

ESL STARTER TIPS

Introduction

According to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA), state-collected data for 2005 to 2006 shows more than five million students with limited English proficiency (LEP) enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade, and 1,172,569 adults in state-run ESL programs in 2003 to 2004. Public schools are legally required to address the educational needs of non-English-speaking youth, assuring they can achieve academic success. The benefits are many..

Community Participation

- ESL classes prepare students to be fully engaged with their communities. English learners benefit by being informed and achieving a level of inclusiveness that enhances their lives. Communities benefit from an increased level of inclusiveness for all community members.

Family Life

- Families benefit when parents become proficient in English, enabling them to participate in their children's education and social lives. The family benefits when children are not required to act as interpreters for their parents, thereby preserving the family structure and parental roles.

Self-sufficiency

- Non-English speakers benefit by becoming more self-sufficient and reducing the need for translators to assist with daily or personal business. They are able to use public transportation, read street signs and directions, get a driver's license and communicate with the public to make their needs known.

Education and Employment

- ESL students benefit by being able to take advantage of educational and training opportunities, which lead to employment, promotions or higher salaries, all of which benefit families by improving their opportunities and access to benefits such as health care.

Civic Pride and Citizenship

- ESL classes benefit participants and communities by enhancing participants' civic pride. They may become full members of their communities and prepare to enjoy the responsibilities and benefits of citizenship.

Non-native English speakers, immigrants, refugees applying to a college in the United States, must take the the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System). In some cases you can take a combination of other standardized tests to demonstrate your language skills. In this article we'll look at the types of scores different college admissions offices require on the TOEFL.

Note that the scores below vary widely, and in general the more selective the college, the higher the bar is for English proficiency. This is partly because the more selective colleges can afford to be more selective (no surprise there), and also because language barriers can be disastrous at the schools with the highest academic expectations. In general, you'll find that you need to be nearly fluent in English to be admitted to the United State's top collages.

If you score a 100 or higher on the internet-based TOEFL, your demonstration of English language skills should be strong enough for admission to any college in the country. A score of 60 or lower is going to restrict your options drastically.

Note that TOEFL scores are generally considered valid for just two years because your language proficiency can change significantly over time.

ESL TEAM FORMATION

It is best if you think of all those who will be working in the ESL School with you as a team. This mentality will help everyone take "ownership" of the ministry.

Prayer Support

The first people that you need on your team are prayer warriors. Actively recruit them for your ministry. Does your church have a weekly prayer meeting that you can submit prayer requests to? Is there a Bible Study group that will pray for the ministry regularly? All of your teachers should be regularly praying for the school in general and their students by name. You should be praying for your teachers by name.

Teachers

It is your job to recruit teachers. (See separate section on teachers.)

Other Volunteers

Some people who are interested in your ministry are just never going to feel comfortable teaching in a classroom. That is ok. You can recruit them to be snack coordinators, nursery workers, conversation partners, etc.... You can always find a place to put a willing volunteer. These people should also be Christians and fill out your volunteer application.

Church Staff

Although they would never realize that they are on your team, in reality they are. The people on your church staff are there to help you. Make sure that you have a good working relationship with them. Keep the "authorities" up-to-date on your ESL School. Always have a story about a student ready to tell. Personal stories about your students help others feel connected to your ministry.

APPRECIATION

Appreciation is not optional. It is mandatory. As the Director it is your job to make sure that everyone on your team feels appreciated, especially your teachers. This

can be done in many different ways – weekly e-mails should have encouraging words in them. Small gifts and little notes of gratitude go a long way.

THE VOLUNTEER ESL TEACHER

Job Summary:

- Teach English as a Second Language (ESL) to adult Internationals from all over the world so they can live, work or study in the United States.
- Seek opportunities to share the Gospel in both Word and Deed.
- TOEFL & Advanced Level ESL instructors must have TEFL certification.

Qualifications:

- A committed Christian who has a special burden to reach migrants.
- A sense of mission or call from God to this ministry.
- The ability to speak, read and write English well.
- Commitment to teach for a period of at least one school year.
- Sensitivity to different cultures.
- Patient, understanding, flexible and teachable.
- Completion of the online TEFL certification program for advanced level instructors.

Responsibilities:

- Teach once or twice a week for one school year.
- Prepare ESL lessons.
- Call or write students when they are absent.
- Attend one student social each semester.
- Share your faith and testimony with students
- Pray for your students regularly
- Attend training workshops
- Obtain relevant resources for self improvement

HOW TO FIND STUDENTS FOR YOUR ESL CLASS

Advertising

You must advertise your ESL School in as many ways as possible the first few years of your program. After that just doing a brochure and word of mouth will probably be all that you need.

Brochure: You need to create a simple English brochure about your classes. It should include the following information:

- Description of Classes
- Cost
- Location - include a map if possible
- Dates and Times

- Is Childcare available? Is it free?
- Contact Information

Where do you put these brochures? Any place that Internationals will find them. I suggest printing about 1000 brochures about a month before your classes start and put them in some of the following kinds of places:

- Public Libraries
- Western Union Offices or anywhere that wires money
- International Grocery Stores
- Dry Cleaners
- International Restaurants
- Fast Food Restaurants
- Apartment Leasing Offices
- Salvation Army
- Thrift Stores
- Elementary Schools (to make them available to ESL students' parents)
- Flea Markets
- Ethnic Churches
- Construction Companies

Who is responsible for distributing the brochures? You are as the Director, however, it is perfectly acceptable to ask your teachers and others to help you with this.

If you are a new ESL classes are just getting started, ask your Pastor if you can include a brochure in each Church Bulletin on a Sunday morning about one month before your classes start. Then make a pulpit announcement asking each congregation member to carry that brochure with them that week and to give it to someone they think might benefit from the classes.

In addition to a full-size brochure, you can have business cards made that have all pertinent information on them about your classes. These are easy for your teachers and others to carry with them and hand out as they go through their daily lives.

Public Service Announcements

- Radio
- Newspapers
- Foreign Language Papers

Paid Advertisements in Foreign Language Papers

Interviews with local newspapers (Many local papers are looking for good human interest stories.)

Letters to Businesses and Churches

If another church has an ESL School on a different day/time from yours, ask them if they would be willing to display your brochures. Remember to reciprocate by offering to display their brochures at your school.

BEST ADVERTISEMENT POSSIBLE: Word of Mouth

As your program grows you will develop a reputation within the local International community. Their word of mouth is your best advertisement.

ESL CURRICULUM

There is a world of ESL Lesson plans out there waiting for you. Please do not think that you have to come up with your own material. That will burn out your teachers. RISEN ESL Training will show you various examples of printable lessons and you can visit other websites to download more lessons for your class. This is a good time to look through the different options and decide which lesson plan works for you.

Your first decision will be whether to use a secular lessons or Bible-based lessons. We have found a combination of both works for our students. Here are a few things that you need to consider: If you pick a Bible-based lessons, you need to be sure that you advertise in a way that is not a "bait and switch." If using Bible-based material you need to advertise your class as a Bible Study that teaches English. On the other hand, if you pick a secular lessons you can advertise that you are having free English classes. Usually "free English classes" will attract a lot more students and many of these will not be Christians. "Bible Studies that teach English" will attract fewer students and those with a Christian background. Do not think that you will not have the opportunity to bring the Gospel to your students if you use a secular lesson plan. All classes should open with prayer and can even have a short devotional time. Once your classes are well established, you can then offer Home Bible Studies. Your students are more likely to attend these now because they have built a relationship with you already. You can also have special events where you present an easy English Gospel presentation.

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