



## **PBS TeacherLine® Introduces Courses to Help Teachers Support English Language Learners in the Classroom**

*Latest collection of PBS TeacherLine courses addresses classroom instruction for fastest-growing segment of student population*

AUSTIN, Texas (Texas Computer Education Association Annual Convention) Feb. 6, 2008 – PBS TeacherLine, the premier provider of online professional development courses for educators, introduces a new collection of courses that focuses on the unique educational needs of English language learners (ELL). More than 5.5 million school-age children in the United States are English language learners, comprising 10 percent of the preK-12 student population. Projections indicate that the ELL student population will amount to 50 percent of all students by 2015. Through the *Supporting English Language Learners* series from PBS TeacherLine, teachers learn skills and techniques that accelerate students' mastery of English and enable students to keep pace with classroom instruction.

Enrollment of preK-12 English language learners is growing at almost 10 times the rate of total public school student enrollment. Yet, only 30 percent of public school teachers instructing ELL students have received appropriate training, according to the Education Commission of the States. The accountability mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act require that ELL students' test scores be factored into the determination of whether a school is making adequate yearly progress. Providing the means to train more teachers in this area would be a significant contribution to improving student achievement.

Language proficiency is a key determinant of academic performance. English language learners face the challenging task of mastering a new language while also learning subject-area content. Research and test data indicate that ELL students receive lower grades, score lower on standardized tests and drop out of school at higher rates than their classmates.

To help ELL students build language proficiency, teachers must draw on a range of research-based strategies, pedagogy, and skills. The new collection of PBS TeacherLine courses provides teachers with theoretical and practical information that they can apply immediately to the classroom to help ELL students develop language skills, meet learning standards and achieve academic success. The ELL courses cover language development, technology integration and assessment in pre-Kindergarten through third grade.

The *Supporting English Language Learners* series comprises three, 10-hour courses designed to provide a quick immersion into specific instructional strategies and pedagogy and to accommodate teachers' busy schedules. The courses are:

- *Oral Language Development*
- *Vocabulary Development*
- *Assessing Language Development*

Rigorously trained facilitators guide teachers through the courses and provide timely, meaningful feedback. Teachers work within a collaborative online learning environment to share ideas and discuss educational practices and challenges.

Teachers can earn professional development points or continuing education units for these courses, depending on their district's requirements.

Additionally, PBS TeacherLine offers educators more than 100 graduate-level courses, ranging in length from 15 hours to 45 hours, in reading/language arts, math, science, instructional technology, and instructional strategies.

PBS TeacherLine provides facilitated online professional development courses to educators throughout the United States. In Texas, PBS TeacherLine is available through PBS TeacherLine of Texas, a consortium of Texas PBS stations managed by KLRU in Austin and KLRN in San Antonio.

For more information about PBS TeacherLine and the ELL courses, visit [www.pbs.org/teacherline](http://www.pbs.org/teacherline). A full course catalog is available online.

#### **About PBS TeacherLine**

PBS TeacherLine is committed to helping teachers acquire the skills they need to prepare students for a successful future. PBS TeacherLine provides high-quality, affordable professional development through facilitated, online courses, collaborative learning communities, and exemplary Internet-based resources. Currently, more than 90 courses across multiple subject areas are offered. Teachers can earn continuing education units, professional development points and graduate credits for course completion. The courses have been developed in conjunction with leading education organizations, including Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), Education Development Center (EDC), Concord Consortium, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and International Society for Technology Education. Created in 2000, PBS TeacherLine is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for \$6,046,811. This represents approximately 85 percent of the total program funding. The remaining 15 percent is funded through in-kind support from PBS and through program income. For more information, visit [www.pbs.org/teacherline](http://www.pbs.org/teacherline).

#### **About PBS**

PBS is a media enterprise that serves 354 public noncommercial television stations and reaches almost 90 million people each week through on-air and online content. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is a leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers, and offers a broad array of other educational services. PBS' premier kids' TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online ([www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org)), continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org), one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.

###

#### **Media contacts:**

--Kevin Dando, PBS, 703-739-5073, [kdando@pbs.org](mailto:kdando@pbs.org)

--Tim Lum, PBS TeacherLine, 703-739-5252, [tdlum@pbs.org](mailto:tdlum@pbs.org)

--Charlene Blohm, C. Blohm & Associates, Inc., 608-839-9800, [charlene@cblohm.com](mailto:charlene@cblohm.com)