



Teaching English as a Second Language

Teaching English to non-native speakers is a challenge that can be daunting to both certified and un-trained teachers. And teaching ESL in a developing country brings even more unique difficulties. You may find that you don't have access to many school materials. In most cases, the villages in which you are teaching will be rural and not well funded. When school supplies are scarce, group activities may be the best way to involve every student. You may consider bringing some school supplies from home, such as pencils/ pens, as a practical and much needed donation to your host village.

In spite of these trials, teaching ESL in the developing world can also be an incredibly rewarding experience. Being a teacher in your host community will give you a rare view into the society in which you are placed. The bond formed with your students will be a strong connection to the village at large. Many times, English is an important skill that may mean a better job or greater opportunity for your students. As a teacher of ESL, you really can make a difference in the lives of those you teach.

Some Tips for Teaching ESL

- Maintain a good outlook

Being a successful teacher requires three crucial qualities: patience, creativity, and enthusiasm. There will be days that are more fun than others, and students that are more cooperative than others. It is imperative to keep a positive attitude in the face of such challenges.

- Keep in mind the overall objective of your class

Every classroom situation is unique and needs to be treated as such. Take some time to think about the goal of your lessons. What language skills do you want for your students? Keep your lessons focused on the task at hand, whether that means concentrating on conversational skills, technical/ business vocabulary, grammar, or basic practical phrases.

- Take your audience into account

It is important to direct the content of your lessons to your intended audience. As you volunteer you may be asked to teach impromptu lessons for adults, conduct

organized classes for school children or lead some simple English games with the entire community. Be ready to tailor your plans according to your students. In addition, it is imperative that you consider the culture in which you will be participating. Be sure to research into how that society views education and communication practices.

In addition, it will be imperative to the success of your classes to note the skill level of your students. You may want to start your first lesson with simple and basic skills, and gradually introduce more difficult material in order to judge the level of the class.

- Remember that you are the expert

Un-trained teachers may be experiencing some anxiety about leading a classroom for the first time. For some, public speaking is an obstacle. But remember that just being a native English speaker qualifies you for this position. If you can speak it, you can teach it! Don't underestimate the importance of self-confidence.

- Be prepared

Always be ready with a plan B. These "just in case" lessons will come in handy if you have extra time at the end of class or if a lesson does not go as planned. Especially in the beginning, it may be difficult to judge what activities will match your students' needs and interests. Bring extra games and activities in case something else simply doesn't work. Having extra materials on hand will allow you more choice if you feel a lesson is struggling.

- Speak slowly and pronounce clearly

Your students may not be used to hearing a native speaker of English. Help them to learn the natural sounds of English by making an effort to speak slowly and clearly. It is easy to forget that the pace of two native speakers during a conversation may be too fast for those still learning the language. Slow down!

- Use skill building

One effective tool in teaching is building upon prior skills. Make an effort to incorporate earlier vocabulary into the next lessons. Using progressive lessons will help your students to remember more vocabulary and have a chance to apply any skills learned in former lessons.

- Make it fun!

If your students genuinely enjoy your lessons, you will see more skill improvement, better attendance and an enthusiasm to continue the study of

English. Do your best to get everyone to participate. Show excitement for the subject you teach and it may just spread through the entire class. Actions speak louder than words, especially foreign words! Pantomime can be an effective learning tool. You don't have to be a clown with the sole purpose of entertaining your class, but do try to inject energy into each lesson.

Additional Resources

There is an endless number of websites dedicated to teaching English to non-native speakers. Here are some favorites:

www.onestopenglish.com

This website is a great place for any new teacher to start. There are tons of materials! Any lesson can easily be adapted to suit your needs. This site has a range of activities and worksheets for any age group. The fun illustrations are perfect for younger students.

www.teachingenglish.org.uk

This is a resource created by BBC. Here you will find loads of classroom activities, interesting writing samples, and full lesson plans complete with worksheets.

www.genkienglish.com

Be sure to find the "English" button on the top left of the Teachers page unless you can read Japanese! This site contains lots of very basic, but useful, lessons. It is directed towards Japanese elementary school students.

www.abcteach.com

This site has literally hundreds of sample worksheets to be printed out and used in class. You will find games, spelling activities, and ABC worksheets ranging from very simple to difficult.