

ESL PRODUCTIVITY SECRETS

HOW TO
TEACH
MORE
EFFECTIVELY
AND WITH
LESS
EFFORT



What Motivates ESL Teachers? Some Ideas to Get You All Fired Up!

WE COULD GO ON AND ON ABOUT HOW REWARDING TEACHING ESL STUDENTS IS. BUT THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS, LIKE IN ANY PROFESSION, IT'S SOMETIMES HARD FOR ESL TEACHERS TO GET UP IN THE MORNING, TOO. WE MAY GREET OUR STUDENTS WITH A GREAT, BIG SMILE, EACH AND EVERY TIME - BUT ARE WE REALLY MOTIVATED TO TEACH THAT CLASS? WHAT MOTIVATES ESL TEACHERS AND WHY IS BEING MOTIVATED SO IMPORTANT?

Let's assume that you're all teaching ESL because it's your choice, and it's what you enjoy doing the most. Sometimes, that's not enough. And although there may be external factors that contribute to your lack of motivation, like salary or general working conditions, here we look deeper into what motivates you personally - in other words, what gets you fired up for a class no matter where your ESL school is.

Let's consider the "why" first. If you're highly motivated you have better chances at living a healthy, productive happy life. And naturally, this healthy glow and inner happiness will shine through and pour forth into everything you do with your students. You want to give your students the best ESL experience, right? And of course you want them to be motivated, but you have to take care of your motivation first.

Here are some of the things that motivate ESL teachers - if you feel you sometimes need a little nudge or whiff of inspiration these might just do the trick.

HOW TO STAY MOTIVATED 24/7

1 ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR VISION

Why are you teaching ESL? Do you believe it's important for those in your country who don't speak English to be able to? Do you want to help people bridge communication barriers? How important do you think your job is? What do you perceive your job to be like now, and what would you like it to be in the

future?

These questions should help you define your vision if you haven't already defined one. If you have a vision, you are in control of your destiny and your own life. A lack of vision will only lead to a lack of control and the inability to make your own choices. That's not very motivating. It's also important to recognize your barriers to making this vision a reality. What can you do to overcome these obstacles? Overcoming barriers is tremendously liberating - and motivating!

2 DEFINE GOALS

Making a vision a reality may seem like a tall order. Which is why we must take it one step, one day, at a time. First, you define a major goal, like something you wish to accomplish by the end of this year or next. A Master's degree? A research project? A better paid job? A teaching position in some exotic location? Surely, you have clearly defined goals for your class. How do you go about achieving them? By teaching them one structure, one set of vocabulary, at a time. The same applies to your major goals. The best way to achieve them is to break them up into smaller, more attainable steps.

For example, if you want to teach ESL in a foreign country, first you do your research into places and requirements, then you go about gathering all of the information you need to supply in order to apply, and so on... Each step that is checked off your list brings you one step closer to your dream, and this keeps you motivated. So, if anything seems to be too big a task, just break it up into simpler, more reachable goals. Once you accomplish smaller goals, you are motivated to tackle the bigger ones.

3 FIND SUPPORT

Nothing is more motivating than finding a group of like-minded individuals who share the same dreams and are dealing with the same frustrations. Motivation is contagious. If you surround yourself with people, whether they are ESL teachers or not, who are highly

motivated and visionary, chances are you will catch the fever and be raring to go!

4 LEARN FROM MISTAKES

The big, fat "F" for failure is something every student dreads, but every teacher, as well. What most forget is that a failure is an opportunity, a chance to keep going till we get it right. The fear of failure sometimes paralyzes, it weakens us to the point of procrastination. Instead, we propose you take each failure as a motivating tool, something that you can use get it right the next time. Use your failures to motivate you, but plan for success. Good planning, time management skills and general organization will get you where you want to go - every time.

Above all, remember this: motivation is a learned skill. Motivation is not about automatically bouncing out of bed, grabbing books and materials and dashing off to school.

It runs much deeper than that - it's deeply rooted in your vision, dreams and goals. Keep yourself rooted to that, and you will be motivated to teach any class, any group of students, at any level.

Hopefully, you will find these little nuggets of wisdom helpful. If you have any nuggets of your own to share, please do so below!

NOT FEELING VERY MOTIVATED TO CRANK OUT SOME WORKSHEETS? WE CAN HELP IN THAT DEPARTMENT! BUSYTEACHER.ORG HAS GOT SPLENDID SETS OF WORKSHEETS FOR ANY TOPIC, ANY SEASON, AS WELL AS HANDY PUZZLE MAKERS. JUST SEE FOR YOURSELF!

Sure-fire Ways for ESL Teachers to Cut Down on Stress

SOME OF US ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO LOVE WHAT WE DO. WE CHERISH OUR TIME SPENT WITH OUR STUDENTS, AND ENJOY ALL OF THE ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM THEY BRING INTO OUR CLASSROOM. NOTHING COMPARES TO THE SATISFACTION OF HAVING ACHIEVED A GOAL – YOU HAVE TAUGHT THEM WHAT YOU SET OUT TO TEACH.

Still, there are some ESL teachers who might not be feeling so fortunate. They have no time to enjoy their lessons. They feel stressed out and have a hard time coping with the many difficulties they face on a daily basis.

There are, of course, different types of ESL courses and students. Some might teach Business and E-mail English to private students in high-rise offices, while others may be teaching large groups in a rural area in some remote, foreign location. But no matter what type of course we teach or where, each of us feels a little stressed out at one point or another.

Here, we'll address the most common stressors in ESL teachers and ways in which you can deal with them to live a happier and healthier life.

HOW YOU CAN CUT DOWN ON STRESS

1 BEING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A lot of ESL teachers, particularly beginners, make the mistake of believing they must put on a great show - every time. This means they try to take students from one activity to another seamlessly and with one sole purpose in mind: they must not get bored. This poses several problems. First of all, it's exhausting! Secondly, everybody needs some quiet time to work, even students, and this includes little ones who may need you to switch activities every ten minutes. If you only propose activities that demand high-energy and a great deal of participation from you, you'll wear yourself out, and this can't be good for you or your students.

How to cut down on stress: Remember you're not a performer who has to put on

a show and keep your students entertained for the duration of the class. Set realistic expectations from the start, and make sure students know you won't be standing in front of the class doing a juggling act. Plan some quiet activities in between more active ones (even young learners who can't write can draw or complete easy worksheets) and give yourself a breather. Just walk around the classroom checking your students' progress. Plan as many quiet activities as you can to make your classes and your day more relaxed and enjoyable. Remember: you're not a one-man/woman show!

2 PREPARING AND GATHERING MATERIALS

A lot of ESL teachers are overwhelmed at first by the sheer amount of materials they must prepare for a single group of students, things that include flashcards, worksheets, photocopies, props, games, etc. If you find yourself spending every evening after work simply preparing for the following day's class, you probably feel you have no time for other things, right?

How to cut down on stress: Here at BusyTeacher.org, we've recently published some articles in an effort to help you become more productive. In Top 5 Productivity Tips for ESL Teachers, we recommend that you take at least a couple of hours a week to plan an entire week's worth of lessons AND gather the materials you will need for them. By concentrating all of your efforts into this special planning session, you'll free up the rest of your week!

Another great way to handle the preparation of materials is to share the burden with other teachers. If you're all preparing for the same holiday celebration, divide the tasks: have one buy the decorations, another teacher make photocopies, or another cut out the flashcards.

3 MANAGING YOUR CLASS

If you're stressed out because you have an unruly group of ill-behaved students, you need to implement some

heavy-duty classroom management strategies. Students may not know what's expected of them in an ESL classroom, so it is your job to set limits, help them come up with rules they agree to follow, and provide the adequate rewards.

SOME OTHER USEFUL TIPS TO FIGHT 'ESL STRESS':

Don't rush to finish everything at the last minute. Plan in advance. Leave 15 minutes earlier and get to school with plenty of time to relax and have a cup of coffee or chat with your colleagues before it's time for class.

Schedule activities every week for pure enjoyment. Are you a movie buff? Go to the movies once a week either on your own or with a friend. Have an artistic side? Enroll in a pottery or ceramics class. Feel you need to exercise to unwind? Get yourself a membership to the local fitness center.

Sometimes, it's better if you just say no. Does the school need volunteers to decorate the cafeteria for a party? Is someone organizing a fundraiser? The drama teacher needs a few extra pair of hands to sew costumes? If you honestly feel you've already got too much on your plate, why add more to it?

If you really want to relieve some of the stress in your life, you will need to commit to some serious reflection on your part. Which are exactly your main stressors? If you're having a hard time coping, try to find a support group or start one with the other teachers at your school. On the other hand, what gives you the greatest pleasure? Try to bring more happiness into your life and the best way to accomplish this is by doing what makes you the happiest: teaching your students with all of the fun and none of the stress!

BUSYTEACHER.ORG DOES ITS PART TO HELP RELIEVE SOME OF THE BURDEN! BROWSE OUR ASTOUNDING VARIETY OF READY-TO-PRINT WORKSHEETS AND TAKE A LOAD OFF!

Top 5 Productivity Tips for ESL Teachers

DO YOU OFTEN FIND YOURSELF STRAPPED FOR TIME? EVER GET THE FEELING YOU HAVE SPENT WAY TOO MUCH TIME ON SOMETHING THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN EASIER AND FASTER TO DO?

Have you ever thought “there has to be another way, a better, more productive way to get this done”? Do you wish you had more free time to spend on a hobby or with your family?

If you have answered any of these questions with a resounding “yes!”, then what you need are ways to improve your productivity, strategies that will help you make the most of your time and allow you to enjoy your classes, free from last-minute rushes and stress. Here are our top productivity tips for ESL teachers:

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR ESL PRODUCTIVITY

1 PLAN IN ADVANCE

Do you sometimes find yourself making flashcards, printing worksheets, or finishing posters the night before a class? Wouldn't it be great if you could wake up in the morning and have your lesson and materials ready, so that all you have to do is grab your stuff and go to class? Well, this is not hard at all to achieve!

Take 2-3 hours once a week to plan the week ahead. Pick one day, say, Sunday evening, and schedule your planning session. Plan your lessons for the week AND gather the materials you will need. Find a way to organize these materials that works best for you. Perhaps you can use a file cabinet, and file your lesson plan and materials for each day, including ESL worksheets, flashcards, a book you plan to read, even special props or realia. If you need to use the school photocopier, try to schedule one day in which you can copy everything you'll need for the week.

Try to leave nothing for the last minute or the night before. As soon as you're ready to head for school, all you need to do is grab your materials for the day. We guarantee your week will go by much smoother!

2 ELIMINATE ALL DISTRACTIONS

If you only set aside two hours on Sunday to plan a whole week's worth of ESL lessons, you need to make those two hours count. Imagine these two hours are sacred and essential to your weekly planning. If possible, put your phone on mute, and if you're at the computer disable all incoming email alerts.

Try to resist the temptation to see what's up on Facebook, Twitter, or any other social media site. The energy and effort you put into these two hours of planning will pay off later on in the week, when you have the chance to go out with some friends for dinner or to a movie.

3 POOL YOUR RESOURCES

When you plan a special holiday lesson, chances are most of the other ESL teachers will be planning one as well. Whenever you teach the past simple or the present perfect, chances are another teacher has used a great lesson plan. Schedule a meeting with the other teachers in your school once a month to discuss any special events, celebrations or lessons.

There are plenty of websites that sell posters and stickers in bulk, so why not make a big order for everyone? As a group you could come up with a system to share great ESL lesson plan ideas, maybe keep them on file in the teacher's lounge. No man is an island, and neither is a classroom. No teacher should have to work alone when he or she has the possibility of gaining from others' experience.

4 GET TO SCHOOL EARLY

“The early bird catches the worm”,

and if you get to school early enough you might just get the photocopier's undivided attention. Also, if you need to set up props, posters, decorate the classroom, or get video or audio material set up, it's best to get it all done before your students start to arrive. You may even have enough time to enjoy a good cup of coffee in the peace and tranquility of your empty classroom. There's no better way to start a productive day!

5 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS

There are lots of tools and applications out there that are HUGE time-savers, and will do wonders for your productivity. Digital calendars, timers, and to-do lists allow you to have everything you need, a mere click away.

As soon as you start implementing these strategies, you will notice the difference.

Follow these tips, and you will be able to schedule some time for YOU, to spend with family and friends, or enjoying your favorite hobby. It doesn't take a whole lot of work to become a happier, more productive teacher. It just takes some planning and organization.

If you have any productivity tips that work for you, by all means share them on BusyTeacher.org!

AND WHEN IT COMES TO TIME-SAVERS, DON'T FORGET THAT BUSYTEACHER.ORG IS HERE FOR YOU AS WELL, ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO SUPPLY YOU WITH GREAT TEACHING TIPS, WORKSHEETS, AND NOW, EASY-TO-USE PUZZLE CREATORS!

5 Must-Have Technological Tools to Increase Your ESL Productivity

NOT FEELING VERY PRODUCTIVE LATELY?

We'll provide you with some specific technological tools that will help take your ESL productivity to the next level!

INCREASE YOUR 'ESL PRODUCTIVITY' WITH THESE TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS

1 EVERNOTE

<https://www.evernote.com/about/home.php>

Evernote is an excellent application for ESL teachers. It can be downloaded for free to a great variety of devices, including iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, Android phones and Mac or Windows computers.

This handy little software allows you write notes, capture Web pages and even record voice notes in a matter of seconds so if you're ever suddenly inspired by a great idea all you have to do is make a quick note either on your computer or phone and store it for later. Here's how you can specifically use Evernote to improve your productivity:

Organize your notes with tags – For example, if you start gathering URLs of websites that feature Christmas lesson plans, tag them as "Christmas", and you'll be able to access all of your notes for that theme with only a click.

Plan for an absence – Evernote lets you email notes or share an entire notebook with a substitute teacher.

Take photos. Snap a pic of your bulletin board for specific month or celebration and save it for next year! The same goes for whiteboards. If you happen to have a very productive mind-mapping session, take a photo and use it later to make a worksheet out of it (and then publish it on BusyTeacher.org!).

Keep all of your worksheets organized. Keep all your handouts, test papers

and other lesson materials clearly organized and on hand.

And these are just a few of the things you can do with Evernote! Synchronize your devices and have the same notes available on your phone and desktop!

2 REMEMBER THE MILK

<http://www.rememberthemilk.com/>

Get rid of the useless piles of 'to do' lists once and for all! Remember the Milk is a website that allows you to organize all of your tasks and send yourself alerts for things that must be done on a particular day. In our previous article, Top 5 Productivity Tips for ESL Teachers, we recommended that you schedule one afternoon or evening a week to plan the following week's lessons.

If you need to schedule in some additional tasks, like shopping for supplies, making copies, or planning a teacher meeting, simply add them all to Remember the Milk, set your alerts, and relax – you won't forget another important task again!

3 FRESHBOOKS

<http://www.freshbooks.com/>

Freshbooks takes the guesswork out of personal accounting. This tool allows you keep your financial records safe and at your fingertips, and absolutely free of charge (for a basic account).

Also, this is the best billing tool for ESL teachers who need to send invoices to their students. Freshbooks keeps a record of all of your invoices and expenses. It's intuitive and easy to use – who said bookkeeping is a struggle?

4 GOOGLE DOCS

<http://www.docs.google.com/>

Google Docs is the ideal tool for teachers who share or work from different computers on a regular basis. USB

drives are easy to use, but the truth of the matter is that they tend to break, and what's more, they may carry nasty viruses from computer to computer. If you constantly work from different computers, Google Docs is the solution for you. You may access your files from any computer, anywhere, but you also have the option to share documents with other teachers. Wouldn't it be great for all of the ESL teachers at your school to share lesson plans via Google Docs?

5 MOZY

<https://mozy.com/home>

Even the least technologically savvy teachers understand the importance of backing up files, right? There's no bigger nightmare than realizing that your hard drive has just been fried by a virus, and you've lost years of worksheets and tests in a matter of seconds.

Backing up files in external drives or CDs is time-consuming and tedious. Plus, these devices don't last forever, and this is a task you need to schedule on a regular basis for it to be effective. Mozy takes care of it all. For only \$5.99 a month, you can have all of your files safely stored in an online environment – automatically. How will you spend your newly acquired free time?

TECHNOLOGY HAS ITS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES. LIKE ANYTHING IN LIFE, IT CAN BE MISUSED, AND IN SOME CASES, IT MAY EVEN DEMAND MORE OF OUR TIME.

But here, we've presented tools that will only make your life much easier. Use them wisely and be the most 'ESL-productive' you have ever been!

Remember that at BusyTeacher.org, we are all about helping you become happier, more productive teachers!

Top 10 Teacher Software Programs

You Should Be Using On a Daily Basis

HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED HOW MUCH TIME AND EFFORT WE PUT INTO ALL OF THE THINGS WE DO FOR OUR ESL STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM?

It's safe to say we spend more time planning lessons, preparing for class, correcting and grading, than actually teaching. Of course, you put a lot of care into each worksheet you design, but if it's taking you hours at this day and age when we have so many resources and tools at our fingertips, then you're not using your time wisely. It's true - there are some teachers out there who are still reluctant to go the technological route, but once you see how much easier your work is, how much time you save, you'll never go back to pen and paper again. Here are our top 10 teacher software picks, all of which are guaranteed to make your job easier and which you should be using on a daily basis:

1 GRADEKEEPER - [HTTP://WWW.GRADEKEEPER.COM/INDEX.HTM](http://www.gradekeeper.com/index.htm)

We all know how tedious it can be to keep track of scores, attendance, and all of the other information that is relevant to students' progress. If you've been thinking about investing in some assessment software, Gradekeeper will not disappoint you. This teaching software records grades and scores, keeps track of assignments, and even sends progress reports via email. With individual licenses available for \$20, there's no reason not to try it.

2 QUIZFABER - [HTTP://WWW.LUCAGALLI.NET/EN/](http://www.lucagalli.net/en/)

This is a free teacher software that allows you to create a great variety of quizzes in HTML format, but no previous knowledge of HTML or javascript programming is necessary. It creates true or false, multiple choice, and matching quizzes, just to name a few, that you may publish on the Internet or send via email with just a few clicks.

3 VOCABMAKER - [HTTP://VOCABMAKER.COM/](http://vocabmaker.com/)

This is one AWESOME vocabulary software for making printable worksheets! For a one-year membership fee of \$22.99 you can make an astounding variety of printable worksheets and puzzles, like matching exercises, word

[published by busyteacher.org](http://www.busyteacher.org)

search, fill in the blanks, crossword puzzles, or even bingo cards, among countless others.

4 LESSON PLAN MAKER - [HTTP://WWW.MAKEWORKSHEETS.COM/SAMPLES/LESSONPLANS/INDEX.HTML](http://www.makeworksheets.com/samples/lessonplans/index.html)

Need some help organizing your thoughts and putting together a great lesson? MakeWorksheets.com has the answer for you. Besides their great teacher software for making all types of puzzles and worksheets, they also provide members (one-year membership for \$29.99) with a handy little lesson plan maker that will help you plan a lesson from your own custom lesson plan format, but there are also several templates to choose from.

5 WHAT2LEARN - [HTTP://WWW.WHAT2LEARN.COM/](http://www.what2learn.com/)

Every ESL teacher knows kids love games. What if you need a series of short computer games to act as time fillers between activities, or to give your students a break from the more serious type of work? And what if you could give your students a game specially designed by you that they can play at home? Look no further than What2Learn! From their website you can make your own fun interactive game with vocabulary or questions chosen by you, which include options like hangman, word search or multiple choice questions. After you make the game, you obtain a code and a URL you can send to your students. All in a matter of minutes! All for free!

6 BOOKSEARCH - [HTTP://WWW.THEABSOLUTE.NET/SWARE/INDEX.HTML#BOOKSEARCH](http://www.theabsolute.net/sware/index.html#booksearch)

No matter how much technology we use, we still need to cling to our beloved books. Booksearch is a software that allows you to search and find all types of books, even if they are rare or out of print. A great way to save money, as this freeware lets you compare prices before you make your purchase.

7 BINGO CARD PRINTER - [HTTP://WWW.BINGOCARDPRINTER.COM/](http://www.bingocardprinter.com/)

What would we do without custom made bingo cards? With Bingo Card Printer, you can make your own Bingo cards and choose the size, font, color scheme, or what they say. No need to waste your

time with glue and cardboard anymore. In minutes, you'll have the bingo cards you need ready to be printed. You can download a trial version of this great software for teachers for free.

8 PICASA - [HTTP://PICASA.GOOGLE.COM/](http://picasa.google.com/)

Picasa is a free software developed by Google, an essential image editing tool that will allow you to edit the pictures you have stored in your PC so you may then use them on worksheets, coloring pages, games, flashcards, and all types of activities. You can also create albums to be shared with your students.

9 TESTCOMMANDER - [HTTP://WWW.ETESTINGSYSTEMS.COM/](http://www.etestingsystems.com/)

This teacher software is an invaluable tool for creating professional-looking online or printed tests. You can publish tests online, and they're automatically graded, with the test results sent directly to you. Or create tests that you will administer on paper and print them out. Also, you can send your test database to others. AND it's available for free download. Pretty amazing, huh?

10 HILITEXT - [HTTP://WWW.FENIX.COM/HILITEXT.HTML](http://www.fenix.com/hilitext.html)

This tool will make your Internet research so much easier as it highlights your keywords, thus allowing you to effectively and quickly scan a text for the information you need. It saves time and there's no need to pore over a long text and make sure you're not missing anything: the key information will be highlighted for you and in plain sight. Are Microsoft Word and Excel driving you up the wall? Can't figure out how to make PDF files? Did you stay up late to finish that custom made board game? Fortunately, there are people out there, many who happen to be teachers, who have thought about your needs. Some of these teaching software solutions take the guesswork out of designing professional looking worksheets, quizzes or tests. Others simply make your work easier and less time-consuming. So, what will you do with your newfound free time? Pick up that book you bought but never got around to reading? Start an ESL blog? Catch up with old school friends on Facebook? Sip a cold margarita by the pool? Well, the choice is yours, but be prepared to enjoy all of these things and more with your extra free time.

5 Sure-Fire Ways to Bond with Your Class

BONDING WITH YOUR STUDENTS IS ESSENTIAL NOT ONLY TO THE SUCCESS OF YOUR CLASS, BUT ALSO TO YOUR STUDENTS' LEARNING.

When you effectively bond with them, you create a unique connection between you and your students, and this connection pretty much guarantees they'll be more motivated, more willing to participate, and more receptive to the activities you propose.

Here are some sure-fire ways to bond with your ESL class:

HOW TO PROCEED

1 BREAK THE ICE

To start the school year off on the right foot, it is imperative that you try to bond with them from the start. On the first day of class, adult ESL students in particular, are often self-conscious or insecure about their English level, so the best way to bond with them is to break the ice in ways that will help them relax.

Try this for a very original icebreaker. Tell students that you'll begin with a pop quiz (and ignore their panic-stricken faces). Give each of them a sheet with quiz questions about you: what your favorite color is, favorite movie, favorite music, how long you've been a teacher, even your age. Of course, they won't know the right answers: tell them to guess! Afterwards, they share their guesses, and you can see who was right. It's a fun, non-conventional way to tell them a little bit about yourself.

2 SHOW INTEREST IN THEM

If you really want to bond with your students you must show them you are genuinely interested in them. Ask them about their hobbies, after-school activities, and families. Talk to them before class, after class, or during lunch hour,

but make sure you know a little bit about each of your students.

3 GET PERSONAL

Throughout the course, don't forget to share with your students little tidbits about your life, particularly if they are things they can relate to.

Are they excited about the upcoming Bon Jovi concert? Hey, you bought tickets weeks ago! Is there a movie they're dying to see? Tell them you saw it and what you thought about it. If you start the class by asking them what they did over the weekend, tell them what you did, too.

Teachers often ask students about their families, activities, and interests, but some neglect to share their own things, for fear of it being too personal. Stick to topics that anyone can talk about and show them you're a real person, who has a life outside of school. Once they become familiar with your cat and the antics he pulls, he'll be more popular than Garfield with you class! And don't forget to show pictures!

4 TAKE SOME TIME TO CELEBRATE!

Learning is not only about serious study time and targeted activities. To avoid falling into the "all work and no play" mindset, one that will not help you bond with your students, schedule some special days for celebrations, like Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, and make these days all about the fun!

Of course, there's still plenty they can learn about American customs and traditions, but they'll be too busy having fun to realize they're actually learning too.

Don't forget to include birthday celebrations.

5 SHOW THEM YOU CARE

Bad things happen - that's a part of life, and your students are not exempt from heartbreak, sadness, or worries.

If one of your students has just lost a grandparent, or other family member, tell him or her how sorry you are for their loss.

If one of them seems to be having a hard time, if you sense there's something going on, don't be afraid to talk to the student in question to find out what's wrong. It's not your job to offer solutions or any type of counseling, but you can at least show your concern and point them in the right direction.

No matter what strategy you use to bond with your students, above all else, keep it real and keep it genuine.

IF YOU CARE ENOUGH TO WANT TO BOND WITH THEM, THEN YOU CARE ENOUGH TO WANT TO GENUINELY GET TO KNOW THEM, AND LET THEM GET TO KNOW YOU.

AND THIS IS THE BEST, MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO BOND WITH THEM: SHOWING GENUINE INTEREST AND THE DESIRE TO FORM A BOND THAT WILL HELP YOU WORK TOGETHER TOWARDS ACHIEVING ALL OF YOUR ESL GOALS.

ESL Teamwork:

Collaborating With Colleagues

COLLABORATING WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES IN ANY WORK ENVIRONMENT CAN HELP GUARANTEE SUCCESS FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED.

When working together, people can contribute their unique skills for a better overall result. This is the same when it comes to teaching and can be even more beneficial than in other work places because the students ultimately get more out of their educational experiences when teachers work together.

Here are some ways you can collaborate with others at your school.

HOW TO WORK AS AN ESL TEAM

1 ENGLISH TEACHERS – SAME COURSE, DIFFERENT STUDENTS

If you are not the only teacher in charge of a particular course, for example English I, take the opportunity to collaborate with teachers of other sections of the class. During exams work together to develop a test that will provide a good baseline for all students. The results will allow you to see how classes compare to one another. Creating exams can also be a lot of work so breaking up the responsibilities will lessen your workload.

Additionally, having multiple people review the test will lead to better accuracy which is really important when it comes to test sheets as students may become confused if questions or directions are unclear.

Another thing you can do is create a project that all the classes can participate in. It may be challenging to work together if classes meet at different times but one thing you could consider doing is putting on a performance. Each class could have its own presentation or skit to perform for other students and even parents.

This could be a lot of fun and you may even choose to turn it into a competition to see which class performance the audience liked best.

2 ENGLISH TEACHERS – DIFFERENT COURSE, SAME STUDENTS

If your students take English classes besides yours, consider coordinating activities with their other instructor or instructors. An English reading course might have a chapter on poems which would be a great opportunity to talk about rhyming words and to encourage students to write poems of their own in your class.

By talking to other teachers, you can help one another reinforce themes common in both classes. This will also benefit students because they will be able to examine various things related to a single topic in different classes.

3 OTHER TEACHERS

It would make sense for art classes to focus on Asian art while students are studying Asia in their geography or history class right? The same thing can be done with English lessons if you are willing and able to coordinate themes with another instructor. Consider approaching art, history, and geography teachers to get some ideas. Especially with younger students incorporating topics from other classes should be very easy and enjoyable.

The material at this level is not too challenging. First grade geography is pretty straightforward while calculus might be a stretch for some ESL teachers and also harder to link to the English language. Where possible, consider tying things together and let students teach you what they have been learning in other classes by using English and learning the related vocabulary along the way.

4 PRINCIPAL

You can also present ideas to the principal about how to get your ESL students involved in other activities around the school. Perhaps you can set up a display in English about the class, school, town, or country.

By approaching the principal with ideas like this one, you are showing that you are interested in English being part of the school's identity and are thinking about how students can use their knowledge in practical ways not just theoretical ones.

Students should be able to use English in real life situations and designing displays or booths for school fairs is a great way to encourage this. A display like the one suggested would be something students could be proud of.

For students with a special interest in English, you can even create an optional English club that meets after school once or twice a week. Working with the principal will ensure that you are allowed to do certain activities and also have space either to display work or to meet with students.

YOU WANT TO BE ABLE TO WORK WELL WITH EVERYONE IN YOUR SCHOOL.

While this is not always possible, it is an admirable goal and collaborating with others will often help you form better working relationships with teachers.

ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT YOUR PRIMARY FOCUS IS TEACHING STUDENTS ENGLISH AND WHILE COLLABORATING, BE SURE TO SHARE IN THE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH PROJECT SO THAT YOUR COLLEAGUES DO NOT START TO RESENT YOU.