

2018 SMA ESL and ELL Explanation

Rationale

Students identified as English as a Second Language (ESL) students or English Language Learners (ELL), at San Marcos Academy, are immersed into the core content classes in order to provide the maximum potential for learning, understanding, and grasping the English language. English Language Learners (ELL) is used to refer to students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Sullivan, 2011). English as a Second Language (ESL) applies to students whose language is other than the language supported by the system. These students are taught English as their second language (Hough & Kaczmarek, 2011).

One of the most difficult aspects of learning the English language is the academic language or vocabulary. Vocabulary used in the school setting further complicates placement issues. For example, words, used to teach mathematics such as addition or multiplication, are English words applied to functions that are universal (Ernst-Slavit & Wenger, 2016). Although students can perform these functions appropriately, the English labels are often harder to understand than the functions they describe. This does not mean that an ESL or ELL student cannot perform the function, but may just not know the English labels (Guenther, 2016). The goal at SMA is to allow the students the opportunity to master the academic

goals of each subject while being exposed and immersed in the practice of the English language.

At San Marcos Academy

ESL and ELL students will be grouped within each subject area to ensure that the students are receiving the required contents for each course. ESL and ELL students will gain the required credits for graduation as listed by the Texas Education Agency. For example, an ESL or ELL student who is classified as a Freshman would begin in English I (ESL). This student would be in an English I class with other ESL or ELL students. The required contents of the English I course would still be covered with an ESL/ELL modification, allowing the students to work at a different pace with the interjection of English language immersion. His/her transcripts will be credited with an ENGLISH I credit upon successful completion of both semesters. The transcript WILL NOT report ESL I. This same grouping will occur in subject areas including history and social studies.

References:

Ernst-Slavit, G., & Wenger, K. J. (2016). Surrounded by water: Talking to learn in today's classrooms.

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Hough, S., & Kaczmarek, L. (2011). Language and reading outcomes in young children adopted from

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Sullivan, A. (2011). Disproportionality in special education identification and placement of English language

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