

Guidelines for Culturally Competent ESL Teachers

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Abstract

The typical ESL classroom is a dynamic place full of energy, exploration, and experimentation. Teaching ESL is an exciting and rewarding career, mostly because of the students themselves, who bring a wealth of knowledge to the learning environment. Managing the cross-cultural interactions can be a challenge for the teacher, however, who may become overwhelmed by having to cope with the various cultural behaviors and values contained in one classroom. A few practical guidelines can help guide teachers through the process of developing rapport with all ESL students by avoiding cross-cultural mistakes. This list of fifteen Dos and Don'ts, developed by an ESL teacher and teacher-trainer over many years in the United States, is appropriate for use by pre-service teachers, teachers in the field, educational policy-makers, and administrators who serve second language learners.

Keywords: Cultural competence, ESL teacher training, ESOL, TESOL, English as a Second Language