

BLED PROGRAM

1. What was the BLED/TESOL Program created to do?

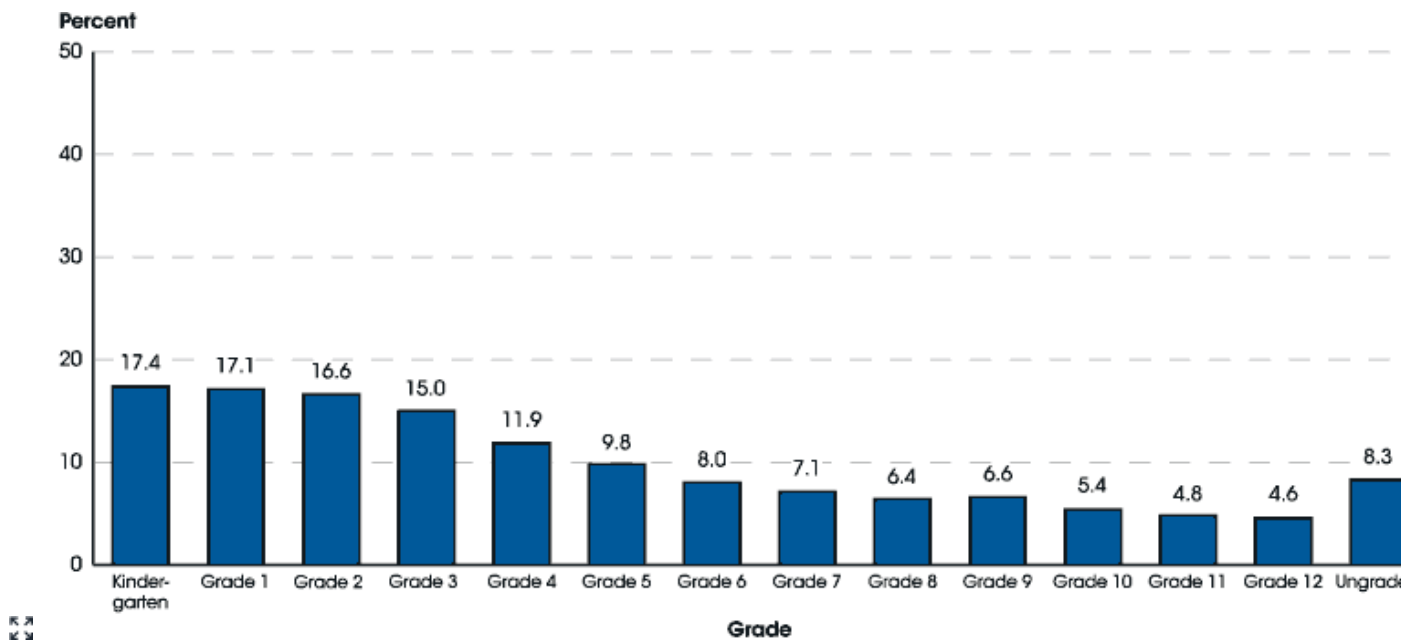
Western New Mexico University offers undergraduate and graduate courses leading to the Bilingual Education and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of other languages) endorsements to the New Mexico teaching licenses. Neither Bilingual nor TESOL are majors within the School of Education. Courses may apply toward the Bachelors of Arts/Science or the Masters of Arts in Teaching. The endorsements are also accepted in various other states.

The Bilingual Education endorsement is a program designed to encourage the acquisition and development of professional knowledge and expertise in the field of Bilingual Education. The online Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (and also the TESOL endorsement) is a program designed to encourage the acquisition and development of professional knowledge and expertise in the field of TESOL. Both programs prepare teachers to work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse students and encourage them to serve as advocates for bilingual/multilingual children, their families and communities. The competencies include an effective use of the learner's mother tongue as well as the sociocultural values of the members of the community. To be a bilingual teacher is to be prepared to teach all content area subjects (mathematics, science, literacy, social studies, etc.) in two languages. In addition, the importance of TESOL is more apparent than ever in our increasingly global and diverse world in which learning English became a necessity in other countries.

2. What is the program doing now?

English Language Learner School Enrollments

Figure 3. Percentage of public K–12 students identified as English language learners, by grade level: School year 2013–14



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *EDFacts* file

141, Data Group 678, extracted November 3, 2015; Common Core of Data (CCD), “State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary and Secondary Education,” 2013–14. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, [table 204.27](#). Spanish was the home language of nearly 3.8 million ELL students in 2013–14, representing 76.5 percent of all ELL students and 7.7 percent of all public K–12 students.

As noted previously, Bilingual/TESOL is not a major or minor but rather a concentration or teaching field. Below are the enrollments for 15-16.

Major	FA15 MAJOR	FA15 (2) MAJOR	FA15 MINOR	FA15 Concentration 1	FA15 Concentration 2	FA15 Concentration 3	FA15 Total
Bilingual Education	0	0	0	2	6	1	9
Bilingual Education - Navajo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bilingual Education - Spanish	0	0	0	5	0	0	5

FA16 MAJOR	FA16 (2) MAJOR	FA16 MINOR	FA16 Concentration 1	FA16 Concentration 2	FA16 Concentration 3	FA16 Total
0	0	0	2	2	0	4
0	0	0	1	0	0	1
0	0	0	7	0	0	7

As statistics and census figures have shown, English language learners are the fastest growing segment of the school-age population in the United States. When it was signed into law, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) went further than any preceding version of ESEA in holding schools accountable for the academic performance of all students—including English language learners. Under ESEA, as amended, schools are specifically required to report on the academic achievement of English language learners, as well as the development of their proficiency in English. In 2013–14, five of the six states with the highest percentages of ELL students in their public schools were in the West. In the District of Columbia and six states—Alaska, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas—10.0 percent

or more of public school students were English language learners, with California having the highest percentage, at 22.7 percent.

In addition, as WNMU has been expanding its international efforts, TESOL becomes a very important program to support these efforts. The high demand for English teachers with a strong knowledge base for effective teaching and understanding of language acquisition means there are many opportunities that can come from having a program of that nature offered to international institutions here at WNMU.

WNMU School of Education also got two rounds of an HED grant towards preparing teachers for the ELL population. Although budgets will be cut for the next year, BLED and TESOL programs in all 4-year institutions were guaranteed another round of the grant due to the need to provide more opportunities for teacher candidates within this area.

3. Should it be doing what it is doing now?

The university serves the multi-cultural populations of New Mexico, and preparing teachers to meet the promise of every student is an essential aspect of WNMU's mission.

As the population of school-age English language learners continues to grow, so must the United States' capacity to effectively serve them. According to Education week, the state of New Mexico has approximately 8,846 certified teachers in title III language instructional programs at the moment. The state will need an additional 11.3 percentage of certified teachers for title III in the next five years.

4. If not, what should it be doing?

Both programs focus specifically on linguistics, language acquisition theories and methods specifically designed to meet the needs of English language learners. In addition, several courses are required that focus on a range of multicultural, cross-cultural, multilingual or bilingual issues. Multicultural content is infused throughout the curriculum to further enhance learning and competency.

The TESOL program is fully online which benefits a lot of our students in the state of New Mexico but also provides opportunities for students in other states and countries to pursue their degrees. Many students do not want to leave their current jobs to come for another degree, online programs provide that opportunity. In addition, international institutions' needs will also be met by the offering of online or hybrid programs. The BLED and TESOL courses also cover elements of the Diversity standards that are evaluated in the CAEP accreditation which no other course does in the SOE.

5. How should it do what it should be doing?

Language learners must be taught by highly trained educators who are qualified to serve their specific needs in order to achieve high standards. Initiatives to promote teacher quality must recognize and promote the specialized training that TESOL and bilingual specialists receive to effectively serve English language learners. In addition, more of these highly trained and qualified professionals are needed, as well as training for mainstream teachers on meeting the needs of English language learners.

Graduates from the TESOL program typically teach Sheltered English instruction as well as ESL or EFL in elementary or secondary schools, in colleges or universities, in language schools or institutes in the

United States or abroad, or in businesses or international organizations. Finally, many TESOL graduates work as language program administrators or teacher educators in schools, colleges, or universities around the world.