

ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR TEACHING ESL/EFL

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Annotation:

This article presents various tips for teachers to teach English language an easier way. It will help not only new teachers, but also experienced teachers.

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Introduction:

English language may not be the most spoken language in the world but is the official language in most countries, and is used frequently in most business communications all over the world which makes it relatively important, learning wise at least. Being an English teacher is a rewarding career choice. However, it is also challenge to teach English effectively. Teaching a new language requires a teacher to first make their students realize the primary aim of learning the language. Teaching English as a second language is a task that is often easier said than done. Even for an experienced teacher, successfully leading your first ESL class can be challenging. However, teaching ESL, at its core, is the same as teaching fluent students because you still need to apply basic classroom principles. Your lessons need to be structured to cater to an array of learning needs too. But you will also face some unique challenges when working with English language learners. Teaching language skills while compensating for different cultures, learning styles, and educational backgrounds, all while trying to break through language barriers, can take some getting used to. But with the right tips and tricks up your sleeve, teaching your students the English language can be an extremely rewarding experience.



Main part: Here are a few tips you can use to teach English effectively.

•**Become a Master of Lesson Planning**

All the best teachers know that lesson planning is the foundation of teaching success. Your students are unpredictable, and winging it is never an acceptable thing to do in the classroom. What you need is enough worksheets for the entire class and lesson time that's gracious enough to cover the lessons you have planned for the day. But you also need a backup plan for when an activity isn't working as well as you planned it would. How will you introduce new topics of language to the class? When are your students to move on with the syllabus? Which aspects of the syllabus need to be revisited? All this needs to form part of your lesson planning.

Although you might be fluent in the English language, that doesn't mean you're qualified to teach others. Anyone serious about teaching English as a second language should obtain a bachelor's degree (in any subject).

•**Establish Classroom Language**

Classroom language – is usually associated with teaching children, but it really helps with adult beginners as well. No matter how friendly and relaxed you make your classroom atmosphere, learning a new language can still be daunting, especially when you feel you're not completely following what's going on, or that you might be called on to say something that you don't feel ready to say. It's much better to equip students early on with classroom language that will help them navigate the lesson smoothly.

•**Use English as the Medium for Communication**

Students learn English best when they use it in their daily communication, ask your students to use English as the medium for communication. Use new words in your conversation with the students so that they know the words and their usage. Allow students to make mistakes but ask them to continue with English language as the medium for communication. Observe and correct your students' usage of words and help them improve their language usage skills.



•**Make Short Stories a Part of The Class**

Young students usually find narrating and listening to stories interesting. Use this as a teaching tool. Make short stories a part of your class by encouraging your students to narrate stories in English. This helps them improve their communication skills. This also helps you to assess your students' interactive skills and helps them improve. This helps the students improve their thinking ability. If you give them some short stories to translate for their homework, it will help their translating skills also.

•**Keep Instructions Simple**

It can be tempting when addressing a class of students, especially ones that you've only just met, to explain activities in your politest language. After all, no one likes to be rude. Native English speakers might not think that adding a few extra words to a sentence can cause confusion. But from the perspective of a foreign language learner with limited English proficiency, there's a major difference between "put your book on the shelf" and "would you mind placing your book back on the bookshelf?" Whenever teaching a new language to beginners, try to use the simplest of sentences with plain vocabulary, and speak slowly. Make instructions crystal clear by using as few words as necessary and by gesturing whenever possible, and break down series of instructions into smaller units. You can gradually introduce new English words once your students have the building blocks in place that will ensure they understand the basics of the English language.

• **Use Interactive Activities**

A great way for an English teacher to boost language acquisition and the confidence levels of their students is through interactive activities. These can include group work, role-playing, and other hands-on activities. Regardless of whether you're teaching kids or adults, it can help your students better relate to physical objects, which speeds up the process of picking up on words outside of their native language. Group work and interactive activities help students practice their new vocabulary and polish their verbal communication skills. And since it's a social activity, it can also help inhibited learners come alive in the classroom environment. A pictorial wall is also a great way to help expand the vocabulary of your students, and every



great teacher knows this. You can also give your students time to watch movies in the English language, perhaps they could be subtitled to encourage active participation in the activity. In the ESL class, the old saying that a picture speaks a thousand words couldn't be closer to the truth.

• Let Them Listen First

More than likely, your students will want to start practising speaking pretty much from the get-go. However, it takes a while for one's ear to acclimatise to the sounds of a new language, and not everyone will be so keen; don't pressure students into speaking before they've had lots of opportunity to listen to you using it (which doesn't mean you should just be rambling on at the front of the classroom – with beginners more so than with other levels, you really have to consider what you say and grade your language accordingly).

This may seem a trivial point, but it's all too easy when listening to somebody speaking broken English to forget that behind the errors and the mispronunciation is a person with cogent thoughts, no doubt articulate in their first language, attempting to communicate his or her opinions or ideas.

• Prepare well and Keep Them Talking

Even though teaching beginners entails progressing slowly and recycling and repeating language many times, that doesn't mean recycling the same activities, especially not during one lesson. Ensure you have a range of activities to use, and don't go into class without having first carefully thought through how you are going to introduce new language, how you will check that the students have understood it, how you will practise it, and how you will deal with potential misunderstandings. The possibility for confusion at this level is much greater than at higher levels, and sometimes even harder to disentangle.

Also bear in mind that, unlike with higher levels, you can't rely on conversations developing simply because the students don't yet have the linguistic resources to engage in anything other than simple exchanges (though in time they will). This means that the onus will largely be on you to keep them talking.

Finally, enjoy this level. Although in many ways the hardest level to teach, it can also be one of the most satisfying. Seeing your learners go from knowing nothing to



knowing a few words to knowing a few sentences and structures to being able to hold rudimentary conversations can be incredibly rewarding, and if they enjoy their initial exposure to the language, and feel confident and inspired to continue, then you will have helped pave the way to their further success.

•Writing – Students’ Life to Inspire Writing

Most students lose interest in language class due to a lack of a favorable environment. It is hard to learn when there is no motivating factor that pushes you to learn. One way to change this is to ensure learning through participation. Make your students participate by encouraging them to write about themselves and the people they live with. Encourage peer evaluation; it helps your students improve themselves by learning from their mistakes as well as from the mistakes of their peers.

•Reading & Literature-Relate Literature to Real Life

Reading is equally important as learning the rules of English. Use interactive ways to create interest in reading like utilizing various reading materials that relate to real life. Encourage your students read newspapers and magazines aloud turn by turn at the beginning of your class. Encourage your students to find new words from the prescribed text-material. This makes a fun activity where students find new words, learn their meanings and also improve their reading skills.

•Bring the Fun Back

Language learning can feel bland and boring if you’re going at it in black and white for hours on end. And this is the last thing you want your learners to experience, which is why you need to find fun ways of sprucing up each lesson with interesting verbal and written instructions. Perhaps incorporating the interests of your students into the lessons helps them engage and broadens their understanding of the topic. Separating the class into teams that compete against each other is also a fun way to encourage students and ensure you’re adding an element of excitement to the learning process. And when learners are excited and interested in the subject, they find it easier to relate to the new language, which makes bridging the language barrier easier.



•Set Classroom Rules and Enforce Consequences

It is also essential to set some ground rules for your classroom. This will help to create a respectful and positive learning environment. Some things you may want to include in your rules may consist of:

- no talking while the teacher is talking,
- raising your hand if you want to speak,
- no interrupting each other,
- always be polite to others.

If rules are not followed, it is important to enforce consequences, which can range from a warning to being sent out of the classroom. This will help to ensure that your rules are taken seriously and that students know what they need to do to follow them.

•Map Out a Timeline

Right from the start through to the final lesson, you need to set a clear completion timeline for your English classes. This helps you (and your students) stay on top of the objectives at hand. You can also use checkpoints throughout your timeline to evaluate the progress your students made and assess whether they'll reach their next goal in time. This will help ensure you're meeting the needs of your students with your lessons and that they are making progress in their English learning journey.

Wrapping up: Teaching English as a second language might seem like a daunting task and can be a little more challenging than the average teaching job, but it's one of the most rewarding teaching roles out there. This is so much more than a career. It's a meaningful endeavor that gives back and helps bring the world closer together, one word at a time. Each teacher might have their own style, but the ten tips we've highlighted in this post should help you foster stronger relationships with your students and equip you to set them up for language learning success.

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