

## Teaching Tips from Experience MexECO

The following are tips for people travelling abroad to teach English as a foreign language.

Provided by Kathleen Smith, English Teacher from Canada, teaching in Mexico and ex-volunteer of Experience MexECO:

### **Before leaving home:**

Although the whole lesson should be planned and given in English (see below), it is very helpful to have a basic knowledge of the language of the country in which you are going to teach. This is particularly useful for discipline and explaining topics that would otherwise be very difficult to explain using just pictures or other props.

### **Once you arrive:**

- Everybody is nervous before their first lesson!  
The easiest way to calm the nerves is to realise that most people are interested in what is different. Having an English teacher from another country not only gives your students the opportunity to learn the language, but also to learn about you and your way of life. This gives the students motivation, and makes your job that much easier.
- When planning lessons, always have extra work prepared just in case you complete the original plan with time to spare.
- The whole lesson should be given in English so that the students are becoming accustomed to hearing spoken English (see 'before leaving home' section for exceptions).
- A brief revision of the previous lesson at the beginning of each new lesson helps students remember what they have been taught and accelerates learning.
- When using repetition learning (making the students repeat a word after you), make sure that each student gets a chance to speak; it is very easy for those who are struggling to get away without practicing if the rest of the class are speaking at the same time.
- Using props such as pictures, maps and games is a great way to teach, both with children and adults. It makes the lessons more fun and gets the students' attention. Once the students have a good base of English, acting out plays is a great way to practice and develop their speaking skills.
- Have confidence in yourself!  
Even if you think you are making slow progress, just listening to you speaking English on a regular basis is a huge help in the development of your students' English language skills.
- Be Patient!

### **An extra tip for teaching children:**

Animation!

Children love to see you embarrass yourself. Getting down on the floor and doing an impression of the wild animal you are trying to describe to them will stick in their memories for a very long time! After the first few times, the embarrassment wears off and the 'acting' becomes a part of your role as a teacher.