed to enjoy the mapping strategy immensely, so we decided to take the exercise a step further. I showed the students how to create a Power

Map, simply by numbering the parts of their existing map. With this concept, the main idea in the center becomes a Power 1; the surrounding details become Power 2's, and so on. I asked the students to narrow their Power 2's down to just three details. From there, I was able to show students how to create a five-paragraph paper. They used the Power 1 in their map to create an opening paragraph, and then each Power 2 became its own paragraph, filled with Power 3 details. Once they completed their paragraphs, I showed them how to write a conclusion. They found Power Mapping to be an easy way to develop a five-paragraph paper. Rafael's paper was a good first try; he was able to create the Power Map and to transfer his information into paragraph form.

The next step was to show Rafael and the other students how to put the strategy into practice in the content areas. In social studies class, pupils had been studying the Virginia Indian Tribes—a fourth grade SOL. To spark their background knowledge, I asked the students to tell me what they already knew about the Indian tribes in Virginia. After this initial group brainstorming activity, I asked class members to read a selection from their social studies textbook about the Indian language groups in Virginia and then to create a Power Map based on the information they had seen. This made them actively engage in the reading.



When their maps were complete, they used this information to write a five-paragraph paper about the Indian language groups to make meaning of what they read. Most of the students were very successful in their writing. Rafael was easily able to read the material, create his own map, and write about the language groups. By having Rafael actively participate during reading by creating a Power Map, he grasped more effectively the information and vocabulary he needed in order to make sense of his reading. He then used the other tools in his Writing Toolkit to publish his paper.

This aforementioned Project CRISS strategy worked very well for the students in the class, but especially for Rafael. He has learned to use the Power Mapping and Power Writing strategies on his own in the classroom, which is the primary goal of Project CRISS. As he continues to exercise his academic independence, I feel like a proud parent watching a child take his first steps without any assistance. Go, Rafael, go!

Internationalizing the University of Virginia & Supporting English Language Learners by Involving the Campus Community - Low Costs, High Returns

Dudley Doane & Alyson Kienle
The Center for American English Language and Culture (CAELC)
University of Virginia

Calls for greater internationalization of higher education in the United States are not new, nor is disappointment about the breadth and depth of internationalization efforts. Much of the discourse on campus internationalization has focused on the mobility of U.S. students and faculty along with reform of undergraduate curricula. While commonly acknowledged to be a primary component of campus internationalization, the integration of international students and scholars at U.S. colleges and universities (Ellingboe, 1998; Hayward, 2000) too often receives little attention and few resources. One can argue that in failing to support their international students and scholars, institutions overlook a tremendous internationalization resource and underserve, what for many universities including our own, are increasingly important constituencies.

In the last decade, the number of international students and scholars has grown dramatically at the University of Virginia. These students and scholars bring a wealth of knowledge and skills to the University. They play a significant role in the production and dissemination of knowledge. As newcomers to the U.S., many international students and scholars face a variety of challenges. The challenges often involve language and culture.

In an effort to help students and scholars address challenges related to language and culture, the University of Virginia re-configured and expanded English language support services through creation of the Center for American English Language and Culture (CAELC). Coordination of several existing, and highly successful, ESL endeavors was effected under the banner of CAELC, and additional English language courses and services were created; however, CAELC faculty quickly realized that their students needed opportunities both for conversation practice and for interaction with U.S. peers outside of language classes. For this to happen, CAELC would have to call on members of the U.Va. community.

The faculty also recognized that the capstone course for prospective international teaching assistants, LING 111 Classroom Communication, a class focused on both the development of oral language skills and of

teaching skills, would have to be re-designed in order to accommodate more participants. There was a long waiting list for enrollment in the course, and departments needed to fill teaching assignments.

Elizabeth Wittner, the CAELC faculty member who oversees the training program for international teaching assistants, elected to double the size of LING 111 and to create a second section of the class. In the fall of 2002, 48 individuals enrolled in LING 111 whereas in 2001, 12 people took the course. Resources allowed employment of a second LING 111 instructor, but re-design of the course relied heavily on the involvement of U.Va. community members.

CAELC faculty cited increased contact between U.S. students and individuals from different cultures as a significant collateral benefit of the new programming. Interacting with international students and scholars on a regular basis could help U.S. students develop intercultural proficiency or global competence, an overriding goal in much of the literature on internationalization (ACE, 1998; Hayward, 2000; Green, 2002). The prospect of developing programs that led to more reflexive and insightful U.S. students as well as to increased English proficiency among international students and scholars provided a powerful incentive to forge ahead.

The challenges faced by CAELC faculty were substantially lowered by two existing models for campus community involvement in English language support services. The first involved classroom assistants and tutors and was developed by Dr. Marion Ross, founder of the original ESL program at the University. Ross recruited U.S. students from linguistics, anthropology, foreign language departments, and her own course on the teaching of English as second language to assist with her popular course on American pronunciation. Many of the volunteers received practicum credit for the work, directed by Ross.

The second model, tied to the training program for international teaching assistants, was developed by Elizabeth Wittner. Wittner recruited volunteers to debrief prospective international teaching assistants on their teaching demos in her LING 111 course and also sought volunteers to meet with her students for conversation practice outside of class.

Today, there are five ways U.Va. community members can assist with the delivery of English language support services: Peer Mentors in the summer English for Academic Purposes program (10 in 2003), Classroom Tutors in LING 105 American Pronunciation (17 in 2003-2004), LING 111 Classroom Volunteers (47 in 2003-2004), LING 111 Classroom Moderators (18 in 2003-2004), and Student Language Consultants, a.k.a., conversation group leaders (152 in 2003-2004). Since September, 2003, over 350 international students and

scholars have participated in CAELC courses and extra-curricular activities that draw on support from the larger U.Va. community.

While the five programs all rely on the willingness of native-English speakers to give of their time, CAELC has been able to provide modest financial rewards for the summer Peer Mentors and the LING 111 Classroom Moderators. This is important as Mentors and Moderators take on more responsibilities than do assistants in the other programs. Additionally, practicum credit continues to be available for the Classroom Tutors, which is appropriate given the training in the teaching of pronunciation provided by Marion Ross. The vast majority of the native-speaker assistants, however, are true volunteers. Levels of satisfaction with the experience appear to be high. The programs have rapidly increased in popularity.

Each type of assistant completes some kind of training at the beginning of the term and is monitored throughout the term. The assistants, who are mostly from the U.S., are not only asked to provide feedback on the language skills of English language learners but also encouraged to reflect on their own assumptions and values along with the difficulties of intercultural communication. This is done through bi-weekly journals.

Organization of the five programs involves recruitment, training and support, and evaluation. The endeavor has required employment of a graduate administrative intern to assist faculty with development and administration of the programs. Given the number of assistants and internationals involved in the programs and the value of participation to both groups, the costs of administration seem small.

By building on existing strengths and practices, CAELC faculty have increased interaction between internationals and members of the larger U.Va. community. This increased interaction has helped English language learners develop their language skills and their knowledge of U.S. culture and helped several hundred U.S. students expand their world view. In the words of Elizabeth Wittner, we are "Internationalizing U.Va. one conversation at a time."

Information on English language support services at the University of Virginia is available at www.virginia.edu/provost/caelc. Questions should be directed to CAELC at caelc@virginia.edu or 434/924 3371.

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University of Virginia Offers ESL/EFL Teacher Training Institute

Dudley J. Doane
University of Virginia

The University of Virginia's Center for American English Language and Culture will offer a six-credit certificate program in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language, July 12 – 29, 2004.

Two theoretical streams, describing language and acquiring language, inform an examination of teaching methods, classroom practices, materials development, and assessment.

Opportunities for classroom observation and practice teaching are scheduled as part of the Institute. A review of professional resources and standards is included as is an overview of prospective employers and teaching contexts.

The ESL/EFL Teacher Training Institute is an excellent opportunity both for individuals considering overseas work and for those who intend to work with English language learners in the U.S.

Non-UVA students are welcome to apply. The program is limited to 18 participants. Applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.



For more information contact CAELC at caelc@virginia.edu or 434/924 3371. The Institute application is available at www.virginia.edu/provost/caelc/teacher.html.