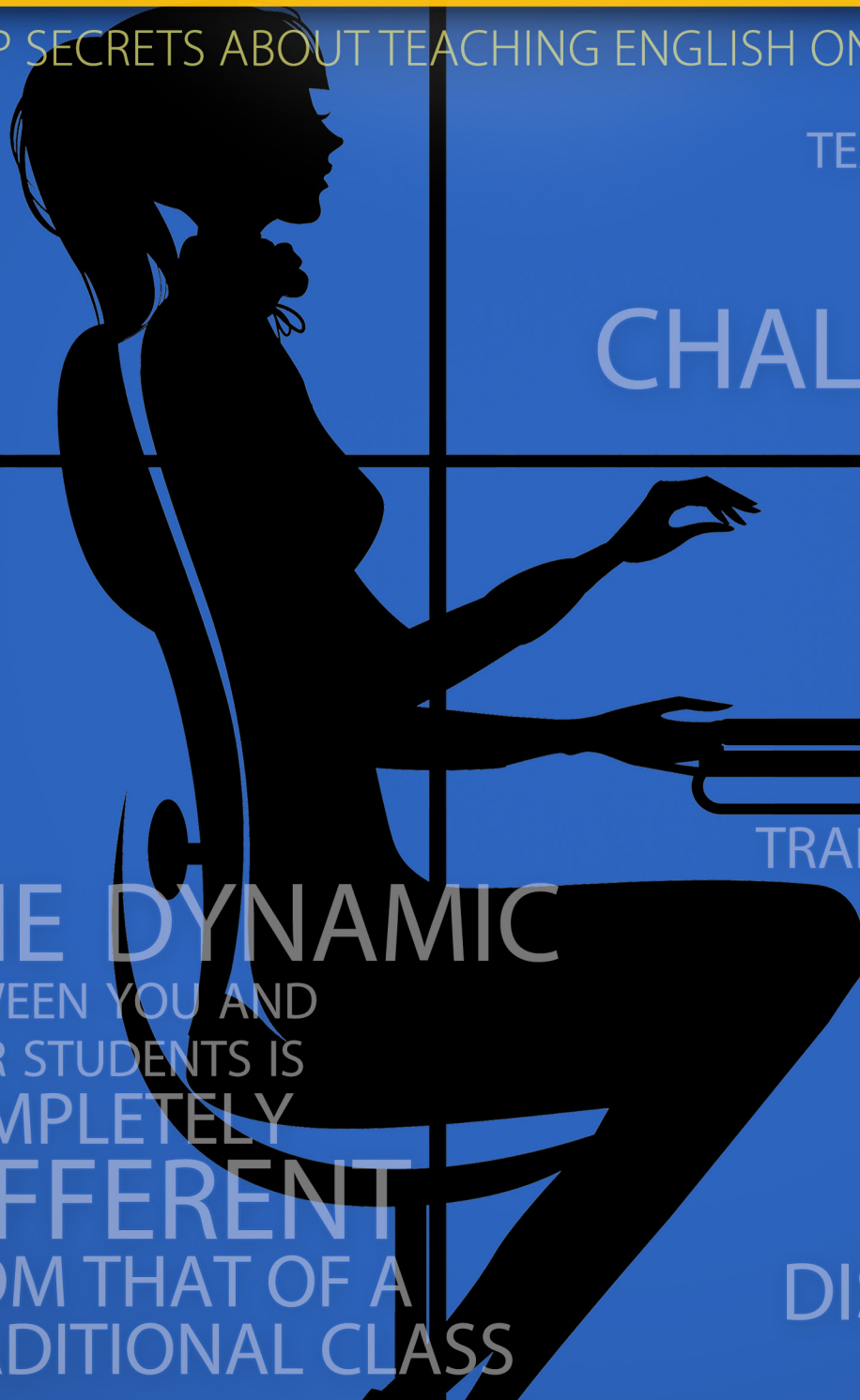


HOW TO TEACH ENGLISH ONLINE & 1-ON-1

LIKE A PRO

25 TOP SECRETS ABOUT TEACHING ENGLISH ONLINE & ONE ON ONE

TEACHING ESL ONLINE
AND ONE ON ONE
CAN BE
CHALLENGING



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🔧 THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO TEACH ENGLISH ONLINE AND ONE ON ONE

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5 Important Questions to Ask Yourself Before Teaching English Online

THE EDUCATIONAL WORLD IS CHANGING. FOR YEARS, WE HAVE SEEN AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ONLINE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.

Not only can students take college classes online, but even high schoolers can opt for cyber education. The good news for ESL teachers is that language learning is no exception. Today's students have many opportunities for online learning, and that means that you have just as many opportunities for on line educating. Telecommuting isn't for everyone, though. Teachers considering this type of job opportunity should think carefully about the issues tied to online education before they decide to quit the classroom.

5 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK YOURSELF BEFORE TEACHING ENGLISH ONLINE

1 CAN I GO ANYWHERE OR EVERYWHERE?

One of the biggest deterrents some have to teaching English as a second language is overseas travel. Packing up and leaving everything and everyone you know is not only stressful, it can be terrifying. Learning to thrive in a foreign country involves issues of language and culture. In my own experience teaching in East Asia, even getting a taxi can be complicated to the new overseas teacher. Online teachers avoid this cross cultural stress because teaching over the Internet means you never have to leave your living room. On the other hand, many English teachers enter the field with ideas of adventures from one end of the globe to the other. If you opt to teach online, you lose the unique adventure that is teaching overseas. You will still have cultural conundrums, but they will come from your students and your communication with them through the computer.

2 WHAT'S REALLY IN IT FOR ME?

Though teaching is itself the best reward for many people, ESL teachers must still consider how to cover the bills, and that

means thinking about money. Many overseas teaching opportunities come with lots of zeros on the paycheck. Others may not pay as much but give perks that make up for what you don't get in your income. Online teachers may find that the financial benefits of teaching online are less than what they could get travelling overseas. Teaching websites that hire you as teacher or tutor may pay by the hour, and though it's likely to be more than minimum wage, it's less than what you would make through other venues. Other opportunities may offer more money upfront, but pay attention for the words 'independent contractor'. If you are hired as an independent contractor, your employer will not take taxes from your pay before it comes to you. Your paycheck will be bigger, but when April 15 rolls around you'll find that you own a large percentage of what you made. Independent contractors need to calculate how much of what they make will end up going to the tax man, and then decide if the job is worth what they are paying. Finally, be wary of any company that asks you to pay money upfront. These are questionable at the least and illegitimate at the worst, and you want to avoid them on your online teaching journey.

3 DO I HAVE THE TECH SAVVY?

With online teaching comes a dependence on computers. Before signing up to be an online educator, you should take an honest look at your own tech savviness. Resources like Skype and Facetime make video conversations possible, but teaching may take more than a webcam and an internet connection. Some companies will require you to download software and have specific connection and processing speeds. Because you don't go to an office, you'll have to tackle any technology bugs on your own though you may get the assistance of a help desk professional. Potential online teachers should think about what they can do and who they can turn to when they have technology needs beyond what they can handle themselves.

4 CAN I FILL IN THE GAPS?

Potential online educators must

also ask themselves if they have what it takes to tackle all their students' questions on their own. Where classroom teachers often have coworkers they can turn to when they run into a language conundrum, online teachers most likely will lack such resources. It's important for teachers to think about their education and experience and whether they will be able to answer their students' questions. Having a coworker to turn to can be very helpful. Even when you know the answer to the question, sometimes knowing the right way to explain it to your students can make or break your lines of communication. Online teachers need to have the background that enables them to answer questions without a buddy to turn to. In addition, online video chatting will still lack some communication clues that in person conversations make available. It's important that online teachers be able to fill in those communication gaps without clues such as body language.

5 DO I HAVE THE GUMPTION

Online educators, especially those who choose not to work through a larger company, need to be able to sell themselves. Keeping profiles updated and selling your skills is important. Though you may get some referrals from one student to another, you will have to remember that you are your own boss and your own marketing department. You will need self motivation and independence to keep your personal business, your English education business, growing and thriving. Students will come and students will go, but teachers who can market and sell themselves will find a steady stream of English students.

TEACHING ONLINE CAN BE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY, BUT IT ALSO HAS ITS DRAWBACKS. BEFORE YOU JUMP IN WITH BOTH FEET, CONSIDER IF ONLINE EDUCATION REALLY IS THE BEST MOVE FOR YOU.

If it is, go for it, and watch success come to you! If it is not there are plenty of other teaching opportunities available to you if you take the time to find them. Besides, a great adventure may be waiting just around the corner.

Move Classroom to the Cloud: Pros & Cons of Teaching Online

IS TEACHING ESL ONLINE RIGHT FOR YOU?

There is a lot to consider when making the leap from traditional classroom settings into an online forum. Assess the pros and cons below and make the best, most informed decision for yourself. There are many pros of teaching ESL online, and in turn any pro could also be looked at as a con. Find the positives in each of the below arguments for why you may want to begin teaching ESL online.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS FOR TEACHING ONLINE?

1 TEACH FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME

One big pro depending on your circumstances, is that you can teach from the comfort of your own home. You don't need a lot of equipment, just a computer, web camera, internet connection, and microphone. Most computers come with built-in cameras and mics are cheap enough to buy and easy to find. A wireless internet connection works wonderfully for the best and fastest connection possible. It is a terrific advantage to be able to work out of your home simply for the convenience of it. It is comfortable and can enable you to host lessons early in the morning or late at night if you choose. In addition, there is no commute, so you will never be late to class.

2 SET YOUR OWN SCHEDULE

Teaching online enables you to set your own schedule, devise your student base, and choose what types of lessons you will provide. This can be very freeing and if you are juggling other commitments, this arrangement makes it easy to set a schedule that works to your advantage. Teaching ESL online enables you to decide the combination of students that will work best for you, what levels you would like to teach, as well as what subject matter you are interested in focusing on.

3 TEACH STUDENTS IN VARIOUS PLACES

One interesting advantage to teaching ESL online is that you can teach students from many different locations. You could have students that are spread across a country, or you could mix students from many different countries. Teaching multicultural classes has a lot of benefits as well as students of varying ages and cultural backgrounds. Depending on where you are located and the time difference of your focal countries you may be able to manage having many countries represented in your classroom.

When deciding whether or not an online classroom is good for you, you want to be honest with yourself when it comes to the challenges and negative aspects. As with the positives, negative aspects can often be flipped to a positive depending on how you examine the circumstances.

4 MORE CHALLENGING TO BE INTERACTIVE

It can be more challenging to host interactive activities when you are teaching online. This is not to say that it cannot be done, it just takes a different mind-set and more planning. Many interactive activities and games just won't work simply because you are not face-to-face with students. You will have to come up with alternatives and find other ways to have students interact, communicate and learn from one another.

5 DIFFICULT TO SHARE ASSIGNMENTS

A point a lot of teachers overlook is the subject of materials. You have to figure out what books and materials will be utilized in the class and how students will gain access to them. This will most certainly impact your interactions on a whole. Another difficulty you face is disseminating and sharing information and assignments. It is pretty easy to be able to email all the students a handout or assignment, but you can't be sure that all of them will be able to access it during the class or remember to have it ready to go. Also, it is more difficult to have students share writing assignments, homework or other exercises. You will need to devise a way to share documents that all students can access and understand. Consider

hosting a bulletin board or creating an email group to get students in the habit of communicating in this way.

6 DISCIPLINE CAN BE AN ISSUE

Generally speaking, ESL classes are pretty manageable when it comes to behavior and discipline. However, the online environment changes this dynamic, and may make it a bit more difficult to monitor all students and enforce requisite behavior. One example of this might be that students could get away with taking a back seat in the participation department. If a student is particularly quiet, reserved, or shy, it may be difficult to break through those barriers in the online environment. The opposite may also hold true. If you have a student who monopolizes the conversation, it can be problematic to enforce class guidelines. You will have to approach these problems as they arise and think about how your classroom management style will be different online. There are ways to reach students in cyberspace, but you may find this to be particularly challenging.

7 TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

Technical difficulties may perhaps be the most daunting problem you will face in an online classroom. No amount of troubleshooting and preparation can control the inevitable. Students will have problems with their connections, someone won't know how to login properly, bandwidth in some countries can result in choppy videos, non-existent reliability for connection, or endless technical issues. You'll want to explore these issues and try out your technologies before you intend to use them for a full-time class. If you are in a country where the connection is almost impossible, you are out of the game completely. You may want to explore possibilities for how to troubleshoot problems when they arise. Consider having a chat capability ready to go if your video falls over, or enable some social media where you can communicate the problem clearly to all students at the same time.

ONLINE TEACHING CAN BE BOTH CHALLENGING AND REWARDING. Examine your own list of pros of cons to decide whether this forum is right for you.

Teaching English Online – What You Need to Know

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO WORK FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME?

Although more and more ESL teachers are becoming less reluctant to use technology in the classroom, going completely online is a big step. Some can't even imagine what it would be like to teach a class and not have your students sitting in front of you. Still, teaching English online is a very attractive possibility for many these days, and it's a choice that is gaining popularity fast among ESL teachers and students.

THE ADVANTAGES

- Firstly, you have all of the benefits that come with working from home. You save money on commuting costs, mothers can stay home with their kids, you set your own schedule, hours, etc., you work within the comfort and privacy of your home, in your pajamas or sweats, you have greater freedom and independence...
- Thanks to the advances in telecommunications technology and devices, you have the possibility to reach students from across the globe, students who may not have the time to take a regular course, or don't usually have native English speakers to talk to.

THE PITFALLS

- Working at home while you care for your children can be both an advantage and a complete nightmare. It's great for a mother who has recently had a baby to be able to work from home, but you must be professional and reliable at all times. This means that if you have a student who is paying good money to talk to you for one hour, you'd better be prepared to give your student his or her full hour -- you can't run off to see to a crying baby in the middle of your lesson. Nor can you have kids running around with noisy pets in the background.
- Dealing with time zone differences can be a little tricky, particularly if you have Asian students.
- Some online payment systems are not available in some countries, so you'll have to offer students other alternatives.
- Although it may be great to get up from bed and get to teach English online

without having to shave or change, there's the inherent risk of spending far too many hours at home and not enough outside socializing -- it's important to go out once in a while, to do some shopping, go to gym, have lunch with friends, etc.

While the pitfalls may seem numerous, if you're able to handle the issues that may arise when you work from home, you'll find that the benefits of teaching English online far outweigh the disadvantages.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

ONLINE SCHOOL OR ON YOUR OWN?

The very first decision you'll have to make is whether you will work for an online school, tutoring service, or run your own website. If you want to teach at an online school, you'll have to go through the application process just as you would for any other school. You'll most likely be required to have TEFL certification and experience. There are websites where all you have to do is sign up and create a profile to attract students, but you must realize that your profile may compete with hundreds of others. If you want to have more freedom and ultimately higher profits, then running your own website is clearly the best choice, but you must be prepared to work hard to promote your services and find students.

WHAT ARE YOU PREPARED TO OFFER?

Will you help students build vocabulary, answer grammar questions and clarify doubts, or merely offer students the chance to speak to a native English speaker? Whatever you choose to do, you must be absolutely clear on what it is you will offer, and provide some form of structure, like lessons plans or some guidelines in reference to what you will help your students accomplish. Although you may come across students who only want to talk, this may not be what the majority wants. It is important that you offer what you know best. Are you great with idioms, slang, or specific vocabulary? It's important to identify your niche.

WHAT TECHNOLOGIES WILL YOU USE?

Online schools usually have their own online platform, usually in some form of chat room. But if you work on your own, you'll need to have an instant messaging service, like MSN Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, or Skype, but also Internet VoIP

service for the calls you'll need to make to practice listening and speaking. Don't forget that there are video conferencing platforms that are very easy to use like MSN Messenger's where all you need is a Web cam and a microphone to deliver lessons that are just as real as face-to-face classes. You may also choose to record podcasts or audio files in MP3 format. Explore the possibilities and make use of all of the technological resources available on the Internet.

HOW MUCH WILL YOU CHARGE AND HOW WILL YOU RECEIVE PAYMENT?

Online schools usually transfer payments to your bank account, PayPal account, or use some sort of payment processor. Some may even send you a check. For those who run their own online business, PayPal offers some very useful services, but you may also choose to accept payments through other means like credit cards. As for rates, online English teachers charge anywhere between \$15 and \$50. Do a bit of research and find out what your competitors are charging. The lowest rates are usually for conversation, with no grammar teaching or lessons.

HOW WILL YOU PROMOTE YOUR SERVICES?

If you decide to start your own online business teaching English, you won't find any students unless you promote it. Fortunately, there are lots of ways to do this online:

- Advertise on websites with a lot of English learners.
- Find online tutor databases, like TutorAgent, sign up, and create an engaging profile to attract students.
- Actively participate in ESL forums and always leave your signature.
- Promote your business on several social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.
- Drive traffic to your website with SEO strategies, PayPerClick campaigns, add a blog to your site and provide useful tips and advice for students.

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO TEACH ENGLISH ONLINE.

You can set up your own online business teaching English online with a minimum investment and watch it grow. Or work for an established online school. The choice is yours, but the important thing here is that teaching online is no longer the future. It is a reality.

5 Mistakes Online Teachers Make - And How To Avoid Them

ONLINE TEACHERS ARE LUCKY IN THAT THEY CAN WORK FROM HOME ALMOST ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD BUT THEY ALSO ENCOUNTER A UNIQUE SET OF PROBLEMS.

Of course some issues are similar to problems experienced in classrooms however online teachers will have to deal with them differently. Here are some common mistakes that online teachers make.

5 MOST COMMON MISTAKES WHEN TEACHING ONLINE

1 CAMERA

If you use a webcam for your classes, please give some consideration to your appearance and background. Just because you work at home does not mean that you can wear your pajamas during classes. Dressing appropriately, in a professional manner, will help earn your students' respect and set the tone for your interactions with them. Keep in mind that students will not only see you but also everything behind you. Beds and bathrooms should not be seen in the background. Find a quiet, neutral place that reveals little personal information. It is great getting to know students but they should not see certain parts of your house, family members walking behind you, or pets. You need to show that you have a professional approach to your work and take their education seriously.

2 MICROPHONE PLACEMENT

Microphone placement is also another important thing that teachers need to think about. Online teachers must use a headset. If you do not, students will be distracted by your typing, clicking, and other sounds but using a headset reduces the amount of other noises they hear and allows them to focus more on what you are saying. Microphone placement is important because it will affect the sound quality of your classes. If it is directly in front of your mouth, your breathing

and speaking will cause students to hear sounds like those you would expect to hear if a caller is outside on a windy day. You should test your microphone placement by recording yourself speaking into it or by asking a friend or family member to test it out with you using a program like Skype or Google Voice. This will give you some insight as to where it should be placed. Generally the microphone should be off to one side and either a little above or below your mouth.

3 OVER TALKING

Online teachers often spend too much time speaking during lessons especially if they are not used to teaching one-on-one lessons. Since online classes are generally short, teachers should really maximize student talking time. If you use certain teaching material, allow students to read directions and anything else you may be tempted to read for them. Use your speaking time to ask questions, prompt longer responses, give feedback, and model pronunciation. Encourage students to ask questions. For example, instead of having a student say each word on a vocabulary list after you, have him read the words aloud, practice the pronunciation of any words he had difficulty with, and ask if there are any new words on the list. This saves a lot of time because you only have to focus on what the student needs help with.

4 LACK OF VARIETY

Online teachers focus most of their attention on speaking and listening. These are very important skills but in order to learn English, students should focus on all aspects of the language which includes reading and writing. In order to make the best use of your time, you can ask students to read materials before class to prepare them for lessons and assign written work occasionally as homework. Some students may not be interested in improving their writing skills but be sure to establish what they want to get out of their lessons so that you

can plan classes appropriately. Encourage students to consider the importance of these skills and explain how including them in lessons will not take significant time away from other activities.

5 NOT ENOUGH FEEDBACK

It is important to provide students with written feedback and evaluations. It can be hard to structure this without homework assignments or tests but students should have a record of their progress and be able to review their mistakes on their own time. Online learners must do some self study activities in addition to taking online classes but without direction it may be challenging for them to know what to focus on. Providing students with feedback will help you both identify which areas they struggle with and you can recommend additional practice exercises to help them.

THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE THINGS THAT ONLINE TEACHERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF.

BONUS TIP: It is nice to know what time of day it is for your students. This is a very simple thing but the class you teach in the morning might be in the evening for your student so you should adjust your greeting accordingly. This can be a challenge but it lets students know that you are invested in them enough to know what time and day your class is in their country. It just personalizes your experience a little more. Good luck!

How to Teach Online Lessons - And Be Proud Of Them

The content of online English lessons varies greatly but the focus should always be on student speaking. Try to minimize the amount of time you talk (TTT) by having students read directions for exercises aloud or by doing the same types of activities often so that less explanation is necessary. Try to provide both oral and written feedback for students so they can review certain corrections on their own. If students are able to record classes, that can be very beneficial for self study too.

HOW TO BE PROUD OF YOUR ONLINE LESSONS

1 GENERAL ENGLISH

If you are following a certain textbook or curriculum, you can structure your lessons around new topics and grammar points. Start lessons off with a bit of conversational English since this is important for students who will have the opportunity to speak English outside of class. You can elicit what students already know about the topic and go over specific vocabulary words. Explain any new words to students and ask them to make sentences with or provide synonyms for several to test their comprehension. You can also introduce any grammar points or idioms at this time. Be sure to give students some example sentences and have them complete some practice activities. The majority of the lesson could then be spent having students respond to questions about the topic, practice a certain structure, or even role play a situation. Depending on how you teach your classes, you may share material in different ways and this will affect how you organize your lessons. Without any special software it can be challenging to highlight certain things and share materials but you can send students relevant files or links to websites before and during class.

2 BUSINESS ENGLISH

Business English classes can be the most challenging classes to teach because students are sometimes quite advanced English language learners. For these lessons, it is imperative to prepare very well and be able to research items when students ask challenging questions. It is fine to have a student move forward in the lesson while you look for a proper answer to the question and then discuss the answer later or include it in the written feedback. Other students in these classes may be surprisingly good at speaking about their jobs but have difficulty speaking about other topics. It is important to focus on business material while still giving these students the opportunity to practice basic skills. General English can be just as important in the business world as delivering clear and concise presentations especially if students are expected to answer questions afterwards. Another key topic in these courses is numbers. Students will need some practice reading a variety of numbers and speaking about currency. Business English classes need to cover a broad range of material to ensure that your students are confident in a variety of situations. What you include in your lessons will vary drastically from student to student.

3 CONVERSATION CLASSES

These classes can be enjoyable because students often just want to practice speaking English with a native speaker. This creates a very relaxed teaching environment and allows you to get to know your students well. Be sure to talk about what topics they are interested in and what they want to get out of their lessons. Once you have a better understanding of why they are studying English, you will be able to create better individualized lesson plans. It is great to be flexible for these classes but if students would like more structure, you can focus lessons on specific topics and include some activities such as introducing

new vocabulary and idioms just like in general English classes.

4 DISCUSSION LESSONS

For advanced students who are not taking business classes, discussion lessons may provide them with excellent reading, pronunciation, and speaking practice while covering a range of different topics. These lessons can focus on two or three paragraph articles. In the first lesson students can start by reading the article aloud. Be sure to discuss any new words or phrases and have students complete some short activities focusing on vocabulary and content. Use the second class to discuss the article by asking the student ten to twenty related questions. It would be best to cover actual content, personal experience and opinions, and some tangential topics in these discussions. Feel free to insert your own thoughts from time to time to lead the discussion and challenge students to defend their arguments.

ONLINE LESSONS VARY SO MUCH.

Be sure to include some conversational English in all your lessons since this is most likely what students will have the opportunity to use and tailor your lessons to the interests and needs of your students as much as possible.

Top 25 Online Learning Resources for Students

As a teacher, sometimes you want to give your students access to more than just the run of the mill Wikipedia and Google search results for out of class education.

This is true whether you're teaching at Greensboro college or a local community college. The trouble is finding a selection of decent websites to suggest. Thankfully, there are a number of excellent resources available if you know where to look. Here's 25 of the best:

UNIVERSITY PROVIDED RESOURCES

1 MIT ONLINE COURSES

Just because your students don't attend MIT doesn't mean they can't take advantage of the excellent courses they offer. MIT has a large number of courses available for free online.

2 THE CARNEGIE MELLON OPEN LEARNING INITIATIVE

This online learning tool operates the same way as MIT's. A variety of classes are available for free online.

3 STANFORD ITUNES

Stanford is another excellent university offering courses online. In this case, however, they're offered through iTunes. Alternatively, most of them are up on Youtube as well.

4 HARVARD ONLINE

Harvard offers classes online as well, though they're mostly Computer Science oriented. The limited subject matter doesn't counteract the quality of the teaching.

5 BERKELEY WEBCAST

Berkeley is another university that offers online courses. The cata-

log spans most of their departments, from Art to Physics. They even have courses stretching all the way back to 2005!

6 UTAH STATE

Utah State may not be what people think of when someone says Ivy League, but they too offer online courses with a quality level similar to the rest of the institutions on this list.

7 RICE UNIVERSITY

RU is yet another of the prestigious schools to offer courses online. In this case, their Connexions system is one of the best available. Content doesn't necessarily have to be submitted by faculty of the university, and as such they have hundreds of modules to choose from.

8 THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The University of Chicago provides both course lectures and interesting multimedia videos to watch. Not everything is directly related to classwork, but it's all interesting.

9 THE OPEN COURSE WORK

(www.opentapestry.com/ocw-finder) This consortium is a group of universities that believe offering their courses for free online is an excellent way to improve the human condition. Many of the universities listed above are part of this consortium. You can find just about anything, from a criminal justice degree course to writing to engineering!

10 PEER TO PEER UNIVERSITY

This site is a new concept that could only be possible with today's level of Internet saturation. Anyone with the knowledge can start a course, and anyone with the curiosity to learn can attend. There isn't much on offer quite yet, but as time goes on, it will grow.

OTHER ACADEMIC RESOURCES

11 OPENSTUDY

This site is a similar project to Open Course Work and P2PU combined. It allows teachers and students to network and tutor each other in virtually any subject. Students can help each other, and instructors can add their information as well.

12 THE YOUTUBE ED CHANNEL

Youtube has an entire category dedicated to educational videos. While it's always risky to suggest Youtube as a resource, there's plenty of good information available. That is, if your students can resist the distractions available on the same site.

13 TED TV

(ted.com/) The TED talks happen several times a year, but the videos of their presentations are available all year round. Most of the brightest minds in the world present their ideas here, on any subject imaginable. TED is one of the best resources around for learning without realizing you're learning.

14 HOW STUFF WORKS

This site is one of those brilliant sites that's been around forever. Virtually any complicated idea is explained in detail with language anyone can understand.

15 THE DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS

(www.doaj.org/) There comes a time in every student's life where they have to scour academic journals for information. The Directory of Open Access Journals makes this much easier, by compiling free access journals in a sortable manner.

SPECIALIZED SUBJECT MATTER

16 THE GOOGLE CODE UNIVERSITY

The Google Code University is another resource Google offers. It includes courses and tutorials for learning various programming languages and web coding, including Google's own APIs.

17 W3SCHOOLS

W3Schools is one of the largest resources for web development and web coding available on the Internet. HTML, CSS, XML, and a dozen other languages are all on offer for free.

18 ULTIMATE GUITAR

Sometimes your students may have other interests in mind. Ultimate Guitar offers a variety of free guitar lessons for anyone with the instrument and the patience to learn from a video.

19 HOW TO PLAY PIANO

(www.howtoplaypiano.ca/) For something a little different than guitar, this site offer piano lessons for anyone musically inclined. A piano may be harder to come by than a guitar, but that doesn't mean your students can't learn.

20 LIVEMOCHA

LiveMocha is one of the best sites online for learning a foreign language. While no online class will compete with immersion, this site can certainly help with any student struggling in a language class.

21 GOOD EATS

(www.goodeatsfanpage.com/GEFP/index.htm) One of the most essential life skills is learning how to prepare food for yourself and others. Alton Brown's long running show Good Eats was one of the best resources for learning how to cook. While the show itself is over, episodes can still be found online to watch.

22 THE GUTENBERG PROJECT

The Gutenberg Project is a vast compilation of free books online. Many of them are older classics, some of which are required reading for many literature classes. Every book offered is free for download and reading at any time, even on a mobile through their mobile website.

23 SCRIBD

Scribd is the social networking site for those who love to read. More than that, however, it's also an excellent way for students and teachers alike to discover new literature to read. It's a site well worth checking out for lovers of the written word.

24 REDDIT

Math is a complicated subject, and one many people struggle with. Reddit has compiled a massive list of math resources for any level of learning, and they're all too excellent for just one to be featured here.

25 INSTRUCTABLES

(www.instructables.com) This site offers instructions for do it yourself projects of any level. Anything from cake decorating to recycle crafts to small robotic contraptions can be found with step by step instructions complete with pictures.

WITH ALL OF THESE FREE RESOURCES AVAILABLE, NO TEACHER OR STUDENT SHOULD EVER WANT FOR MATERIAL.

Just because your school doesn't have a class for it, doesn't mean your students can't learn. For those that do offer the classes, the material in these sites can go a long way towards making learning fun and easy. All it takes is finding them.

3 Ways to Create Lasting Rapport with Students in Online Classroom

TEACHING ENGLISH ONLINE IS A METHOD OF CONNECTING MANY TYPES OF STUDENTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND CHALLENGES IN AN ONLINE CLASSROOM PRESENT DIFFERENTLY THAN IN A TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM FORMAT.

One of the sizable difficulties can be relating to students and determining their needs. Try these three techniques to create rapport that will build lasting relationships within your online classroom.

3 WAYS TO CREATE LASTING RAPPORT WITH YOUR STUDENTS

1 CREATE A YAHOO GROUP

There are many forums that can help you facilitate communication amongst students in an online classroom. One of the best choices for teachers just starting out with online content is Yahoo Groups. It is an outstanding choice because students from most countries can access it, and it is simple for the instructor to create and maintain. It only takes about 15 minutes to set up from scratch and it can be utilized as a class page or as a place to do supplemental work.

There is no limit to how you can use a Yahoo Group for your class. It can be used like a bulletin board where instructors and students can write and reply to messages. You can post assignments, manage a class calendar, share photos and create photo albums, create member polls and share information and links. You may want to require students to have a certain number of visits or posts per week. They can start conversations or ask questions on topics relevant to the class, and which engage their varied interests. You can also facilitate it in a way that you are managing class outcomes while putting the students in the driver's seat to generate content. The teacher can pose a question and students can drive the direction the discussion takes. You can also join in conversations that students have started so that they get to know your style and views on things. You may also wish to share links for in-

dependent study and other resources that will help students be successful. It is important to use the group to get to know your students and to find out what motivates and excites them.

One benefit to creating rapport via a Yahoo group is that students will hone more skills in reading and writing. This type of forum combined with Skype or some other form of video and audio communication ensures that they are getting the necessary practice in all language skills. It also allows them to take their time with what they are posting and get back necessary correction and input from the instructor.

2 SET THE TONE

Setting a positive tone from the beginning of an online class will serve you well, and lead to wonderful communication as the class progresses. In order to set the tone that optimizes student performance there are a few things to focus on. First you want to be sure you are welcoming and personable while communicating in a very clear voice with animated facial expressions. Students in an online environment need to see and hear very clearly your instructions, your corrections, as well as your style. It's also crucial that students get to know one another well while having you moderate those relationships. Provide every student an opportunity to shine, share experiences, and give their input. Be sure to include all students equally and engage them in activities that will facilitate sharing personal details, goals and experiences.

Another important element is to set clear expectations with your students, and provide explicit guidelines as to how the class will operate, what topics will be covered, and how much work will be required. Students also need to know when you will be available and how they can contact you with questions or concerns. Because you don't have a physical presence, it is imperative to be that much more congenial with them during your online class sessions.

3 KEEP IT REAL

Just because you are utilizing technology to host your class doesn't mean every aspect of the lesson has to be high-tech. Adapt activities from the traditional classroom to ensure that students still receive the same structure and practice they would in a traditional classroom. An example of this would be to still incorporate rounds or triangles where students ask one another questions in an organized order. In-class activities don't have to be replaced simply because you are communicating over an internet connection. For example, you can still incorporate traditional grammar explanations, being sure to provide everyone with the same handout so that they can easily access and refer to. Students can also still do project work where they do some level of independent preparation with your guidance and then give a presentation to the class. These are all examples of how to maintain engagement in a low-tech way. So don't always rely on technology to create interesting lessons. Bring in your personality, expertise and incorporate all kinds of activities!

AN ONLINE CLASSROOM HAS MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER.

It's not all that different from teaching in a traditional classroom, and making minor adjustments to your teaching style can lead to powerful results. Don't forget to create lasting relationships with students to make the most of your online environment.

3 Ways to Increase Communication in Your Online Classroom

TEACHING ESL ONLINE CAN BE BOTH REWARDING AND CHALLENGING.

Get used to a different way of teaching, and utilize these three strategies to produce increased communication in your online classroom.

TRY THESE 3 WAYS TO INCREASE COMMUNICATION IN YOUR ONLINE CLASSROOM

1 CREATE DISCUSSIONS AND KEEP THEM ON TRACK

In an online environment, especially one where the focus is language acquisition, it can be difficult for discussions to materialize and continue. This may be because students don't know each other well enough, the classroom dynamics may be more focused on structured course work, or perhaps there is little opportunity for organic conversation to originate.

There are a few strategies you can employ to keep students talking and to keep them on task. As the instructor and mediator of your online environment it is important to facilitate natural conversation, and to make sure the students don't get too far off course. No doubt, you want an effective dialogue to continue and veer off at times, but you don't want your classroom overrun with conversations that have no purpose. One strategy to create a lot of conversation in the beginning is to do icebreakers designed for the students to get to know each other. Keep the icebreaker structured so that students have tasks to accomplish while asking and answering questions. An example could be: Talk about one of the following topics: an embarrassing moment or funny experience you have had recently. Their tasks could be something like: Each person must ask at least one question during the discussion, and there will be a debrief where you are expected to report back some of the facts / funny things / details that you learned about classmates. This way you are promoting active listening and encouraging speaking at the same time.

Set-up perimeters for conversational activities so that you achieve both natural interaction and task-focused work. You

may want to set these perimeters for all conversational activities, on a case-by-case basis, or for each activity you entertain. Make the perimeters clear to the class before you begin, and be sure to enforce them if need be. A few examples are:

- During conversations, no one student should speak for more than 5 minutes at a time.
- Please do not interrupt students during discussion. Sometimes it works really well to have a hand gesture that symbolizes agreement, so that students don't interject to say things like *me too*, or *I've had that same experience*.
- Pay attention when others are speaking and do your best to remember details and ask questions.

2 TROUBLESHOOT WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

It is common to supplement video conferencing with some amount of written communication. Be sure that you troubleshoot this right from the beginning. First, choose the right type of written communication to fit the needs and the desires of your particular group. Consult the class and determine their interest level is in using email, social media, bulletin boards, or a combination. Once the class has agreed on a form of communication, set guidelines on how it will be used. Perhaps you will create a group on Facebook where you can send out pertinent information about the class, assignments, discussion topics, etc. You need to be sure that whatever you choose to do, all students are on board with it and will have access to it. Next you need to decide how to use it. Will you post surveys, handouts, or extra materials for students to access? Will you communicate directly with students or will they all have the capability to communicate with one another? Will the students be required to do some amount of communication with classmates, on a bulletin board, for example?

Knowing ahead of time how the platform will be used and setting those expectations clearly will avoid confusion in the future. Also think about the level of your class and how you plan to mediate communication with a lot of grammatical errors.

3 UTILIZE TEACHABLE MOMENTS

In every classroom it is essential to utilize every teachable moment possible, and the same holds true for teaching ESL online. It is imperative that you be able to jump in and interject impromptu lessons when opportunities arise. This can be a little more problematic in an online environment because you miss your opportune window to stop for the natural teaching moment, or you might not want to interrupt the activity at hand. Even still, it might present more clumsily to veer off in a different direction when generally you are trying to keep students on task. You can avoid these pitfalls by making it a priority of yours to take those natural teaching moments as they come and direct the class accordingly. It may feel clunky in the beginning, but if you stick with it you will find that it becomes more natural and adds to the flow of the class instead of detracting from it.

Teachable moments can be anything from a grammar point that students keep misusing, to a cultural error that you learn about in discussion, to a pronunciation issue that multiple students are struggling with. Whatever the issue, you want to address it when you have the chance. A good rule of thumb for grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation errors is to address it if you hear it more than three times from two or more students. It might be a simple correction that you make, or a quick explanation. You can say something like, "I'd like to stop for just a minute and address an error I keep hearing today." Or you could simply ask the students, "It seems like a lot of you are struggling with present perfect today. Would you like to review it now?" Give them options, and be sensitive to the fact that you are calling out errors. Some of the best teachable moments can create wonderful dialogues that clear up problems for good or can bring to the surface more things that need attention.

COMMUNICATING IN AN ONLINE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT CAN BE JUST AS STIMULATING AND EXCITING AS A REGULAR CLASSROOM SETTING.

Employ these strategies so students can make the most of the experience and keep them coming back for more.

Online Quizzes:

ESL Allies or Waste of Time?

In today's day and age, students can practice almost anything they need to improve their English online. They can read authentic material, listen to real audio, complete a dictation online and even speak into a microphone to practice pronunciation. There have been quizzes for ESL learners available online right from the start. But not everything that is available online is appropriate for your students. Are online quizzes your best ESL allies or a complete waste of time? Let's take a closer look.

THE ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE QUIZZES

1 COMPUTER LITERACY

Most ESL students know how to, at the very least, navigate the Internet and have basic computers skills. Most feel absolutely comfortable in an online environment and will not only enjoy completing quizzes online, they will work through them quickly and efficiently.

2 TIMELY FEEDBACK

Most online quizzes either show the correct answer after each question or correct them all at the end. Most also give students a "result" usually as a percentage of correct answers. This means that students don't have to wait for the teacher to correct the quiz. They get their feedback while their doubts are still fresh on their minds.

3 SELF-PACING

Students are able to progress at their own pace. They may take as long as they need for particularly difficult questions -- there's no pressure from the teacher or peers to respond quickly, as there might be in an oral Q & A. This creates a very safe, non-threatening environment that is ideal for classes where you have students who process information at different speeds.

4 VARIETY

At this point in time, the Internet probably has hundreds of online quizzes for us to choose from, in a wide range of topics from grammar to specific

vocabulary, listening to reading quizzes. If you are teaching something, there is most likely an online quiz somewhere that your students can take for further practice.

5 INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING

Instead of making the entire class do the same quiz, you may choose to give each student a different one to target specific needs.

6 AVAILABILITY

Online quizzes may be accessed by students any day, any time. They may in fact, choose to take the same one again and again to improve their score.

7 AUTONOMY

Online quizzes are great for developing learner autonomy and helping them take control of their learning.

THE DISADVANTAGES

1 TECHNOLOGY

The one obvious disadvantage is that not every ESL classroom has a computer, let alone access to a computer lab with one computer for each student. There may be classes in which you may ask students to bring laptops, tablets or other mobile devices with Internet access. You may also assign online quizzes for students to do at home if they have the technology there.

2 QUALITY

The other main disadvantage is something that has to do with the Internet itself and the astounding variety of materials available -- not all of them are good quality. Some may have mistakes, others may not be challenging enough. You must take the time to conduct a proper screening to make sure the quizzes and links work properly, and that there are no distracting ads or banners with content that is inappropriate.

HOW TO MAKE ONLINE QUIZZES YOUR ALLIES

1 CHOOSE WISELY

Choose online quizzes that are not only appropriate for your students' level, but also challenging enough so that they may learn something from them. Don't just look at the website and list of quizzes, try completing an entire quiz yourself. If possible, choose quizzes from well-known, established sites like:

- UsingEnglish.com
- EnglishClub.com
- Dave's ESL Cafe
- ESL Galaxy

2 KEEP A RECORD

Have an Excel file where you can add the URL to the quiz, the date in which your class completed it and your students' scores. Even better than this is to provide one file for each student (shared via GoogleDocs) so that each student may access and see the progress they've made, as well as specific areas of difficulty (maybe they get lower scores on the grammar quizzes than on the vocabulary quizzes, or vice versa). This is a great way to make them active participants in their language learning.

3 FIND THE RIGHT BALANCE

Once you start using online quizzes in class, you'll see your students will really enjoy them. But you should never replace regular written quizzes with online quizzes. Online quizzes usually require students to choose the right answer from a drop-down menu or click on the right choice. They rarely require them to type the answer. You'll still have to give them regular pen and paper quizzes so they have a chance to practice their writing.

CONCLUSION: Just like you'd do with most other things available online, to make sure online quizzes are not a waste of time, you have to take the time to pick the right ones for your class. Like any online tool, it is not the tool itself that is either good or bad, it is the use you give it. Choose the right one, and you'll have a trusty ally to help you in your English-teaching efforts.

Allthink & Engrade: Changing What Teachers Do in the Class

Since technology has become a part of everyday life for many people and the internet is widely accessible around the world, teachers should endeavor to develop the technological skills of their students regardless of the subject matter they are teaching.

By using technology and online resources, teachers can also increase the amount of time they spend teaching students since learning can take place outside the classroom as well as in it. This is an especially important topic for ESL teachers who, in most cases, want to maximize the amount of time learners spend speaking English in class and minimize the amount of time spent lecturing. Allthink (www.allthink.com) and Engrade (www.engage.com/) are both online resources for teachers and although their purposes are quite different, they are linked to one another online and will therefore both be discussed below.

ALLTHINK & ENGRADE, AND WHY YOU SHOULD USE THEM

1 ALLTHINK

Allthink can be used to create engaging mini lessons. Integrating a variety of media is simple and, unlike a PowerPoint, the material exists online rather than as a file and is accessible to anyone with the link. The introduction video on the site explains quite simply how to create a good Allthink lesson and you can view some of the available lessons to get even more ideas. If there is a lesson already made that will suit your purposes, you can also just use it as is. As a resource that you, the teacher, can use to give presentations in class, Allthink is pretty good but it is even better when used to deliver instructional content outside of class. Having students view lectures at home frees up class time for more interesting learning activities where the teacher can simply act as the facilitator. This arrangement is known as the flipped

classroom and is gaining in popularity as many teachers want to include more interactive activities in class but also struggle to cover all the required material in the allotted time frame. This site (www.knewton.com/flipped-classroom) provides more information about the flipped classroom approach to teaching.

For an ESL class, Allthink might work something like this. Students are given the link to an Allthink lesson about the past tense to view and study as homework. The lesson consists of a short PowerPoint that you have used in the past and find quite effective, images to better convey key points, videos either drawn from the web or created by you, other related text, and finally a short quiz. Based on the results of the quiz, you know whether or not your students are comfortable with the material and where to start when you see your students next. Assuming the majority of students do well, you can devote 90% of the next class period to past tense speaking exercises maximizing the amount of time students are using English and minimizing the amount of time you spend lecturing. This can be used for any number of ESL topics.

Besides the fact that students are required to use listening, reading, and writing skills to complete the Allthink lessons, another benefit of this teaching method is that each student is viewing the homework material at his or her own pace and can therefore gain the most from it. Unfortunately, when material is delivered in a traditional lecture format, mid-level students often gain the most whereas high-level students become bored and low-level students are left confused and frustrated. Making materials available online gives students at every level the support they need to excel.

2 A NOTE ABOUT ENGRADE

Allthink is linked to Engrade through the Apps tab at the top of the

Engrade website so let's take a look at Engrade for a moment. While actual teaching is obviously the most important part of a teacher's job, there are a lot of other important tasks, such as paperwork, that teachers must attend to on a regular, if not daily, basis. Some schools have their own software to make tasks like grade keeping and attendance easier but many others do not so a free platform like Engrade is the perfect solution. Teachers can set up every single one of their classes on Engrade, keep attendance, and track assignments. The platform also has many tools to aid teachers in creating materials such as flashcards and rubrics. Additionally, if students are given access to the site, online quizzes, wikis, and discussions can be created easily. Finally, Allthink lessons can be assigned to classes through the Engrade platform which makes assigning and grading them even simpler!

IN SOME CONTEXTS, NOT ALL STUDENTS WILL HAVE INTERNET ACCESSIBLE COMPUTERS OR PHONES AT THEIR DISPOSABLE SO BEFORE ASSIGNING ALLTHINK LESSONS, BE SURE TO CONDUCT A SURVEY OF YOUR STUDENTS TO SEE WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM.

If your school or local library has a computer lab, you can suggest these as possible study locations as well. Although you need to create accounts for each website, Allthink and Engrade are both free and the time you take to set up accounts and learn the ropes is a worthy investment considering the time they will save you later on!

Blog, Vlog, What's a Glog?

Glogster for Teachers

THESE DAYS PEOPLE SEEM TO BE DOING SO MANY AMAZING THINGS ON THE INTERNET. THERE IS NO REASON WHY TEACHERS, EVEN ESL TEACHERS, CANNOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH EXCELLENT RESOURCES AND START USING TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR CLASSES.

Blogs and even vlogs, that is video blogs, have become quite common but what is a glog? Well, glogs are digital posters and Glogster.com is a website where you can make them. Not all teachers will be in a position to use glogs in their classroom but if your school has a computer lab or your students all have computers and internet access, then glogs can be a great way to make learning more fun! Even with just a classroom computer, you can find a creative solution which allows students to use glogs in class from time to time.

HOW TEACHERS & STUDENTS CAN USE GLOGSTER TO MAKE LESSONS MORE FUN

1 ABOUT GLOGSTER

Glogster offers many different account options but if your school is not willing to pay for multiple accounts, do not worry, there are free education accounts too which gives you access to everything you need to make your own glogs. Creating glogs is very intuitive, the visuals are easy to customize to appeal to students of all ages, and you can even embed your own videos, images, and sounds in glogs. The site has a tutorial that you can watch and plenty of great sample glogs that you could use as is or as inspiration for your own creations. I would like to suggest several ways ESL teachers and students can use this site.

2 GLOGSTER FOR TEACHERS

Teachers can use glogs in two ways. Firstly, you can create digital posters to print out and display in your classroom. In just a short time, you

can create visually stunning posters that will impress your colleagues and your students. Classroom posters for rules, special announcements, or even classroom English phrases could be made using Glogster. To make things even more interesting, you can also adapt the idea of a digital poster to suit your teaching needs. Glogs, such as this one (hermione11185.edu.glogster.com/paraphrasing/) designed for an advanced English for academic purposes class, can be used to structure entire classes or even homework assignments by linking or embedding all the necessary resources to one page, the glog. In the example above, students are directed to various sites to complete quizzes, view lectures, and examine other resources before being asked to complete a couple assignments. A great advantage to using glogs for lesson and homework assignments is that you can include as many resources and scaffolding as your lowest level student needs while higher level students can simply move through the assignments without reviewing the extra material. In this way, each and every student can have the individual support he or she needs to successfully complete tasks. Using a glog to structure a complex lesson also frees you up to monitor students more closely and provide more support to students who are struggling with the material. It is almost like having an extra teacher in the classroom!

3 GLOGSTER FOR STUDENTS

Students can use glogs in the same way teachers can. At the end of a unit, you can ask students to create individual or group posters to display in the classroom and/or present in class as a review or for a poster competition. If your students feel very comfortable with technology already, they can create their own interactive glogs with resources, questions and assignments for their classmates to use, again, probably as a review. These types of tasks allow students to show off their creativity while also demonstrating their mastery of course

content.

SINCE ENGLISH IS A COMMUNICATION TOOL, IT SEEMS SILLY TO HAVE STUDENTS COMPLETING ONLY READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS FOR HOMEWORK.

By using a glog you can include listening tasks and, by using additional resources such as Voicethread.com, even speaking assignments. If you think that students should be practicing all four skills both in and out of the classroom then glogs might be a good place to start. Posting a link to the glog you want to use on your class website or even just handing out the address makes assigning homework easy and students can look forward to the exciting new material you have prepared for them. When was the last time a homework assignment looked so colorful? Think of all the paper and ink you will conserve by becoming a tech-savvy teacher! If you have not started making your first glog yet, now might be a great time to begin.

English Homework for Listening and Speaking

Recently, there has been a move towards oral English or English conversation classes in countries around the world. Educational programs have shifted from teaching solely grammar to teaching pronunciation and communication skills.

Teachers of these types of courses struggle with giving meaningful homework assignments as traditional homework tasks focus entirely on reading and writing. Fortunately, if your students have computer and internet access, you can make use of new technology to encourage more speaking and listening practice outside the classroom. By providing your students with new opportunities to practice speaking English, you will help them learn and improve more rapidly.

Voicethread.com, Voki.com, and the Listen & Watch section of the British Council website (learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/listen-and-watch) are great sites to start with because they are fairly straightforward. The first two offer free basic accounts but you and your students will all need to create accounts so having one class in the computer lab, assuming that one is available to you, to get students used to these sites is ideal. The British Council site does not require an account to access the material but an initial session in the computer lab is still preferable because it would give students the chance to participate in a guided exploration of the site. Asking students to explore sites entirely on their own could be frustrating for some of them so this approach is highly recommended.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE LISTENING AND SPEAKING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

1 VOICETHREAD

Here is how you can use Voicethread for your classes. First, you have to create a Voicethread by up-

loading a series of images or videos. It would be best if there were a theme to the Voicethread such as animals, hobbies, environmental problems, countries, food, or art that related to your current unit of study. The theme will obviously depend on the level of your students. Before sharing the Voicethread with students, create a comment that includes the directions as well as a model of what you expect from students. For homework, ask students to comment on one or more of the images or video clips. Comments can be made orally or in writing. You can encourage students to leave oral comments but the flexibility is also good since some students may not initially feel comfortable recording themselves speaking. After students are familiar with the site, you can require oral comments and even ask students to make their own Voicethreads to tell stories about their lives, introduce themselves, or give short presentations about topics they are interested in.

2 VOKI

Voki.com is another free site that can be used for speaking practice. To create a Voki, choose and customize a character and record a short sixty seconds of speech. It is really that simple. You could use Vokis for practicing descriptions by asking students to customize a character and then use a sixty second recording to describe the character they have created. Since characters are not limited to people, this could be a very fun and enjoyable activity for students at many levels. Students could also use this program to create a personalized Voki and record oral responses to homework questions. Rather than requiring students to create a Voki right from the start, start off using it as an alternative to short written assignments. Once students have seen some examples that you or peers have created, they could be encouraged to create their own. If you want to guarantee that students practice speaking English for these assignments, specify that

they are not allowed to use the text to speech feature.

3 BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council makes a lot of materials available for English language learners so you can direct students to what you would like them to listen to or watch. Many of the activities on the British Council website include their own tasks which you could ask students to complete or ignore depending on your purpose for using the material. You can also just ask students to prepare a comment or question for the following class period. This site section (learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/listen-and-watch) could help your students focus on their listening skills but if combined with Voicethread or Voki, students could do both listening and speaking activities for homework which is perfect for oral communication classes.

IT IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SPEAK ENGLISH AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND THESE ACTIVITIES ALSO HELP STUDENTS IMPROVE THEIR COMPUTER LITERACY WHICH IS EQUALLY, IF NOT MORE, IMPORTANT THESE DAYS.

On the other hand, if students do not have computer access, it is still possible to encourage students to practice their speaking skills by asking them to prepare and practice speeches or conduct short interviews. If reading and writing are getting too much attention in your communication classes, consider using some of these resources and ideas in the future.

10 Essential Online Tools: What You Should Have in Your Pocket

As teachers, we are always looking for new and interesting ways to present information to our classes and give them practice with linguistic concepts. Sometimes, though, we are not sure where to turn for activities that will challenge and entertain our students.

The answer is clear. Arm yourself for successful teaching with these online tools for use in the classroom and outside it!

ESSENTIAL ONLINE TOOLS EVERY TEACHER SHOULD KNOW

1 WORD SEARCH CREATOR

Busy Teacher offers more than just great articles and creative teaching ideas. You can also find some of the most useful online tools at your favorite ESL website. One of these tools is the word search tool (busyteacher.org/wordpuzzle). Word searches can be a great way to review vocabulary with your students. Simply provide a list of words you want the puzzle to include and you can have an original word search puzzle in seconds!

2 PUZZLE MAKER

In addition to word searches, crossword puzzles are another effective vocabulary tool. You can easily provide your students with definitions of vocabulary words and challenge them to come up with the answers. Simply type in your answers and clues and this site (new.puzzle-maker.com:8093/?) will convert them into an original and custom crossword puzzle to use with your ESL class.

3 DOUBLE PUZZLE CREATOR

Would you like to take the challenge a step further? Busy Teacher also gives you the opportunity to create an original double puzzle (busyteacher.org/doublepuzzle). These puzzles use answers which are in turn used to find the answer to a larger question. This type of puzzle offers a change of pace to your students who may have had their fill of

crosswords.

4 TILE PUZZLE CREATOR

A tile puzzle (busyteacher.org/tilepuzzle/) is another resource you may want to keep in your back pocket for those rainy days when you are looking for variety in your classroom activities. With this activity, you type in a phrase which is broken into two-, three-, or four-letter tiles. Your students' challenge is to rearrange the order of the tiles to determine the original phrase. This activity can be used with quotations from reading selections or famous speakers. Your students will have to use logic and their understanding of English spelling to determine the correct phrase.

5 DICTIONARY OF SPOKEN WORDS

Is it possible to repeat a new word as often as your students might like to hear it? If you are getting tired of saying the same words repeatedly, direct your students to this online dictionary of spoken words in English (www.howjsay.com). Though the accent may be slightly computerized, this tool is still useful for students and even teachers who want an objective source for English pronunciation.

6 ONLINE TRANSLATOR

The goal of ESL classes is, of course, to teach your students English, but there are times when it helps to speak your student's native languages. If you are not a speaker of ten languages or more, you may find an online translator to be a useful tool. There are several different sites where you can translate from one language to another (google translator or babel fish, for example). Though you should not expect a perfect translation from these or any other online translators, they may give you enough information to communicate with parents or beginning level learners.

7 ONLINE PLAGIARISM DETECTOR

We all want to think the best of our students, but while we are thinking the best it is good to be cautious as well. With this online plagiarism detector (www.dustball.com/cs/plagiarism.checker), you can cut and paste your student's writing to check for copied material. Though the search will not be exhaustive, you should still get a good feel for whether your student wrote the material on his own or used a little more help than he should have.

8 FLASHCARD MAKER

Busy Teacher offers an extensive collection of printer ready flash cards, but if you still do not see what you are looking for, you may want to make your own flash cards with this online tool (www.kitzkikz.com/flashcards). Once you determine what you want the front and the back of the card to read, you can use your original flashcards for an almost unlimited number of activities in the classroom!

9 REPORT CARD CREATOR

Report cards come around all too often, it sometimes seems. When you are looking for a way to express yourself clearly on these student evaluations, look to this site (www.esltool.com/) which helps you compose exactly what you want to say about your student's language skills.

10 GRAMMAR & SPELLING CHECKER

Finally, as a teacher you should be sure to keep your own materials free of mistakes and problems. To that end, this free online grammar and spelling checker (www.grammarcheck.net) is a good second set of eyes for the materials you publish for your students. Staying at the top of your game is essential when you are teaching English to nonnative speakers. By using every resource that you can, you make sure that you are setting a good example and teaching the correct things to your students!

Virtual Realia: 10 Examples and How to use Them in an ESL Class

THERE ARE PLENTY OF ESL TEACHERS WHO ADVOCATE THE USE OF REALIA IN THE CLASSROOM – AND FOR GOOD REASON.

Over the years, they have brought an assortment of authentic city maps, brochures, restaurant menus and coupons to class, and have had tremendous success. Students connect to these authentic materials they can touch and manipulate, which enhances the overall language learning experience. But, what is virtual realia? Essentially, virtual realia is any item from the target culture that is presented in a digital format. So, if the local city map is realia, a scanned copy of the very same map is virtual realia. Now, you're probably wondering: why would we have digital copies of things we can simply pick up and take to class? Virtual realia certainly has its disadvantages, the obvious one being that students can't touch or manipulate these items. Also, you need to have a computer, laptop, or at the very least, a tablet or Smartphone to show these images to the class.

THE ADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL REALIA

- It can be easily reproduced and shared. You can email each of your students a copy they can use.
- It can be used in interactive formats. You can use virtual realia in the class blog or website, and even create quizzes or tests with this authentic material.
- Students may have access to material from different cultures across the globe. Thanks to the ol' World Wide Web, you can probably find all kinds of things you would not normally have access to due to geographic limitations.
- Digital copies may be altered without damaging the original. Did you bring a menu or flyer from a recent trip to the UK? Chances are you don't have many of those lying around. You can scan a copy of the original and alter it for gap-filling exercises – your souvenir will remain intact!
- Virtual realia can be easily stored, carried and accessed. No need to bring a big bag of brochures or heavy catalogs. No need to sort through a box of flyers to find the one you need.

So, as you can see, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. If you're an

ESL teacher living outside the US or UK, you will be able to open a window into the target culture, something that is of tremendous value to ESL students.

10 EXAMPLES OF VIRTUAL REALIA AND HOW TO USE THEM IN AN ESL CLASS

1 BROCHURES

Brochures and pamphlets are probably the most versatile, as you can cover a wide range of topics. For example, show the class the scanned images of several travel brochures. Discuss what you can see and do in each location. Ask them which place they'd pick for a vacation and why. Finally, give them a Travel Brochure Template (bit.ly/ZWvmoN) and have them create their own.

2 MAPS

Maps are especially useful for asking for and giving directions. There are plenty of maps available online. Choose a city your students would like to visit – like New York City. Have them make a list of the sights they want to see and help them locate them in the map. Students take turns asking each other how to get to the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty ferry and many other attractions.

3 RESTAURANT MENUS

Invite your class to an exclusive American or British restaurant! To practice ordering a meal at a restaurant, show them a digitized restaurant menu to order from.

4 DOCUMENTS

What does an American library card look like? Or a Driver's License? Do you know anyone in the US or UK who might be able to scan one and send it over? Some people are very careful about sharing documents, but you can ask them to blur or cover specific information like the license number or other details. Documents like these are great to practice talking about age, birthdays, addresses, etc.

5 TICKETS AND RECEIPTS

Supermarket tickets, theater stubs,

hotel bills -- all of these provide a lot of information you can talk about with your class.

6 TRAIN SCHEDULES

"When does the next train to Boston leave?" Students ask each other this and more questions, and check the train schedule.

7 MAGAZINES ADS

Show your class an ad like this one (bit.ly/186Do4R), but cover the text. Ask them what they think the ad is for. If it's a company, what kind of company is it? Reveal the text below the picture and discuss.

8 COUPONS

Put your students' math skills to the test! The coupon says that they may get two dollars off any large pizza. If the pizza costs 20 dollars, how much would they pay with the coupon? Practice conditionals!

9 FOOD PACKAGING

Look through an assortment of packaged food images from boxes of chocolate to frozen dinners. Talk about which seem to be healthy foods and which do not. Why are some not very healthy? What do they contain?

10 THEATER PROGRAMS

Theater programs provide a lot of information about the play and performers. Playbill has an amazing website called PlaybillVault.com which has hundreds of digital copies of past Playbills. Look at this one for the Broadway version of Beauty and the Beast. You can look through the digital copies of the original 1994 program!

GAP-FILLING EXERCISES, READING AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS, ROLE PLAYS -- THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH THIS MATERIAL. YOU CAN BROWSE AS MANY IMAGES AS YOU LIKE ONLINE, BUT IF YOU DOWNLOAD THEM AND REUSE THEM FOR YOUR OWN PURPOSES, PLEASE BE MINDFUL OF COPYRIGHT. SCAN YOUR OWN AND USE THEM AS YOU PLEASE!

Why Use The Internet In TEFL/ TESOL?

In the pre-Internet world most dialogue in the classroom was between the teacher and the student, but with the advent of the Net we now have a choice of writing and communicating to a wider audience. There is no one unified method of instruction, but some of the more popular choices are the World Wide Web, E-mail, language learning sites and virtual classrooms.

The Internet differs in fundamental aspects from traditional conversational speech and from writing as a medium of computer-mediated communication, as it has a lack of simultaneous feedback, which is so critical to successful conversation. However new innovative uses of screen capture software are making effective inroads into this deficiency.

Should Standard English be the approved medium when we have this exciting new possibility of truly creative language writing? Or should we let blogging run its interactive course, as it is indeed revolutionary in allowing publication of personal reactions, which would otherwise have no audience?

The Internet has no borders, but in the teaching process we must use it as an empowering tool, to methodically direct students to targets effectively according to students' proficiency levels and language abilities.

THE INTERNET – A 24/7 RESOURCE

The Internet provides students with opportunities for exposure to natural and authentic language use, not only during but also outside the class. There is a wealth of information and unlimited resources that teachers can use in getting students to make worksheets for class, or in homework assignments. This makes learning English part of students' daily lives providing functional communicative experiences and an ongoing process. However exposure is not enough to

facilitate language acquisition and students need to be involved in meaningful tasks that integrate proper usage of computers and the Net e.g. WebQuests. The Internet has become a vital part of life and learning how to use it is an essential skill.

Through usage for learning English, students also develop basic information technology skills simultaneously e.g. word processing, Web-browsing, E-mail etc. and increase their competence in the highly competitive global marketplace. As the Internet offers a variety of topics it is appealing and can satisfy a diverse audience. The information available is current and frequently updated therefore providing a 'living' text. Using the Internet is fun as websites are full of animation, colors, sounds, pictures, interactive forms and digital video clips.

The Internet as a medium is highly motivating, thereby enhancing student autonomy and allowing them the opportunity to manage their own learning.

It is intrinsic, trendy and fascinating as realistically our technological society is still in its Internet infancy despite the apparent speed of advancement.

HOW CAN THIS RESOURCE BE UTILIZED FROM THE ESL PERSPECTIVE?

Many students are computer illiterate even in their own language and the 'older generation' especially display technophobia, or are genuinely frightened of 'surfing' in English. The teacher does not have to be an IT expert to employ modern technology, but should commence with identifying the different uses of computers by students, review the different parts of the computer and keyboard, familiarize them with some basic computer and word processing terms/definitions, netiquette and then proceed to the exploration and practice of some basic computer operations. This makes

the tasks meaningful and not merely computer study in isolation.

The Internet is not always accessible in the educational setting due to the country or teaching institution's financial situation. However the resourceful teacher can adapt lessons for the traditional classroom, if no computers are available and assign computer practice activities for homework, if appropriate.

It is important to remember that the primary goal is not to teach computers but a 4 skills course (reading, writing, listening and speaking) utilizing the Internet. Therefore pair work and group participation activities remain essential for collaboration, unlike the computer class where there is little or no interaction with classmates. By helping each other the students often duplicate this social skill in other learning activities.

We can begin with the online sources to do vocabulary and grammar exercises, then use the sites to complete tasks, then become creative and as student skills increase the teacher can design lessons accordingly.

The Internet gives students the opportunity to build knowledge together by expressing themselves in print and then assessing, evaluating, comparing and reflecting on their own views and those of others. They have the opportunity to talk with many people at the same time and not wait their turn, as in the conventional oral group classroom setting. Communication with native speakers allows learners to practice specific skills such as negotiating, persuading, clarifying meaning, requesting information, and engaging in true-life, authentic discussion.

By exchanging e-mails with other students from different parts of the world through 'keypals', there is meaningful communication with native speakers in real situations, improving writing skills, and allowing learners to par-

ticipate in the culture of the target language, which additionally can enable them to learn how cultural background influences one's own view of the world. It should be explained to students that having a keypal is their responsibility and they should answer/originate e-mail outside class, thus increasing autonomy.

Some further examples of using the Internet for ESL/TEFL/TESOL include:

- Business English – exploiting authentic materials, providing vocabulary practice, writing e-mails emphasizing tone, structures and layout, scanning practice, research resource for presentations using current and relevant information, commercial websites and Internet terminology.
- Youtube videos – improve listening skills and vocabulary.
- Distance learning courses – for students and teachers alike.
- E-mailing students pre-lesson with material/texts to be used in the classroom.
- Creating a publication together – newsletter, magazine etc.
- Checking designed ESL sites/authentic material.
- Teachers can find photocopiable worksheets/lesson plans/flashcards/games etc.
- Setting up self-access centres (SACs) depending on equipment and facilities, financing, student benefits.
- Customized learning programmes for vocabulary word lists, learning in chunks.
- Free Skype conversations.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

- Internet use helps learners to gain input in the language learning process.
- This form of communication provides more equality of opportunity for self-expression and indeed more chances to interact in the written form. This increases confidence to experiment in the second language.
- It is the greatest source of information not in book form -- can be used as an encyclopedia and can have real worth in promoting higher thinking skills. Students focus less on rote learning and basic understanding and employ logical

skills for searching and then evaluate and judge the usefulness of gleaned information to put their work together.

- Some studies indicate that such ESL learners produce more written sentences when compared to the oral group situation in the classroom environment. It is also useful not only for the quantity but also the quality of language as learners have a greater variety of speech discourse and use more complex language.
- The Internet changes the interaction between learners and teachers as students can optimize their computer 'talking' time. Furthermore, it changes teacher and students' roles over content and discussion making learning more student-centered with the choice in topics raised and the student becoming involved in decision – making. The students construct their own knowledge and the teacher becomes a facilitator in the process.
- The Internet has unlimited supplemental language resources such as reading texts, pronunciation exercises etc. which students can access to improve technically in the language. Games with learning components are also fun activities, which the teacher can also create.
- Students can use authentic sites created by native speakers, rather than EFL learning type designed ones.
- The Internet is a platform for experiencing and presenting creative works such as essays, poetry and stories and for providing supplemental language activities in specific areas of language learning. Web pages and projects can be published or e-mailed to other students thus creating interest and motivation even outside the class.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES/ DISADVANTAGES

- Communication with other non-native speakers may affect reading skills defectively and student control of input lacks the normal continuity and coherence normally modeled by the teacher. However this can be balanced by introducing native speakers into

the tasks and effective teacher feedback.

- A multitude of materials can be accessed and integration of the materials into the second language may create difficulties, unless the teacher has specific goals for using the technology.
- There are delays and time wastages, which are inevitable due to training, familiarization, computer hardware/software problems etc. But the teacher must not neglect the communicative teaching approach, which must always be the priority in the lesson. For example the teacher can check student e-mails are error free before the correspondence is transmitted, thus incorporating listening and speaking skills into the exercises.
- Student monitoring/evaluation, plagiarism, inappropriate sites etc. need to have appropriate policies and planning in place to pre-empt foreseeable problems. The teacher must also be familiar with technological changes by undergoing CPD to ensure the Internet remains a fun and rewarding language experience, for all concerned.

CONCLUSION

The Internet is a highly versatile resource, provided it is used properly and with discretion. In the future human interaction will be enhanced as sound/video techniques such as voice recognition devices and webcams become more accessible and popular. Speaking is very different from writing, even if it is synchronous. On-line communication restructures class dynamics in a positive and effective manner, but it should be a teaching aid rather than a methodology. We can rest assured that we will always need great teachers.

10 Types of Technology Every Teacher Should Know

THERE IS A TENDENCY TO THINK OF THE CLASSROOM AS REMOVED FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD AND ISOLATED FROM CHANGE.

To some extent, this is true - many of us are in classrooms that Socrates himself almost might have taught in, the most developed “technology” being the whiteboard or perhaps an overhead projector. Even so, there are several reasons to keep current with technology: your students can use it, and in most things, the teacher should know at least as much as their students: the real possibility that you might someday be assigned a “smart” classroom, and many resources for continued learning, such as “podcasts,” come in the form of contemporary technology. In fact there are 10 pieces of technology every teacher should know how to use.

10 PIECES OF TECHNOLOGY EVERY TEACHER SHOULD KNOW

1 A SMART PHONE

A phone equipped with other devices, such as a camera and internet connection, it has been joked that you can do everything on a smart phone but place phone calls. However, a smart phone does prove useful for classrooms: a teacher I once knew, for example, took pictures of each student in her class, the student holding a large card with his or her name, so that she had a visual record of her students’ faces and names associated with them to refer to.

Examples: Apple iPhone (apple.com/iphone/), Samsung Galaxy Phone (samsung.com/us/topic/our-galaxy-smartphones).

2 AN IPOD

Originally a device for storing electronic music, iPods are now a tool for storing other audio material, such as lectures, and are therefore good for teachers’ professional development.

There are numerous “Podcasts” that can be found online on latest teaching information on topics such as English as a Second Language and technology. Teachers can also record their own podcasts, post them, and ask students to listen as homework. iPods are also relatively inexpensive and easy to use.

Link: Apple iPod Product page (apple.com/ipod/)

3 A SMARTBOARD

A smartboard is an interactive white board many classrooms come equipped with now. Rather than ignore it and use the traditional white or chalkboard, as some teachers do, why not learn how to use a smartboard to enhance your instruction? Writing and erasing, for example, can be accomplished with both fingers and smartboard pens. Gone is the frustration when the whiteboard pens go missing or don’t work: teachers can simply use their fingers or another object. Also eliminated is the smell or dust associated with dry erase pens and chalk. In addition, smartboards function something like a traditional computer screens: clicking on items on the board, such as notebook icons, will open them. Also lesson software can be loaded, setting up “true” and “false” responses for students to click on, for example.

Link: Interactive Smartboards (smarttech.com/smartboard)

4 A LAPTOP

Laptops are effective in the classroom, making it possible, for example, to project a clip from YouTube to demonstrate a cultural concept such as what The Tonight Show is. Laptops are also good for teachers out-of-class work, like recording and scoring grades. Finally, many students are assigned their own laptops in classrooms now, on which they can complete, print out, and store their work as well as learn effective methods of completing web searches.

This basic education in technology is important for many underprivileged students who otherwise have little access to it, and for whom learning technology, along with learning English, is critical for advancing in society.

5 WEBSITE DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Understanding how to set up a simple website is important for teachers. It can be as simple as a blog, but there should be places to post updates and class and school news as well as assignments coming due and discussion boards for students to post and answer questions. Ideally, there should also be a place to post assignments so that students who don’t know or who forgot the assignment can refer to the website. Having students print out and bring their own assignment directions, rather than making multiple copies, also conserves paper and saves money for the school.

6 POWERPOINT

Powerpoint remains a critical way to impart important information to students because of its visual and interactive nature. The slides provide more information than the teacher can give by lecturing: showing pictures of Anne Frank’s hiding place and her family, for example, is more powerful than just discussing them. In addition, it is possible to print out a set of lecture guides with each presentation for students to take notes on, so this provides a kind of scaffolding that traditional lectures do not.

7 THUMBDRIVE

Besides just learning the technology, students and teachers should learn some of the basics in responsible handling of computer information, such as storing materials to a thumbdrive, a small electronic storage device that can be kept on a keychain. Asking students to purchase a thumbdrive should be part of every class in which technology is used.

8 A DVD AND CD PLAYER

DVD and CD players remain staples of technology for teaching. Many ESL books come equipped with CDs for listening practice and DVDs for presenting concepts, so access to both a CD and DVD player is desirable.

9 AN OVERHEAD PROJECTOR

Understanding how an overhead projector works remains important even today because many texts — including the one I am using this term — comes with pages to be used on overheads. In addition, many schools have not made the conversion yet to “smart” classrooms, and overhead projects are the extent of their technology. However, overheads are especially useful for demonstrating to students how to fill out a form, for example, or a page on a notebook. Instead of attempting to copy from the book the sentences with blanks on the board, the teacher can simply make an overhead and fill it out on the projector. This saves time, improves accuracy, and reduces confusion for students with learning difficulties, in particular, whose confusion connecting with what is on the board with what is in their book is reduced if what is on the overhead is the same as their books.

10 E-READERS

E-readers, electronic devices for downloading and reading electronic books, are the coming technology in purchasing and reading books. Their advantages are their portability: an e-reader can store thousands of texts and save space and back pain caused by traditional books filling shelves and backpacks. E-books are also often cheaper: a friend of mine, for example, just downloaded the complete works of Shakespeare—free, because it's out of copyright. Many e-readers today also come with devices to mark and highlight electronic text, which is not as damaging as marking a print copy. All teachers and students should consider getting one of these devices.

Examples: Kindle Fire HD (amazon.com/Kindle-Fire-HD/dp/B0083P-WAPW), Nook HD (barnesandnoble.com/p/nook-hd-barnes-noble/1110060426), iPad Mini (apple.com/ipad-mini/overview/).

com/ipad-mini/overview/).

TECHNOLOGY WILL NEVER TAKE THE PLACE OF A TEACHER NOR WILL IT COVER FOR POOR TEACHING.

However, technology, used in the correct place and at the correct time, can enhance the educational process greatly.

Back to School Tech Tips for ESL Teachers: Use Online Resources

Not exactly tech-savvy are you? But you have to admit that starting a new school year can be overwhelming, particularly for new teachers. Luckily for us, the World Wide Web offers ways in which we can share the load and support each other, tools that can certainly make things easier. There is also an astounding amount of information and resources for ESL teachers, and not just in the form of worksheets and printables for download.

Even the ESL teachers who are most reluctant to use the newest online tools should take advantage of the vast amount of resources available to them, and here are but a few of the things you can do online to start the new school year off on the right foot.

BACK TO SCHOOL TECH TIPS FOR SMART ESL TEACHERS

1 USE TWITTER

Twitter can be an invaluable tool for those interested in building a network of like-minded professionals. For ESL teachers, in particular, it provides an excellent way to trade secrets, exchange tips, or simply share the trials and joys of teaching.

If you haven't got an account yet, it's very easy to create one here: <https://twitter.com/>. Once you have your account set up, all you have to do is start following other ESL teachers or ESL publications, organizations and websites. It's as easy as typing "ESL" in the "Who To Follow" search box. You'll have thousands of suggestions to choose from. And don't forget to add [busyteacher_org](https://twitter.com/busyteacher_org) to follow us on Twitter!

Also, [TwitterforTeachers.com](https://twitter.com/Teachers.com) has an excellent database of ESL teachers you can follow – remember to add your name to the list so that others can find you.

2 CREATE YOUR OWN WEBSITE

Creating a website used to be a monu-

mental task, but not anymore! There are sites like [Wix.com](https://www.wix.com) and [Weebly.com](https://www.weebly.com) that allow you to create your own free websites and guide you every step of the way – no need to know anything about programming, no need to hire expensive web designers. But why create your own website? Your custom made website can be an invaluable link between the classroom and home. In your class website you can:

- Post schedules and calendars
- Share pictures of your special projects
- Keep parents informed on what you're doing in class
- Give your students extra homework or reading materials
- Post videos or songs for extra, fun practice
- And the list goes on...

If you think a class website will only give you more work to do, that may not necessarily be the case. Once you have your website up and running, you may only have to update it once or twice a week. You can always choose how much of your time you'll dedicate to it, but chances are you'll get hooked!

This is a great way to get parents interested in what their kids are learning, but it also shows them exactly what they have been doing in class. Remember that before you post photos of your students on the Internet, it's best to get a signed authorization from their parents.

3 DOWNLOAD READY-MADE MATERIALS

Creating your own worksheets, flashcards and posters can be time consuming and exhausting. Why create yet another worksheet on the present perfect when hundreds of ESL teachers have done so before you. Make use of the online resources available to you and download the materials you need. Here at [BusyTeacher.org](https://www.busyteacher.org), we've got worksheets, flashcards, puzzle creators and more! Once you know where you can get everything you need, it'll always be there at your fingertips!

But don't just stop at downloads. Use all of the tools available to you that can

help you get things done easier and faster. [Scholastic Book Wizard](https://www.scholastic.com/bookwizard/) ([scholastic.com/bookwizard/](https://www.scholastic.com/bookwizard/)) helps you choose the right book for you class. [Scholastic's Classroom Setup Tool](https://www.scholastic.com/tools/class_setup/) ([teacher.scholastic.com/tools/class_setup/](https://www.scholastic.com/tools/class_setup/)) takes the guesswork out of organizing your class for more effective lessons.

4 READ ESL BLOGS

ESL blogs may offer worksheets to download or just simple, good advice. There are different types of ESL blogs, but most have one thing in common: any ESL teacher will find something useful in them, perhaps a pearl of wisdom, or a really great video to watch. Blogs are also great places to leave comments and connect with the blogger, who in this case, is an ESL teacher, just like you! [OnlineDegrees.org](https://www.onlinedegrees.org) has published a great list of [Top 25 ESL Blogs for Teachers and Students](https://www.onlinedegrees.org/top-25-esl-blogs-for-teachers-and-students/) ([onlinedegrees.org/top-25-esl-blogs-for-teachers-and-students/](https://www.onlinedegrees.org/top-25-esl-blogs-for-teachers-and-students/)).

5 INVEST IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

You may have already gotten your degree, but this does not mean you have nothing left to learn. There are plenty of ways in which you can further your education, from a Master's degree to technology courses.

- [Walden University](https://www.walden.edu) offers online degrees like the Master of Science in Education and the Bachelor's degree in Instructional Design and Technology.
- Want to finally get your TESOL certification? [TESOL.org](https://www.tesol.org) offers a directory of degree and certificate programs, while [TESOLonline](https://www.tesolonline.com) offers classroom-based or online courses in 20 international locations.

SO, DON'T BE TECH-SHY AND TRY SOME OF THESE RESOURCES AND TOOLS. REMEMBER THAT THE NEWEST INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES CAN ONLY MAKE OUR LIVES EASIER.

All By Myself: The Pros and Cons of Teaching One-on-One Lessons

TEACHING ESL ONE-ON-ONE CAN BE A BENEFICIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR THE TEACHER AND THE STUDENT.

However, tutoring students one-on-one can be challenging and you want to think carefully about whether you want to spend your time teaching one-on-one. Take a look at these pros and cons and decide if teaching one-on-one lessons is for you!

PROS

1 YOU CAN UTILIZE ONLINE GAMES AND LISTENING EXERCISES EASILY

Sometimes this can be difficult in the classroom because you might not have the right setup, internet connectivity or your class is simply too big. With all the new technologies like iPhones, iPads, and laptops you can easily introduce stimulating online games and listening exercises. You can play games together, listen to podcasts, watch movie clips, or have a heck of a good time exploring YouTube together! Whatever you choose to introduce, be sure that you always have interactive language activities, discussions, and vocabulary exercises to make the most of your time plugged in.

2 IT'S UNLIKELY YOU WOULD HAVE TO DEAL WITH ANY BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

You generally know what you are in for when you find your individual student. There are no distractions or classroom drama to cope with, so you can just focus on getting the work done. Students most likely will have high expectations of you, and hopefully for themselves as well. Many behavioral issues arise out of boredom. With your one-on-one student you have the advantage of tailoring the level of difficulty to the individual, and you know when that level needs to be adjusted. When choosing students, be sure that you choose those that you know will be motivated and engaged!

3 STUDENTS HAVE YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION

Many students are really drawn to one-on-one lessons because their learning style really thrives in that type of arrangement, or they may really need serious attention. It gives you time to spend with that student however the two of you would like, and for some that freedom is really appealing. You can devise a plan of attack together, and you can alter things as you go, because there is only one student to consider. It is easier to set goals, work on trouble areas, and to divide lessons into substantive chunks. You may also find that you hit it off with the student, and that the time you spend together is productive, easy and meaningful.

4 YOU CAN LEARN A LOT

Devising lesson plans for an individual can be a great learning process, as can the relationship-building that occurs during one-on-one lessons. You will sharpen some of your teacherly skills and you may find that you also learn a lot about a given culture or topic that the student shares with you. One-on-lessons are a two-way street for sharing and learning together which is a great motivator. You can also learn new skills that could take your teaching in a new direction. Think of one-on-one lessons as a forum, not just for the student to try new things, but for the teacher as well.

CONS

1 IT'S DIFFICULT TO MAKE GOOD MONEY SOLELY DOING ONE-ON-ONE LESSONS

As with most work, teachers want good compensation. If you are trying to plan your main income around teaching one-on-one, you may find your bank account lacking funds necessary to survive. It's hard to arrange enough individual lessons where you will make a huge profit. You want to charge reasonable rates to attract students, so you may want to think about doing this on the side to see how it goes.

2 IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE BORING

In all honesty, one-on-one lessons have the potential of being boring or you might find the time going by rather slowly. If this is the case, the student-teacher match-up may not be a good fit, or perhaps your student is just not cut out for all this student-centered attention. You can battle this by having a lot of tools at your disposal and by over-prepping for lessons. If you find yourself stuck in a boring lesson, try to make the best of it and switch gears!

3 LIMITED OPTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

Sometimes the activities that the two of you settle into become too routine, and there's just not much leeway. The simple truth is that there is only so much you can do with one student. If you are having difficulty coming up with new and exciting activities or your student is not much of a contributor, consult the web for more ideas. You have to be honest with yourself that as creative as you are, you only have so many games up your sleeve for one student.

4 IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO GAGE THE LEARNER'S PROGRESS

One really challenging aspect of one-on-one lessons is getting a gage on progress. Without formal evaluations, a syllabus to use as a check-off, or group work it may feel like your student's progress is slow or not as apparent as in a regular classroom. Try to devise ways to note progress or setbacks, and if possible create a list of points and topics that the student has successfully completed. They will progress, but it may take more time depending on the work.

MAKING THE DECISION TO TEACH ESL ONE-ON-ONE CAN BE ONE THAT REQUIRES A LOT OF THOUGHT.

As with everything there are positives and negatives. Weigh these pros and cons and decide for yourself if it is for you part-time, full-time, or no time.

Teaching English One-on-One: Tips and Tricks for a Perfect Lesson

TEACHING ENGLISH ONE ON ONE OFFERS NUMEROUS BENEFITS TO BOTH TEACHER AND STUDENT.

Teachers have the chance to customize each lesson to his or her student's needs, and the possibility to target activities to a student's strengths and weaknesses is a huge plus. But the greatest benefits are for the ESL student. The student has the unique opportunity for intensive practice. If the student speaks for most of the lesson, he or she will make progress faster. And the same goes for other skills. Still, the teacher is the one responsible for maximizing their time with the student. Here are some practical tips for effective one on one lessons.

1 USE LOTS OF REALIA

The use of real-life objects works in any type of class, whether they are lessons one on one or large groups. But it works exceptionally well in one on one lessons because you have closer contact with the student. For example, if you work with real city maps, you can sit next to your student while he or she gives you directions to a specific location and both of you follow the route on the map. Realia also makes the class more fun in general, and if you have a student who is a bit shy or reluctant to speak, real objects come in handy to break the ice or motivate the student. Needless to say, realia is absolutely essential in a one on one lesson with a child. If you have an adult student who wants to polish his or her business English, ask your student to bring brochures or print pages from the company's website.

2 USE YOUR STUDENT'S BACKGROUND

Do you have a student who comes from a foreign country? Say you know nothing about the country and ask him or her to tell you about it: what it's like to live there, who the most popular celebrities are, customs and traditions. For example, when talking about Christmas you can compare the way the holiday is celebrated in the US and in your student's country. If your student works in a particular industry, say advertising, ask them

to tell you about it: what the job involves, what the company does, who their clients are. In any case, your student will feel proud to share this information about something they do know.

3 USE INTERNET RESOURCES

Using the Internet effectively in a large class can be a bit of a challenge -- students may have to share computers and they usually wander to other sites, check their email, etc... But the Internet is absolutely perfect for teaching one on one. You can do reading activities with real websites, play an online game, listen to a podcast or watch a video, and even have your students take a test online. The possibilities are endless. But remember that proper lesson planning is still essential. Make sure you check all links and websites before your lesson.

4 ALLOW SOME QUIET TIME

It all depends on your student's level, of course, and although some advanced students are willing to talk for hours, most find it hard to speak for a full 10 minutes. Make sure you follow a very active speaking activity or game with a more relaxed and quiet exercise: a young learner may draw a picture of the story they heard, a business English student may write an email, any student may complete a writing assignment or written exercise for a few minutes. Don't be afraid of silence. Remember your students need some quiet time to gather their thoughts and relax.

5 PLAN MULTIMEDIA LESSONS

Remember that the greatest benefit for students taking lessons one on one is that they have more time to speak. A great way to spark discussion is with video and audio. Show your student a video, check for listening comprehension, then discuss what you saw. The same can be done with any audio file. Keep in mind that there is a large variety of audio and video files available on the Internet, most of which are very easy to download.

6 ASK YOUR STUDENT TO GIVE PRESENTATIONS

A student who has to give presentations at work in English will be very thankful for having the chance to practice with you first. But children can also have a show and tell session: ask your young learner to bring his or her favorite toy, book, or stuffed animal, and tell you all about it (who they got it from or where, why it's their favorite, etc.)

7 SPEAK LESS IN ROLE PLAYS

Naturally, the teacher is at an advantage because you manage the most words and expressions. But what if you "play dumb"? Pretend you are lost, don't understand, ask lots of questions, and you'll have your students not only speaking more in the role play, but also laughing a lot! This works great when you reverse roles: you are the student, and your student is the teacher, and he or she has to explain something to you.

8 HOW TO HANDLE GAMES

Playing games one on one can be little tricky and sometimes no fun for the student (he's playing against the teacher!) So here's what you can do:

- Give your student a head start of 30 seconds
- Give your student bonus points when you start the game
- Give your student 3 or 5 points for every one of yours
- Lose deliberately by making mistakes, being slow, pretending you got distracted, etc.

ABOVE ALL, NO MATTER IF YOU'RE TEACHING A CHILD OR AN ADULT, MAKE YOUR LESSONS FUN!

Many students feel uncomfortable at first: they may not be used to being the center of attention! And although they learn a lot faster, they may also get tired faster. So, variety is key. Use a variety of teaching strategies and practice different skills, and you'll see your student progress by leaps and bounds.

How-To: Teaching One On One

It is of paramount importance to make a good first and lasting impression through your physical presentation and behavior. After that the one-to-one methodology will largely depend on the student's requirements following initial contact.

Explain the differences between one-to-one teaching and group lessons and especially how adopting this format will enhance communicative ability and boost self-confidence. The relationship will involve two-way interaction only: the trainer may have to provide stimulus if the student ideas are lacking, but she/he must be made aware and appreciate that there should be no risk of embarrassment and this facilitates the golden opportunity to speak openly.

HOW TO PROCEED

1 THE FIRST LESSON AND FUTURE PLANNING

You should first determine whether your student wants to improve her/his general command of English, or if she/he has specific Business English course objectives. In this case suitable texts should be utilized.

I recommend the completion of a 'needs analysis'/diagnostic testing prior to the first lesson, but if this is impractical I suggest the initial 'get to know you stage' to break the ice, also incorporates some questions about specific needs.

I am outlining a few examples, but this should be an in-depth planning exercise:

- *How long have you been learning English and why do you want to learn it?*
- *What does your job involve?*
- *Do you use English in your workplace e.g. memos, email, telephone calls, meeting or dealing with native speakers?*
- *Do you need to study for any English exams e.g. IELTS or TOEIC?*
- *Do you wish to improve your English skills for traveling abroad or communication with people*

from other countries?

- *What do you find interesting about Business?*
- *What other topics do you find interesting or enjoyable e.g. sport, news, fashion, entertainment?*
- *What do you want to focus on in our lessons?*
- *Do you want to study grammar in class or concentrate on communication skills?*
- *Do you want to listen to tape recordings or CDs in our lessons?*
- *Do you have any particular textbooks or materials you want to study?*
- *Do you have a preferred learning style? For example do you process information more easily through seeing or hearing or through physical / emotional feelings?*
- *Do you want to be given homework?*
- *How much time can you spend on learning English?*
- *What do you expect to achieve from this course?*

The next step is to match teaching to the student's preferred learning style. Then describe the teaching methods that will be used and provide a rationale for the student, so that nothing is misunderstood.

Lesson plans should show awareness and sensitivity to the characteristics, expectations and motivation of the learner and consider all of the following:

- Following the diagnostic testing, teaching consultation should engage forethought and planning. Think about the one-to-one attachment, and continually gauge the effectiveness of meeting needs.
- Create a trusting relationship so that you can discuss her/his personal and professional attitudes and values. One-to-one teaching has unlimited potential and facilitates opportunistic teaching. We must tackle current, changing and future student requirements, by linking prior knowledge with new challenging experiences, whilst promoting self-autonomy and self directed learning.
- Customize the programme to

match the learning experience to her/him.

- Influence the student by creating opportunities in authentic settings whilst modeling desirable attributes.
- Ensure that the initially agreed ground rules are maintained so there is no confusion as to the amount of time spent in teaching, observing, giving sensitive and private feedback and what is expected in return.
- Encourage reflective study and identify deficiencies early.
- Acknowledge fundamental differences and optimize transferable and modify less importable techniques from group teaching.
- Switch thinking from language teacher to language coach and acquire the key skills of coaching: rapport, deep listening, intuition, questioning and feedback.
- Maximize the unique existing opportunities, whilst changing the pace and style of your teaching to work on the difficulties of the individual. Deal with persistent grammar problems in a remedial way whether focusing on 'accuracy' or 'fluency.' Fill in the gaps in the student's knowledge of grammar, focus on pronunciation problems and give intensive practice in apparent areas of weakness such as listening.

As one-to-one lessons may be very intense for the student and trainer alike activities should be carefully planned and breaks timed appropriately. Seating arrangements/venue should also be varied.

Always have extra backup material ready at all times, in case the lesson proceeds faster than anticipated, or the chosen tasks are unsuitable. Encourage and praise the student, as they do not have another person to compare their progress with. Don't be afraid of silence, as it can be productive. Allow psychological space to think/reflect etc. Focus on real-life communication, but don't forget the lexis, grammar work. Don't let your student practice listening/reading your next lesson before class, as this will negate guessing from context, an-

swering prediction questions. Show you are interested in the topic and the student – minimal eye contact, body language etc. Slavish adherence to a method (such as PPP, TPR, task-based learning) is unacceptable and mutually unrewarding.

2 THE CLASS ENVIRONMENT

- language competence is the starting point.
- employ a holistic approach.
- make the learning process easier and more enjoyable.
- create grammatical awareness/ Task Based Learning etc.
- produce/extend the language.
- motivate/engage/entertain.
- use prompts, gestures etc to elicit vocabulary.
- recycle grammar/ encourage students to 'notice' language.
- bring personality/background into the class.
- content and language integrated learning (CLIL).
- feel more confident without the pressure of accuracy.
- skill based lessons/ instill a 'can do' attitude.
- student-centred.
- use lessons and time to the best extent.
- self-monitoring.
- organize learning aids – vocabulary notebook/time-lines for verb tenses.
- learning styles – visual, auditory, kinaesthetic or tactile.
- work together in a collaborative style.

3 TASKS

- provide realistic (authentic) examples of language.
- role plays/info-gap exercises/skits. Be prepared to take on different roles as a teacher and for pair work with the student.
- productive skills – writing/speaking.
- receptive skills – reading/listening.
- take notes as the student is monologuing, but pre-explain why you are doing it.
- tape activities/play back conversations. Student corrects mistakes or reformulates difficult items.
- send e-mails for homework.
- recommend English practice websites.
- telephone and speak to each oth-

er for a few minutes – variety of scenarios

- follow the news and get her/him to give news bulletins at the beginning of class.
- 2 minutes presentations of autobiographical topics – useful link with IELTS.
- newspaper headlines – students tell you what they know about these stories.
- learner autonomy – becoming less dependent on the teacher and being able to access many learning opportunities.
- communicate not just in the classroom environment.
- do drills, games etc just as you would in a group lesson.
- motivation/commitment/ take learning seriously outside the classroom.
- push the student, to compensate for the lack of group dynamics.
- maximize the type of input to benefit the student.

4 POST-CLASS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Following this and every lesson you should undertake an honest self-appraisal to consider whether you have succeeded in creating a rich learning environment for your student. Did you endeavor to guide, support, suggest, expand, extend and recycle various language elements in the class? Are you able to create a focused, systematic skill-developing syllabus and adhere to it?

Private Classes: Structuring to Get the Best Results

FOR MANY TEACHERS, HAVING PRIVATE STUDENTS CAN BE A BLESSING.

In some cases, it can be very profitable to move abroad and post advertisements in places, offering private lessons in English. It is up to you as the teacher to set your own rates. You basically work the hours you choose. For many who are employed by an official school, this can also be a great source of supplementary income. Of course, you will have to have a look at the rules and regulations of whatever school you work with in order to make sure that this doesn't contradict them. In certain countries like Germany, teaching English is mainly a freelance job. Teachers will usually be subcontracted by different companies in order to teach at various places such as schools and businesses. As a result, one will need to make sure that they get contracts with a number of different companies. When taking on private classes, the atmosphere can be a lot more relaxed. But it is still important to make sure that the class is structured so that the student who is paying you gets the most of out their lesson.

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR PRIVATE CLASSES

1 MAKE A PLAN

This might seem like an obvious one, but a lot of teachers, especially beginners, forget about it. Even if you are only teaching a conversational class, it is important to give it structure and have goals. For the first meeting, speak with the student about what they need. Organize the date, times and other important aspects of the class. If you work mostly on a freelance basis, it should be easy to accommodate your students whenever they need it, so you can schedule classes depending on when they're available. Other teachers may not be so lucky, therefore in most cases it is important to set up a regular routine.

2 FOCUS ON THE STUDENT'S INTERESTS

This will allow you to engage them more in the class. For example, if your student is a history teacher, tailor a class to his own interests, by focusing on different proverbs and the historical attachments behind them. If your student has an interest in current affairs, then have a look for different news articles on the Internet and print them out. This can be a great way of finding relevant vocabulary, especially if the student wants to practise his or her conversational English.

3 THE IMPORTANCE OF STRUCTURE WITH CHILDREN

Often parents might recruit a private tutor for their son or daughter who doesn't appear to be doing too well in school. This can obviously be a challenge due to their apparent disinterest in the language. Therefore, engaging them (again!) is key. Because there is only the two of you, it will not be like an ordinary classroom setting. This leaves a lot open for distractions. Having a well set out plan with, maybe with a break depending on the length, will achieve much better results.

4 FOLLOW REGULAR CLASS TIMINGS

In order to maintain an air of professionalism, it is a good idea to bill your classes to the same length as they normally would be in a professional language school. Do some research on this if you haven't done so already, or haven't worked in a language school yet. See what the standard hour is, and what the standard pay rate is as well. With this, you will be better prepared. If students want longer or shorter classes, then it is a good idea to organize this within the first lesson. This will clear up any confusion.

5 WARMERS, FILLERS AND MORE

As with a normal class, it is important to fill up your private one-on-one classes with the same structure methods. Introduce warmer exercises and use fillers in case there is any time left. This will ensure the student that they are receiving a proper service. It is important to be professional with all clients, as you can often benefit from the likes of referrals in order to gain more students.

AGAIN, WE CANNOT STRESS HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO MAKE SURE THAT YOUR PRIVATE CLASSES ARE MORE STRUCTURED.

A lot of the time they will be in a more relaxed setting such as the individual's home, or in a coffee shop. Keeping the class professional will ensure the best service.

One-on-One Instruction: Using Time Productively

SO YOU'VE BEEN ASSIGNED TO TEACH A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL WHO NEEDS SOME ADDITIONAL ESL SUPPORT.

Your agreement with the university states this support will be in the form of one-hour sessions three times a week. Sounds ideal, right? So what's the problem? Well, while one hour in a class of thirty seems to fly by — indeed, often seems not enough time — with one student it can seem to drag. With a class of thirty you can arrange a number of interactive activities involving different groupings along with some teacher lecture -- this is not possible, of course, in a class of one. So after your planned activities from a text or handouts, as much as a half hour might hang empty on your hands.

However, this problem is solvable by being proactive and planning meaningful activities. With the following steps, time will also fly by in your one-on-one sessions.

STEPS TO FILLING YOUR TUTORING SESSION WITH MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

1 DO A NEEDS ASSESSMENT. AND OFTEN

With the current student I tutor in a one-on-one session, I took an initial needs assessment and found she wanted to work on pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. So we had initial activities in those areas, but after a subsequent informal assessment, I found she was also very interested in learning idioms in American English. Now I do a quick assessment at the end of each session: "How did this work for you? Would you like to continue in this same way?" Sometimes the student isn't quite sure of what she wants or doesn't know how to articulate it: for example, not knowing the expression "idiom" in English for fixed expressions, she may just say "vocabulary," and it takes additional probing from the instructor to clarify what she really wants. In addition, the needs may change: after some initial work on pronunciation, the student now feels more confident and is ready to work on other areas.

2 TRY MATERIAL OUT

This is a perfect opportunity to test out new material because the stakes are fairly low: If the student doesn't like it or doesn't understand it, you can just not do it again. It's harder to change gears, however, in a class of thirty. For example, the student I am working with now is very interested in Business or Workplace English, that form of English used in professional situations that is different from the English used in more casual settings. Because I have not taught this before, this is a great opportunity to seek out Business English texts on the internet or develop materials of my own.

3 TRY OUT-OF-COPYRIGHT MATERIAL

In a regular classroom, with a purchased text that costs students fifty dollars, you are more or less committed to using that text whether or not the students benefit from it. However, the Internet is replete with out-of-copyright resources, such as classic literature like the poetry of Emily Dickenson or stories of Ernest Hemingway. What better way to introduce American literature than through a variety of stories and poems virtual free of charge? Sometimes you can also find entire books that have fallen out of copyright, such as Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*.

4 DEVELOP YOUR OWN MATERIAL

Because you aren't correcting the papers of fifty students, you have some time to develop materials if your internet searches don't yield anything useful. Materials that you can develop easily and at little investment are conversation and journal cards (index cards with topics for conversation and writing), short dialogues between two speakers you can practice with your student, and lists of vocabulary and idioms relevant to the student's major or career.

5 READ ALOUD

Most students of English are eager to read aloud to practice their speaking and pronunciation and get feedback on it. This is something that is much harder to orchestrate in a large class, but in a

class of one that student has your full attention for feedback, focusing on the student's pronunciation as well as comprehension of the passage.

6 WRITING FEEDBACK

In a class of thirty students handing in essays, it will take the teacher a week or more, perhaps, to turn those essays around and get feedback to students, and often the feedback will be minimal. In your class of one, you can read the essay and give feedback on the spot after it has been given to you in as little as ten minutes. The feedback is also of better quality in most cases because the student can ask for clarification immediately: "What do you mean by 'develop it'? What's a sentence fragment, again?" This isn't possible most of the time in a large class, and writing feedback often gets ignored by students because they don't understand it or receive it too long after doing the writing.

7 QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSIONS

Because in a large class both teachers and students are so pressed for time, the teacher usually can't answer questions that are not directly related to course content. But in your class of one you can devote the first five minutes or so to just addressing questions about American culture or the English language as it relates to what may have happened that week. For example, the German post-doctoral student I am currently tutoring had many concerns regarding the mass shooting in Colorado in July, which led to some discussion about the legality and culture of weapon ownership in the U.S., and some basic precautions to take, such as avoiding situations that might be dangerous like visiting an ATM late at night.

SO DOES THE ONE-ON-ONE ESL SESSION HAVE TO BE SLEEP-INDUCING FOR BOTH TEACHER AND STUDENT? ABSOLUTELY NOT!

The one-on-one session is the perfect place to target individual student concerns, try out innovative materials, discuss the student's new culture, and engage in extended practice of the new language in a way that isn't usually possible in a large class.

Making One on One Teaching Work: 10 Need to Know Tips

Teaching ESL one on one can be challenging. Traditional lesson plans often won't work with a two person classroom, and the dynamic between you and your student is completely different from that of a traditional class.

Don't be discouraged, though. Teaching one on one can be one of the most effective and enjoyable ways to help a person learn English. These need to know tips will make sure your next one on one session is a success.

HOW TO TEACH ONE ON ONE: 10 NEED TO KNOW TIPS

1 SEATING

In a traditional classroom, most teachers stand in front of seated students. When you teach one on one, you want your student to relate to you as a guide or mentor, not necessarily as an expert or authority. When you teach one on one, sit next to your student at a large table. This way you can look off the same texts and relate on a personal level. You are two members of a team working together toward a common goal.

2 TAKE A LOOK

Visual materials such as maps, brochures, diagrams and pictures are of limitless use in the one on one teaching setting. These visual materials are great conversation starters, and you can choose the ones that are most applicable to what you plan on teaching. For example, if you are teaching your student personal adjectives, a group photo would prove a great resource. You can ask your student to describe the people in the photos or ask him to guess at their personality traits. You might also ask your student to bring a family photo and have him introduce his family members to you.

3 DO YOUR RESEARCH

Most students that study English one on one are adult professionals. They have specific needs and goals when it comes to their English educations. Take some time before meeting with your student to do a little research in his field of expertise. You will not use this informa-

tion to teach your student about her job of course, but you can use this information to ask intelligent questions and get your student talking.

4 MORE THAN WORDS

Often, one on one teaching sessions become interesting conversations, and some students may want nothing more than that for the entire class period. As much as your student may enjoy listening and speaking, though, he does need specific language instruction. As you and your student talk, take a few notes on repeated errors in grammar, pronunciation or word choice. Then, in the last ten minutes of your lesson, take some time to talk about the errors you hear your student making. This will give your student practical feedback on his English skills without resorting to unnecessary grammar lessons and still focusing on the conversation he so highly values.

5 KEEP IT PRACTICAL

Your student is learning English for a specific purpose, so make sure your lessons are focused on that purpose. If she is learning English for career purposes, ask your student to bring in the materials she uses in the work place to use during your lessons. These might include forms she must complete or procedures she must read and follow. In addition, give your student exposure to real work materials in their field with field trips, interviews or special guests any time you can.

6 GET TECHNICAL

Technology is important in almost every field today, and no technology is more common than email. Making email a regular part of your class will benefit your student as well as give you an authentic sample of his writing abilities. Have your student submit homework via an email attachment. Use his emails to point out any areas for improvement in his writing skills.

7 PRESENTING

Many English students will find themselves making career related presentations after their English studies are complete. Give your student a chance to

practice her presentation skills with you during your sessions before she gets put on the spot in the work place. This low stress context will give your student a chance to use her oral skills, and you will find it a natural lead in to pronunciation evaluation and instruction.

8 SHOW VARIETY

Your student will benefit from exposure to other English speakers, so bring in any outside sources you can get a hold of. These include guest speakers and audio and visual materials. Since you only have one student listening to these, let him stop and rewind audio materials when he needs to giving him more control and giving you a measure of how much he's really getting when he listens.

9 TAKE IT HOME

Make homework a regular part of your language instruction, even when you are teaching a class of one. Rather than spending valuable class time on grammar exercises and written work, have your student complete these exercises at home. Then use class time to discuss her work and any questions she might have. Make sure your student never feels like she is doing busy work. Respect her time and efforts and make each class as communicative as possible.

10 THE SOUND OF SILENCE

When you are teaching one on one, silence is not a sign of failure. In fact, quiet moments to think are essential to your student's successful language learning. Don't be afraid of the moments when he is quiet and composing his thoughts, and don't give in to pressure to fill the empty air with your own words.

FEEDBACK IS A GOOD THING, AND WHEN YOU ARE TEACHING ONE ON ONE YOU CAN GET USEFUL FEEDBACK FROM YOUR STUDENT ON A REGULAR BASIS.

Ask your student what he finds valuable or effective in your sessions and if there is anything else he would like you to include. When you have only one student, you can tailor your classes to his specific needs. And when your client is happy, you will be also.

Only You: 3 Tips for Successful One-on-One Lesson Plans

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO IT ALONE WHEN CREATING LESSON PLANS FOR AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT.

Follow these three tips for one-on-one lesson plans that will lead you to providing substantive classwork and endless possibilities.

TRY THESE 3 TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ONE-ON-ONE LESSON PLANS

1 ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

When sitting down to write out one-on-one lessons plans, one of the most crucial aspects to consider is the amount of time you have and how you are going to make the most of it. It can be challenging to estimate time for a one-to-one class because if you are not carefully organized, your exercises may run too short. Since you don't have an entire group answering questions and participating in discussions, you have a lot more time to fill. Factoring this in when creating exercises will help you estimate more accurately. You can approximate that most activities will take about half as much time than with a group. It is absolutely necessary to alternate between grammar and other activities.

When teaching a one-to-one class keep your student engaged and interested throughout the entire lesson by alternating material and keeping your lesson going at a steady pace. Schedule your activities and exercises in increments of 10 to 15 minutes to help provide the necessary variety. You should always begin with a warm-up or icebreaker. These exercises at the beginning of the lesson could include light-hearted discussion topics, entertaining review topics, or games that are quick and easy to set up. You want to aim for anything that will get your student talking without apprehension. Icebreakers and warm-ups generally avoid structured grammar, and should be a nice lead in to what you are covering that day. You can sometimes stretch them out for more mileage with your one-to-one student.

Think about your lesson in terms of increments that you break up by focal

point. Focus on specific grammar points that relate to each other so they can be weaved together. For example if you are working on telling time, do some exercises that bring in setting appointments or class schedules. Always show the student how they put the grammar or topic to use in daily life. Keeping this in mind, also write your lesson plan progressively, never starting out with the most difficult or newest material. Put new material toward the middle, so you sandwich the beginning and end with discussion and lively activities. A good gauge is to vary activities every 15 minutes or so. You can allow up to 20 minutes for the main activity of your lesson plan or for the teaching of an entirely new grammar point. Planning in discussion time adds a lot of substance to one-on-one lessons, and you can practice grammar points, topics, and listening in very natural ways, simply by communicating together. Devising ways of getting students to talk without fear or judgement also plays a role in your lesson planning. Include role-plays, guessing games, and real-world examples to make your lesson even more varied.

2 CONVERSATION AND WRITING PROMPTS

To save time lesson planning, it is beneficial to prepare many different types of conversation and writing prompts. Doing this in advance can save you time, and give you plenty of options for filling extra time, moving in a different direction, and catering topics to your individual student. You may want to make lists of each type of prompt separately, those best for speaking and the most interesting for writing. However that doesn't mean that you can't combine them or switch them up. If you did some speaking exercises around the family tree, you could then present some writing prompts that are specific to the student's family. Conversation and writing topics can go well together because they reinforce one another. Choose prompts that are substantive, unique and align with student's interests and passions. Use jumping off points like cultural celebrations, news, pop culture, or anything else the student may be fascinated to write about or dis-

cuss. Also, remember to tap into the student's culture to create a lot of wonderful and personal dialogues. Your student may also be very interested in hearing about how your culture operates, as well as the nuances of English that you know so intimately. Make personal connections and if you want to take it to the next level, incorporate journal-keeping into the mix for some fixed amount of free writing.

3 LOOK TO THE FUTURE

It is important to have a timeline for your lesson planning. To do your student the best service possible, you need to have a vision of long-term goals for the student and your time together. This can easily be done by involving the student and creating goals as a team. It is advantageous for the student to go through goal-setting exercises, and to receive your input. Offer your suggestions and also your expertise to the student. It should be apparent to your student that you will help them achieve their goals, but that you also have expectations. Those expectations should ultimately help them achieve relevant milestones.

Give a lot of consideration to how you will make certain your student succeeds. Once you are clear what the focal points are for the student's development, it is time to decide what approach you are going to take. How will you incorporate developing the four skill, and honing in on the two that are most crucial to your student? What types of reading and listening materials do you think would work for this student? How do you plan to approach grammar each lesson, and then what types of reinforcement will you do? Your approach must be systematic in that you know ahead of time where you are heading. Examining the future will help you to stay in the present and make decisions based on long-term goals and short-term gains.

ORGANIZING YOUR ONE-ON-ONE LESSON PLANS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A CHORE.

Use the above tips to create lesson plans that are full of possibilities, variety, and thoughtful goals.

Don't Go it Alone: 5 Strategies for Owning One-to-One Lessons

If you choose to take the plunge and perform some one-on-one tutoring lessons, don't go it alone. Use these 5 strategies for owning and enjoying your one-on-one lessons.

HOW TO OWN ONE-TO-ONE LESSONS

1 DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Find out ahead of time details of the sessions. Things to find out in advance and spell out with your prospective student are:

- The duration of each session and the length of the arrangement
- The three main goals as well as the reasons the student has opted for one-on-one lessons. The student may have very specific and set goals in mind. For example many students are looking for TOEFL test preparation, Citizenship test and interview or college essay-writing. That would be very different from a more general goal like improving conversation skills or working on writing.
- Payment options as well as firming up the time and place for lessons
- If you are tutoring a child or teenager, be sure to meet with parents and go over goals, any challenges, and the specifics of the sessions
- Student needs and your planning -- If this is a student you already know, planning will be simpler. If this is a new student, you will need to find out what their interests are, how driven they are, whether they want project-related work, conversation practice, etc.

2 ORGANIZE PROJECT-RELATED WORK

When you are instructing one-to-one, it is obvious that the activities you can come up with are limited. There are not a lot of games or exciting exercises that you can devise that only take two people. In order to appeal to students' personalities and allow them to work on very specific skills, projects are a wonderful addition to any one-on-one lesson. Projects should be based on what students

are really there to work on. If they are primarily interested in improving speaking skills, projects could be impromptu speaking exercises, like picking topics out of a hat, prepping for 10 to 15 minutes and then speaking on those topics with different intonations, tones, or manners of speaking. You could have them interview friends or coworkers and report back on the results. These can be as formal or informal as you like. Projects can also be as in-depth and on-going as you like or they can be simple topics in which students focus on for a class or two.

3 SPEND TIME ON INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

You have a lot of time to fill in one-on-one lessons, so use it to hone each of the four skills. Take your time, and spend entire lessons on reading or listening. It's always interesting to also do in-depth work on vocabulary, expressions, intonation, pronunciation, and grammar. Get students input about what they really want to work on, and dive right in. Do grammar exercises together and provide in-depth explanations, or give them writing prompts for homework that you can then spend time editing, rewriting, and discussing grammar. Many students who prefer one-on-one lessons enjoy discussing grammar and gaining in-depth explanations for why things are the way they are.

4 EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS AND BRANCH OUT

There are a lot of different types of opportunities to teach ESL one-on-one. Depending on where you are located, there may be adults looking for Business English tutors, parents desperately searching for teachers for their children, or college students looking for conversation partners. If you really want to explore your hand at tutoring, perhaps stepping out of your comfort zone and trying something a little different will help you grow as a teacher. Use your network of contacts to find out what is popular in your area, and then choose to create the type of situation that is right for you. If you really enjoy one aspect of the language over another, this may be your

chance to become the subject matter expert in that area. If you are a closet writer, consider providing writing lessons to high school students or adults. If you love movies and music, discover ways in which you can devise one-on-one lessons inspired by pop culture. Don't limit yourself, and really do what you love! It will show in your lessons and you will sharpen your teaching skills.

5 PRACTICE HAPPENS IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Creating interesting and memorable practice exercises can be difficult when you only have one student, but don't let that hinder your efforts. There are still plenty of ways to engage students especially since they have your undivided attention. Just as with classroom activities, teach to your student's interests whenever possible. When you bring in topics they are passionate about, they will enjoy participating that much more. Using realia or real-world props can be an effective tool for individual students. Utilize tools from your kitchen if you are discussing food or recipes, bring in objects for the students to describe or do individualized show and tell. Be creative and let realia help you do your job.

UTILIZING DIFFERENT TYPES OF CARDS CAN BE EFFECTIVE TO USE FOR PROMPTS, GUESSING GAMES, OR MATCHING EXERCISES.

You can create cards especially for your individual student or bring in the ones you use in the classroom. You can write them out on index cards, sheets of paper, or use a laminator to preserve them for long-term life. Also, make grammar exercises or homework correction fun by turning the exercises into conversations or role-play scenarios. Doing this can add a lot of spice to those otherwise dull fill-in-the-blank exercises.

Create the best interaction for one-on-one lessons by challenging students to create language on the spot, and learning from your undivided attention and explanations. You can own and enjoy your one-on-one lessons by incorporating these 5 strategies.

Making Reading Work

One on One: 5 Never Fail Tips

One on one teaching can be a valuable experience to English as a second language students. With individualized attention, they can learn at their own paces, get instruction specific to their areas of weakness, and cover material targeted to their interests and needs.

Sometimes, though, one on one dynamics can be challenging. Students do not want their teachers to hover, but teachers want to make sure their students get the attention they deserve. This awkwardness can be especially challenging when teaching reading in an individualized setting. Still, it is possible to teach a great reading lesson even when you teach a class of one. Here are some tips to keep in mind when planning for and conducting an individual reading class.

MAKING READING WORK: 5 NEVER FAIL ONE ON ONE TIPS

1 WARMING UP

Before giving your student a text to read during your session, spend a few minutes talking about the general topic that the article or text covers. You may want to ask your student what he already knows or what he would like to know about the topic. Because you only have one student, you can tailor your material to his specific interests and aspirations. This will keep him engaged and interested in the material as well as give him something to say about the topic from the start. For lower level students, you may want to modify a selection from the newspaper or a magazine, or use a selection from a textbook. For more advanced students, try to bring in authentic English material rather than selections written specifically for ESL students. Doing so will better prepare your student for the language he will encounter once he has completed your ESL program. Your text should be challenging but not overwhelming or intimidating. Find the right balance, and for each student that balance will be in a slightly different place.

2 PREVIEWING VOCABULARY

Previewing vocabulary with your students serves 3 purposes. By reminding your student with topic specific vocabulary she already knows, you bring to mind ideas about the subject at hand. She remembers past experiences, and this will enable her to retain what she learns in her present class experience more easily. Secondly, by defining the preview vocabulary words she does not know, you aid her comprehension as she reads the text. Because her comprehension is higher, she feels confident and makes good emotional associations with the topic and learns better. Finally, by previewing vocabulary that the text presents, you give her some context for making predictions about what she will read. Making predictions also helps aid in comprehension and language retention. So before you introduce your student to the text you plan to use, choose some topic specific vocabulary she will find in her reading as a preview. Doing so will aid her comprehension and retention as she reads.

3 READING

Generally speaking, you should not ask your student to read aloud once you give him the text. Asking a student to read aloud, especially on the first read through a new piece of literature, may cause your student to feel uncomfortable. Having the teacher hover and listen to every syllable can be almost paralyzing and could set your student up for failure. Instead, allow your student to read to himself, and you do the same. This way you can review the content of the text and prepare to answer any questions your student had with the reading. Anticipate any sections he may struggle with, and have him make notes as he reads of anything that he finds difficult to understand.

4 CHECKING COMPREHENSION

Checking comprehension after your

student has read the selection is important, but do not trust her to tell you what she may not have understood. When asked if they understood, students will generally answer yes, whether they did or not. So make sure your student understood what she read by having her retell the information given in the selection. This can be as simple as asking her to retell what she read. You may want to give her some guidance by allowing her to refer back to either the text itself or the vocabulary you used in your preview time. If you want to challenge her even further, ask her to apply the information from the reading to solve a problem or give direction in regards to a case study.

5 WORKING ON PRONUNCIATION

If you are teaching more than reading to your ESL student, you may want to use this one on one time to work on his pronunciation. No one else will be around to criticize, and you can target specific pronunciation issues for your student. To do so, ask him to read part of the selection aloud. When he encounters a troublesome series of words, have him follow your own example by repeating what you read. Remember, when a student is struggling with pronouncing a multisyllabic word or phrase, start with the last syllable and have him repeat after you. Then add one syllable at a time and repeat, working backwards until he can pronounce the entire phrase correctly. Reading aloud can also offer a good opportunity to practice sentence inflection or reductions, which can be overlooked in pronunciation class.

BY TAKING NOTE OF THESE SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING READING ONE ON ONE, YOUR STUDENT CAN BENEFIT EACH AND EVERY TIME YOU MEET TOGETHER, BUT DO NOT LET IT STOP THERE.

These strategies can be modified for use in the traditional classroom, and your students will continue to thrive in their language learning.