

# ELPS and Adult Educators

## Course Syllabus

### Course Description and Overview:

*ELPS and Adult Educators* is a six-week, asynchronous online course that will provide participants with an overview of the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) for Adult Education (AE) report that was released to the field of adult education in October 2016 (AIR, 2016). The ELPS federal report provides a bridge between content and academic standards-based instruction. Participants will explore the five sections of the report, develop a basic understanding of the Basics Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) varieties of language learning (Cummins, 1979), and utilize the ELPS to ratchet-up instructional activities that support academic language learning and transitioning adults to careers and postsecondary education.

The course has been designed to help you discover the keys to strengthening your work with adults who have disabilities. The course is taught through the [Virginia Commonwealth University's Canvas learning management system](#). Completion of the course is designed to require a minimum of **24 hours** of your time – approximately four hours per week. However, you may find that you want to spend longer with some topics. In order to receive a certificate for participating in the *ELPS and Adult Educators* training; you must complete all assignments, respond to each discussion question, respond at least once to one of your classmates in any of the week's discussion/assignment forums, and complete the case study that is due in the final week of class. There are no required textbooks.

### Weekly Format:

Each week begins with an announcement that introduces the weekly content, the discussion threads, and the assignments. A facilitator will monitor discussions, the Wiki (described below), and assignments in order to answer questions and provide feedback, resources, and support. To receive a certificate for participating in the course, participants should read all course materials and must complete weekly discussion and assignment posts.

Weekly content will be conveyed through background readings delivered in a variety of formats, and by navigating through the ELPS. Participants will engage in the content and with each other through weekly discussions that promote a collaborative approach to active learning. Though assignments will use an active learning approach, it is the discussions with both colleagues and the facilitator where participants will likely feel most engaged. To keep discussions as productive as possible, it is recommended that participants stay within the timeframe outlined for this course (see *Week-by-Week Checklist of Assignments*

in this syllabus for a list of what to do each week). Coursework will not be graded, but will be tracked via the Canvas *Grades* section so that participants can follow completion of all their coursework and participation in order to receive a VALRC completion certificate at the end of the course.

An ongoing *Wiki* provides the opportunity for participants to collaborate on creating a collection of resources related to the course materials. The *Wiki* supports participant learning through the building of a collective framework of knowledge. Each learner is encouraged to contribute additional teaching resources in order to expand the weekly content. Posting to the *Wiki* is optional, but it is a great place to collect additional resource ideas that can be saved or printed in order to save as resources for the future.

Both individual and group assignments will provide opportunities for participants to apply their learning to their practice. Assignments will receive feedback from the facilitator, but are non-graded.

**Learning Outcomes:**

<b>What you will be learning</b>	<b>How you will express and demonstrate that learning</b>
Navigate and utilize the ELPS.	Synthesize each section of the ELPS and identify which section to use for instructional planning.
Compare and contrast BICS and CALP and how these language varieties relate to academic standards-based instruction.	Strengthen and redesign an interpersonal language skill to increase academic competence for your learners.
Integrate academic language learning strategies into instructional assignments.	Discuss and collect academic language learning strategies that can be applied to activities to emphasize academic language needed by language learners.
Apply knowledge of the ELPS by designing instruction that helps adults prepare for careers and postsecondary education.	Using the ELPS, redesign a functional language activity into an academic language activity that incorporates elements of postsecondary and career goals for learners.

## **Course Schedule:**

This course will take place over six weeks so that the schedule allows busy professionals enough time to work through the materials and complete the course according to your schedule. Participants can expect to spend about four hours per week. However, you may find that you want to spend longer with some topics or activities.

Participants are expected to participate fully in each of the weekly discussion threads by contributing a meaningful post that adds to the development of the discussion.

Participants should also make at least one 'participation post. A participation post is a follow-up reflective comment to a colleague's post. The discussions are monitored by a facilitator who will provide guidance, support, and answer questions.

Participants can keep track of weekly assignments with the *Week-by-Week Checklist of Assignments* below and the recap *What to Do This Week* section in the weekly lesson videos and Power Points. Assignments are meant as a way for participants to apply your learning by sharing your assignments with each other.

Week #	Lessons	Assignments
Week 1:	Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the Online Learner Agreement.</li> <li>• Download and save/print the ELPS.</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 1- Introductions</b>.</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 1 - Where are You on the ELPS</b>.</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 1 - Navigating the ELPS</b>.</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 1 - Reflections</b>.</li> <li>• Respond to at least one peer post in the <i>Discussion Board</i>.</li> <li>• Complete the survey through Google Forms.</li> <li>• <b>Optional:</b> Contribute resources to the Class Wiki related to Week 1 content.</li> </ul>
Week 2:	Navigating the ELPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to skim the ELPS and organize your access to the sections.</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 2 - Guiding Principles and the Three Key Shifts</b>.</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 2 - Three Key Shifts (#1, #2, or #3)</b>.</li> <li>• Respond to at least one peer post in the <i>Discussion Board</i>.</li> <li>• <b>Optional:</b> View the video <i>Observing Standards- in-Action</i>.</li> <li>• <b>Optional:</b> Contribute resources to the Wiki related to Week 2 content.</li> </ul>

Week #	Lessons	Assignments
<b>Week 3:</b>	Answering the Call to Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print (optional) and read the LINCS Issue Brief.</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 3 - Meeting the Language Needs of Today’s Adult ELL Learner Brief.</b></li> <li>• Watch the BICS and CALP videos.</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 3 - Social and Academic Language Learning.</b></li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 3 - Assignments: Explore the Functions of the ELPS.</b></li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 3 – Reflections.</b></li> <li>• Respond to at least one peer post in the <i>Discussion Board</i>.</li> <li>• <b>Optional:</b> Contribute resources to the Wiki related to Week 3 content.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4:</b>	Connecting the ELPS to the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 4 - Levels 1-5 Descriptors</b> (you will be assigned to either Group 1 or Group 2).</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 4 - Assignments</b> (decide on View One or View Two).</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 4 – Reflections.</b></li> <li>• Optional: Watch the short videos (highly recommended).</li> <li>• Respond to at least one peer post in the <i>Discussion Board</i>.</li> <li>• <b>Optional:</b> Contribute resources to the Wiki related to Week 4 content.</li> </ul>

Week #	Lessons	Assignments
<b>Week 5:</b>	Putting it All Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the ELA Correspondences.</li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 5 - Understanding and Using the ELPS with the Correspondences.</b></li> <li>• Read <i>Developmental Diversity</i> and post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 5 - The Academic Language Learning Gaps for Adult ELLs.</b></li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 5 - Assignments: Preparing ELLs for Careers and Postsecondary Education.</b></li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 5 – Reflections.</b></li> <li>• Respond to at least one peer post in the <i>Discussion Board</i>.</li> <li>• <b>Optional:</b> Watch the short videos (highly recommended!).</li> <li>• <b>Optional:</b> Contribute resources to the Wiki related to Week 5 content.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6:</b>	Standards-Based Instruction and Farewell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the video <i>Academic Language and English Language Learners</i> and post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 6 - Academic Language and English Language Learners.</b></li> <li>• Look at the ELPS <i>What it Looks Like in Practice Scenarios</i> and post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 6 - What it Looks Like in Practice.</b></li> <li>• Post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 6 - Assignment: ELPS in Practice.</b> Reflect on your learning and post a response on the <i>Discussion Board</i> under <b>Week 6 – Reflections.</b></li> <li>• Respond to at least one peer post in the <i>Discussion Board</i>.</li> <li>• Complete the VALRC End-of-Course Evaluation. <b>Optional:</b> Contribute resources to the Wiki related to Week 6 content.</li> </ul>

## **Course Resources:**

[The English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education](#)  
[College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education](#)

Recommended Reading: Zwiers, J. (2014). *Building academic language: Meeting Common Core Standards across disciplines*, grades 5-12. John Wiley & Sons. While this text is not required for this course, it is an excellent resource for applying concepts of academic language learning and provides sound instructional resource ideas.

Additionally, each week will include additional resources related to the week's topic.

## **Student Expectations:**

In order to receive a certificate of completion, you must submit all assignments on time. Remember that although you will benefit from doing the activities, you will learn most from discussions with your online colleagues and facilitator(s). To keep discussions as productive as possible, please post and respond within the assigned week. You may refer to the *Assignments* section of each module, *Syllabus*, or *Calendar* for specific dates. In order to stay on track, be sure to check your weekly progress in the *Grades* section.

## **Discussion Board Posts:**

Write a one- to two-paragraph response for each *Discussion Board* question. In order to receive full credit for your peer response post, your writing should include some details or depth. (Cursory responses such as "I agree with your answer." or "That is a good point." will not receive full credit.)

When you make your initial response to the discussion board, be sure to reply to the prompt and not to a classmate's response.

If you do not post for more than one week at any time during the course or if you fall more than one week behind in your assignments, you may be removed from the course and will be placed on "waiting list only" status for future online courses. If you find that you cannot post for more than two weeks, please contact your technical facilitator at [valrccourses@vcu.edu](mailto:valrccourses@vcu.edu) or 1-800-237-0178 as soon as possible to discuss the situation and your further participation in the course.

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