

ESL Newsletter, September 2010

"Language is a process of free creation; its laws and principles are fixed, but the manner in which the principles of generation are used is free and infinitely varied. Even the interpretation and use of words involves a process of free creation."

--Noam Chomsky

Welcome to ESL!

Dear Volunteers,

The first week of classes is finally off the ground! Thank you for all of your tremendous work the past couple of weeks. From attending orientation to teacher training, we are grateful for your commitment to ESL and are eager to move further into the semester! For fall semester, we have 70 students enrolled, 21 teachers and 6 tutors. Wow!

Many of you asked for additional teaching resources and we'd like to provide you with some training materials which can guide you as you prepare your classes each week. If you are interested in learning more about adult education or good ESL techniques, the following websites, resources and professional development opportunities may be of interest.

We've got a lot more to share so let us know if you have specific teaching needs or requests for materials or books. As always, please let us know if you have any question.

Good luck this semester,
the ESL team

Housekeeping Items:

1. Please remember to turn off all the lights and collect the garbage when leaving.
2. Volunteers have graciously agreed to be responsible for locking up after class on their respective teaching days. For safety reasons, please make sure they do not leave alone! For volunteers with keys: please make sure to close and lock 1.) the supply room door, 2.) the front door, and 3.) the front gate.
3. The Thanksgiving holiday is approaching. There will be no classes Tuesday November 23 - Thursday November 25. There also will be no classes on Thursday November 11 (Veterans Day). Please remind your students as these dates approach!

Professional Development Opportunities:

Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL) Fall 2010 Professional Development Opportunities

MCAEL has announced their fall teacher training courses! You must fill out an application form if you are interested in attending, and please mention that you are teaching English at Sacred Heart this semester. The courses are first come first serve.

To access a full list, please visit this link:

<http://www.mcael.org/CM/ContentManagement.aspx?ModuleID=27>

New American Horizons Foundation

This resource has online videos where new teachers can watch expert teachers conduct life-skills specific courses. Highlight of techniques and tips on facilitating an ESL classroom.

To view the teaching videos, please follow this link:

<http://www.newamericanhorizons.org/>

Fun Games/Activities for Class!

Charades

Since we didn't get to play this game together on the September 18 teacher training, please find instructions to the game below!

Charades is a game of pantomimes: you have to act out a phrase without speaking, while the other members of your team try to guess what the phrase is. The objective for your team is to guess the phrase as quickly as possible. Charades is a good classroom activity that can be fun while encouraging students to think and speak quickly in English.

Equipment Needed

Stopwatch or timing device; notepad and pencil for scorekeeping; blank slips of paper; two baskets or containers for the slips

Preparation

Divide the players into two teams, preferably of equal size. Divide the slips of paper between the two teams. Select a neutral timekeeper/scorekeeper, or pick members from each team to take turns. Agree on how many rounds to play. Review the gestures and hand signals and invent any others you deem appropriate.

The teams temporarily go to separate rooms or different areas in the classroom, to come up with phrases to put on their pieces of paper. These phrases may either be quotations or titles of books, movies, plays, television shows or songs. Here are some suggested rules to prevent the phrases from being too hard to guess:

- No team should write down any phrase unless at least three people on the team have heard of it
- No phrase should be longer than seven words
- No phrase should consist solely of a proper name (i.e., it should also contain other words)

Once they have finished writing their phrases, the teams come back to the same room.

To Play

Each round of the game is to proceed as follows:

A player from Team A draws a phrase slip from Team B's basket. After he or she has had a short time to review the slip, the timekeeper for Team B notes the time and tells the player to start. Team A then has three minutes to guess the phrase. If they figure it out, the timekeeper records how long it took. If they do not figure it out in three minutes, the timekeeper announces that the time is up, and records a time of three minutes. Best out of 3 or 5 games is the winning team!

Finally: If you're short on time and don't have time to generate words/phrases on your own, please visit: www.charadescards.co.uk for ready-made ideas.

Lesson Planning Ideas

Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP) Online Curriculum

REEP created an entire curriculum with a grant from the Department of Education. This resource could be used as support material in class (handout given in your Teacher Training Packets on Sept. 16 & 18)
<http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/15401081182015517/lib/15401081182015517/reepcurriculum/index.html>

Cultural Orientation Resource Center (Life Skills Curriculum)

This resource was originally created for refugees who are being resettled. However, we looked over some of the life-skills topics, and thought it would be appropriate for any new immigrants into the United States. We think this is the best resource in this packet. You can access the toolkit and curriculum here:

<http://www.cal.org/co/domestic/toolkit/index.html>

English for All

Online curriculum and videos available on this website.

<http://www.myefa.org/login.cfm>

ESL Websites for Additional Class Activities & Research on Second Language Acquisition

- ***TESL Journal***
<http://iteslj.org/>
Articles, Research Papers, Lessons Plans, Classroom Handouts, Teaching Ideas & Links
- ***The PuzzleMaker***
<http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/>
Word search, cryptograms, criss-cross puzzles; Enter your text and print out a puzzle for the classroom.
- ***The Adult Education Teacher's Annotated Webliography***
<http://alri.org/pubs/webliography.html>
Reviews of websites for adult education and ESL
- ***Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA)***
<http://www.cal.org/caela/>
Research articles on adult English language Acquisition & ESL resources.
- ***ESL PartyLand***
<http://www.eslpartyland.com/>
A comprehensive resource for both teachers and students

Advice Corner!

Solutions to Problems with Speaking Activities

1. Use Group Work

- This activity increases the amount of student conversation going on in a limited period of time and also lowers the inhibitions of students who are unwilling to speak in front of the full class. It is true that group work means the teacher cannot supervise all student speech; therefore, not all utterances will be correct, and students may occasionally slip into their native languages. Nevertheless, even taking into consideration occasional mistakes and L1 [native language] use, the amount of time remaining for positive, useful oral practice is still likely to be far more than the full-class set-up.

2. Base the Activity on Easy Language

- In general, the level of language needed for a discussion should be lower than that used in intensive language-learning activities in the same class; it should be easily recalled and produced by the participants so that they can speak fluently.