

WISCONSIN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY



**Wisconsin
International
Academy**

ELL PROGRAM HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

Wisconsin International Academy (WIA) is an innovative residential school for Chinese students who attend American high school. WIA partners with local private schools to give students opportunities to develop their English skills through classroom instruction and extracurricular activities. WIA's mission is to bridge cultures, provide a safe environment, cultivate self-discipline, strengthen English skills and encourage academic success.

As part of this mission statement, WIA provides an immersive ELL program included in their high quality academic preparation program. This program helps educate students to become knowledgeable, skilled, confident, and well-prepared for high school and any future study in the United States.

English Language Learning - from Proficiency to Fluency

The following tenets strongly influence the instructional approach in Wisconsin International Academy's ELL Program:

1. Language is human communication interpreted individually and communally across, within, and between cultures.
2. Language processes develop interdependently (speaking, listening, reading, writing, acculturation).
3. Language involves both understanding and using cultural, verbal, and non-verbal symbols.
4. Language acquisition is a long-term process that develops naturally and in stages.
5. Language acquisition builds on meaningful interaction and challenging content.
6. Native language proficiency level (L1) strongly influences second language acquisition (L2).
7. Bilingualism is an individual and a societal asset.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide ELL staff with the necessary goals, guidelines and procedures sanctioned by the WIA-ELL department. This handbook may also be used to advise partner school staff on how to cooperate with ELL staff and how to better work with WIA students.

Profile of a WIA student

The majority of WIA students come from across the mainland of China. Even though students share the same home country, they still come from a wide variety of backgrounds and bring many different cultures and customs with them to the United States. Some WIA students come to us well- equipped to adjust to the life of studying abroad while many others need the help of teachers and ELL staff to adjust and reach their potential to succeed.

Working with WIA students: Cultural and Language Insights

ELL and mainstream teachers are tasked with the challenge of teaching Chinese students who may not fully understand English or fit into American culture. These insights into the differences between language and culture may be helpful for teachers who seek to bridge the gap between them and the students.

Language: Because of the stark differences between the Chinese and English languages, students may struggle at times with different concepts. It may be helpful to understand these struggles and differences between the languages in order to be better equipped to grade and understand students and to help overcome some of the challenges with the language they may be having. Some of the biggest differences/struggles between Chinese and English are the following:

Misuse of He/She: In Chinese, the word for he and she is the same character because of this students often interchange these pronouns. They are often quick to self-correct though.

Misuse/ Omit To Be: Chinese does not have a character for the word ‘to be’ so it is not natural for students to use this verb and they often forget to use it or conjugate it incorrectly.

Pronunciation: Absence of English sounds; syllables: Chinese is a monosyllabic language. This means that each Chinese character is only one syllable. Students may have a hard time with pronouncing words with multi-syllables and may emphasize the word too much or in the wrong place. Chinese and English also differ with the sounds they have. Chinese does not have sounds like /v/ or /th/ that may give students trouble. Also, English has a lot of blended, two consonant sounds such as /tr/, /dr/, /st/, /pl/ that are hard to master.

Word Order: Adjectives and Adverbs: Chinese and English differ a lot with the way words are ordered. English is more structured than Chinese. Words have to be used in a certain order. Students put adjectives and adverbial phrases in an unusual spot in a sentence.

Misuse of articles/ plural nouns: Articles are often one of the hardest grammar points for even the most proficient speaker to master. Students may incorrectly use a, an, the or completely omit

them. Students also might not use plural nouns when needed or incorrectly use irregular plural nouns.

Subject-Verb Agreement: Students often use the wrong subject with the wrong form of the verb.

Literal translations: Translators can be a wonderful tool; however, students often rely on translators too much which leads to a lot of direct, literal translations of phrases and words that do not make sense.

Background Knowledge in Content Areas: Students come in at a disadvantage when it comes to knowledge of content area. Many high school students will have already been exposed to some of the subjects taught or will be building off of previous classes taken. Chinese students cannot build off of the same background knowledge that American students have which makes studying in some content areas course slightly harder. Also students will struggle with some of the vocabulary even in subjects they've already studied.

Role of ELL Staff

Each ELL classroom consist of one ELL teacher and ELL tutor who work together to foster a positive and supportive learning environment with high expectations that encourage student responsibility, enhances motivation, clearly communicates classroom routines, and incorporates challenging instructional strategies.

ELL Teachers

The ELL teacher is primarily responsible for providing instruction to students through a wide range of techniques and strategies. The main focus of the teacher is to deliver lesson plans that focus on developing a student's reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills while also incorporating content course material that help further a student's comprehension of the material.

Other responsibilities of the ELL teacher include:

- Administering academic and language assessments
- Maintaining complete and accurate records of student's progress and growth
- Providing progress reports as required, and communicates with family, dorm, and partner school faculty and staff as needed
- Developing a code of classroom conduct consistent with administrative policies
- Seeking support from partner school administrative staff when concern regarding student progress arises and collaborates with instructional staff to provide language support when appropriate
- Participating in in-services and staff development activities and staff meetings as required and/or appropriate
- Assisting in developing appropriate curriculum to help ELL students acquire the English language.
- Assisting content teachers in recognizing and responding to the multiple needs of ELL learners

ELL Education Specialist

The ELL Education Specialist assists and supports the ELL teacher and reinforces the English language acquisition and content course instruction provided. The ELL Education Specialist also meets with content area teachers to determine academic needs of students and to collaborate to develop tutoring plans or assess student progress.

Other responsibilities of the ELL Education Specialist include:

- Preparing and facilitating tutoring workshops/study groups, collaborative projects, or academic support sessions for small groups of students.
- Monitoring student performance/ assisting students in academic environments
- Reviewing class material with students by discussing text, working solutions to problems, or reviewing worksheets or other assignments.
- Providing feedback to students using positive reinforcement techniques to encourage,

motivate, or build confidence in students.

- Maintaining records of students' assessment results and progress
- Identifying, developing, or implementing intervention strategies, tutoring plans, or individualized education plans (IEPs) for students.
- Assisting teacher in developing teaching materials, such as handouts, study materials, or quizzes.
- Encouraging students to develop study skills, note-taking skills, and test-taking strategies.

EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

The ELL program focuses on the improvement of English skills so students are able to perform on the same academic level as that of a native English speaker of the same age and grade level. Academic Language Proficiency is the certain kind of language needed for success academically. It can be broken down into two types of language sets: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) is essentially the verbal communication skills needed to function in a social setting. This is the day-to-day language needs that a student uses to communicate with others in the hallway or at lunch. This language is not demanding or specialized and is usually acquired within 6 months to 2 years upon arrival in the U.S. However, it can be problematic to mistake a student with high basic interpersonal communication skills for being proficient in the language.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is formal academic learning which includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking in content area subjects. It isn't only content vocabulary but also other essential skills like comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring. These skills are much more cognitively demanding and take longer to acquire. On average, a student will develop these skills in 5 to 7 years. There is a strong correlation between a student being literate in their native language and their ability to understand language in English content.

WIA puts a strong emphasis on the improvement of these aspects of language acquisition. Supporting student performance and mastery of academic language leads them to better gain content area knowledge and social English skills. Research has proven that the most successful ELL students learn to master the use of academic language.

ELL INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

In order to achieve proficiency with academic language, the ELL department implements a combination of several different instructional approaches. The instructional approach of the ELL program combines collaboration and content centered material with inclusiveness and language workshop/seminar style classes at each level.

The instructional practices of the ELL program include:

- Teaching to ELL language proficiency and standards
- Integrating language teaching with the teaching of curricular content
- Collaborating to make content language of the classroom comprehensible
- Customizing the learning environment to meet individual language needs
- Providing explicit instruction in learning strategies and complex thinking skills

- Providing research based explicit instruction in reading comprehension

These practices are focused on in the follow methods:

Scheduled ELL classes: Students are assigned to an ELL class during their daily schedule to focus on developing communication/content area skills and to support the ELL curriculum. Sometimes meeting a school's graduation requirement regarding classes necessary for graduation may take priority over scheduling an ELL class in the student's academic schedule. In that case, students regularly schedule meetings with the ELL to review course materials, course content, and course assignments.

Content Based Instruction: The majority of ELL instruction focuses on teaching topics/skills of content area courses. The goal is to make students comprehend content courses better by developing academic reading and writing skills through actual course content and by developing critical thinking skills through discussion of course content. This type of instruction allows students to stay in content courses and makes language learning more natural.

Collaboration: It is one of the tasks of the ELL department at each school to communicate with content course teachers about the academic objectives of content courses. WIA ELL students take the same content area courses as non-ELL students and are held to the same academic standards. The ELL teacher along with the ELL tutor should communicate and collaborate with content course teachers to help one another understand the needs of each course as well as the needs of each student. This collaboration will determine the language needs of the content courses. These needs are not limited to but include content specific academic vocabulary, academic writing style, participation requirements, and academic reading strategies. Collaboration also allows ELL teachers to prepare and revise content course material to ensure students understand directions and objectives of assignments.

Language Workshop/ Seminar Style: Workshops and seminar style classes encourage students to interact with one another and with the language in a realistic setting and manner. Classes work to develop practical language and academic skills in research and use project-based learning to make learning more meaningful and relevant.

Resource Classroom: The assigned ELL room functions as a resource classroom for all ELL students. Students are able to come into the classroom to ask questions, complete tests, and work on papers, projects and other assignments. Students may also work with the ELL tutor during times in the classroom when an ELL class is in session.

ELL PROGRAM ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Speaking: Students will engage in oral communication in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes and audiences to achieve standards and learning targets at each proficiency level.

Listening: Students will process, understand, interpret, and evaluate spoken language in a variety of situations to achieve standards and learning targets at each proficiency level.

Reading: Students will process, interpret, and evaluate written language symbols and text with understanding and fluency to achieve standards and learning targets at each proficiency level.

Writing: Students will engage in written communication in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes and audiences to achieve standards and learning targets at each proficiency level.

Acculturation: Students will develop sociolinguistic competencies and cultural understanding at each proficiency level to achieve standards and learning targets at each proficiency level.

ASSESSMENT and PLACEMENT

Upon arrival at WIA, students are assessed on their proficiency in each of the essential skills of the ELL program and how well the students are able to handle the language used in achieving grade-level objectives. Students are then placed in a corresponding level based on the results of the test. The following test is used by the ELL program:

I. WIDA MODEL test

The WIDA Model placement test is used to evaluate students' English language ability. WIDA is a professional and academic organization focused on academic language development and achievement for children who culturally and linguistically diverse. The assessment is backed by much research that looked at how to correctly assess second language acquisition in children. The MODEL test looks at social and instructional language, the language of mathematics, the language of science, the language of social sciences, and the language of language arts. The Listening and Speaking test is given one-to-one.

These tests are used throughout K-12 for identification and language level placement. Testing is crucial in distinguishing students' social and academic language capabilities.

New WIA students are tested upon arrival to the program in August.

ELL CURRICULUM

The ELL curriculum provides appropriate instruction for each student's English proficiency level and hones student academic skills in content area courses. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are developed through relevant coursework. The ELL curriculum has developed into a coherent course of study and continues to improve to respond to student needs and to effectively prepare students for high school and future study in the United States.

Students are placed into one of four levels of ELL. The goals of each course are as follows:

Level 1

Writing

- Write simple, compound, and complex sentences which are grammatically correct
- Learn basic rules of punctuation and capitalization
- Achieve basic understanding of the following verb tenses and forms:
 - Present
 - Past
 - Future
 - Simple
 - Progressive/continuous
 - Perfect
 - Gerunds
 - Infinitives
- Learn to use conjugations and transition words to connect ideas
- Develop basic paragraph styles, including:
 - Title
 - Proper indentation and spacing
 - Topic sentences
 - Supporting points
 - Conclusion
 - Transitions
- Learn narrative, descriptive, and expository writing
- Be introduced to simple 3-5 paragraph essay
- Practice the writing process:
 - Prewriting
 - Drafts
 - Peer revision
 - Self-editing
- Learn to use prepositions of time and place
- Write personal and formal emails
- Practice the skill of free writing through journal writing

Reading

- Develop vocabulary and understand word families

- Predict content from title and picture
- Skim short passages for main idea
- Scan easy readings for details
- Develop an awareness of reading speed
- Read a variety of different materials
- Learn to guess meaning from context
- Learn to make inferences

Listening

- Recognize functional language
- Listen to topics of general and cultural interest
- Listen to informal and formal recorded conversations and simple monologues
- Focus on discourse of about 5-10 minutes
- Practice understanding phrases and simple sentences
- Practice understanding questions about discourse content
- Recognize stress in spoken English
- Recognize reductions of speech
- Focus on topics of general and cultural interest
- Practice understanding complex questions

Speaking

- Learn to respond appropriately in social interactions, such as greeting, making and responding to introductions, asking for information, etc
- Develop simple telephone etiquette
- Develop ability to carry on basic conversation about everyday topics
- Learn to produce appropriate word and sentence stress
- Learn to ask questions on complex social topics
- Develop basic interactive strategies for initiating, maintaining, and concluding conversations
- Develop more native like stress patterns
- Use appropriate intonation patterns such as “wh” questions, yes/no questions, choice questions, and listing information
- Develop and use comprehensible speech
- Increase confidence while speaking in formal and informal settings
- Make simple presentations up to 5 minutes in length

Level 2

Writing

- Write essays from one to three pages in length
- Use a variety of organizational patterns effectively

- Develop paragraphs with support, using details and examples
- Develop unity and coherence in writing
- Practice the writing process, including:
 - Prewriting
 - Multiple drafts
 - Peer revision
 - Self-editing
- Write under a 45-50 minute time limit
- Write business letters and formal emails
- Control grammar, including:
 - Verb tenses
 - Adverb clauses of time
 - Subject-verb agreement
 - Parts of speech
 - Modals

Reading

- Increase vocabulary, including:
 - Common idioms
 - Word families
 - Word formation
 - Phrasal verbs
- Improve and develop reading strategies such as:
 - Predicting
 - Skimming
 - Scanning
 - Guessing meaning from context
 - Making inferences
- Be introduced to critical reading skills and interpretation of writer's purpose
- Follow specific written directions and instructions
- Develop test-taking strategies
- Be introduced to basic literary analysis such as:
 - Plot
 - Person
 - Tone
 - Characters
- Identify fact and opinion in texts
- Participate in discussion, write reports, and make presentations about reading assignments
- Identify main ideas and supporting details
- Paraphrase and summarize
- Learn about interpreting, comparing, and analyzing primary and secondary texts

Listening

- Focus on topics of human interest, current events, and culture
- Make inferences about information in audio and video recordings
- Increase understanding of a variety of different dialects
- Concentrate on discourse of 5-15 minutes
- Develop confidence in understanding natural speed discourse
- Complete outlines, answer comprehension questions, and write summaries when listening to specific content
- Be introduced to academic lectures and note taking

Speaking

- Use effective interactive strategies for initiating, maintain, and concluding conversations
- Give both planned and impromptu speeches
- Use appropriate body language while communicating, including eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and body positioning
- Develop comprehensible speech that is smooth and effortless
- Demonstrate confidence while speaking in formal and informal settings
- Make academic presentations up to 10 minutes in length that are well-organized and well supported
- Participate in discussion, write reports, and make presentations about reading assignments

ELL 3

Writing

- Focus on academic writing
- Write coherent essays with a clear thesis statement followed by a well-supported body of evidence
- Develop skills in:
 - Paraphrasing
 - Summarizing
 - Note taking
 - Quoting/citing
 - Synthesizing
- Practice the writing process, including:
 - Prewriting
 - Drafting
 - Peer revision
 - Self-editing
- Ask for editing help but maintain personal control over writing
- Write timed essays (45-50 minutes) weekly, including essay test answers
- Write a full academic research paper up to 10 pages in length
- Learn how to cite sources correctly using MLA, APA, etc styles
- Demonstrate a solid control of grammar in written work

- Write a resume and cover letter and formal emails
- Develop research skills using databases

Reading

- Increase vocabulary, including:
 - Idioms
 - Phrasal verbs
 - Word families
 - Word formation
 - Academic vocabulary
- Continue to use and develop literary analysis
- Develop critical reading skills and interpretation and understand of writer's purpose
- Identify fact and opinion in texts
- Participate in discussion, write reports, and make presentations about reading assignments
- Identify main ideas and supporting details
- Paraphrase and summarize
- Learn about interpreting, comparing, and analyzing primary and secondary texts
- Develop research skills in understanding how to effectively use databases, keywords, and how to assess the credibility of one's sources
- Read from:
 - Newspapers
 - Magazines
 - Journals academic and professional websites
 - Unabridged novels
 - Selections from university texts

Listening

- Develop concentration and comprehensive by focusing on academic lectures, interviews, and presentations, both recorded and live, of 12-50 minutes in length
- Practice effective note taking strategies, including main ideas and supporting details
- Organize and synthesize information
- Experience listening to a variety of speakers lecturing on a variety of topics
- Gather information at a natural discourse
- Listen to university lectures, take notes, and report about the class
- View films on American culture and be able of comprehending them

Speaking

- Develop effective interactive strategies, such as agreement, disagreement, and expressing opinions
- Give both planned and impromptu speeches
- Demonstrate comprehensible speech that is smooth and effortless
- Demonstrate confidence while speaking in formal and informal settings
- Argue opinions and facts in debates on controversial topics

- Actively lead and participate in roundtable discussions
- Make a 20 minute academic presentation using multi-media tools

ELL 4 (a strong focus on academic research, writing, and reading skills)

Research

- I. Questions that guide
 - a. How can a topic of interest be developed into a research paper?
 - b. What is the structure of a cohesive research paper?
 - c. How does a thesis drive a research paper?
 - d. How does one evaluate sources to determine validity and reliability when using informational texts?
- II. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information
 - a. Address a question
 - b. Solve a problem
- III. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence
 - a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claims
 - b. Distinguish the claim from opposing or alternate claims
 - c. Create an organization that logically sequences claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence
 - d. Develop claims and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence of each
 - e. Point out the strengths and limitations of all claims in a way that anticipates audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases
 - f. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link major sections of the text
 - g. Create cohesion
 - h. Clarify relationship between claims and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claims and counterclaims
 - i. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone
 - j. Attend to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing
 - k. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented

Crafting an Argument

- I. Questions to guide
 - a. How can a diverse perspectives of different authors strengthen arguments made in speeches?
 - b. How does effective research enhance an understanding of the subject under investigation?
 - c. What rhetorical techniques can a speaker use to convey a clear and distinct perspective?
- II. Cite textual evidence to support analysis

- III. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach
 - a. Focus on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience
- IV. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects
 - a. Answer a question or solve a problem
 - b. Narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate
 - c. Synthesize multiple sources on the subject
 - d. Demonstrate understanding of the subject under investigation
- V. Gather relevant information from multiple sources
 - a. Use advanced search effectively
 - b. Assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of task, purpose, and audience
 - c. Integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas
 - d. Avoid plagiarism and overreliance on any one source
 - e. Follow a standard format for citation
- VI. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence
 - a. Convey a clear and distinct perspective
 - i. Readers/listeners can
 - 1. follow the line of reasoning
 - 2. alternate or opposing perspectives are addressed
 - 3. organization, development, substance and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks
- VII. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking
 - a. Resolve issues of complex or contested usage
 - b. Consult references as needed
 - c. Developed ability to proofread and edit
- VIII. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts
 - a. Make effective choice for meaning or style
 - b. Comprehend more fully when reading or listening
 - c. Vary syntax for effect, consulting references for guidance as needed

