

Reflection

The TESOL course at the University of Montana was the first online course I have ever experienced. There were many aspects of teaching covered, but a few really stuck out to me, particularly concerning English pronunciation, morphology, and phonemic awareness. The first thing to consider about teaching English is the language itself. Teachers don't have to know everything, but it is their responsibility to discover all they can about their chosen subject so that they can adequately assist the inquiring minds of their students in discovery and language acquisition.

Pronunciation of English is something native speakers take for granted. Understanding the location in the mouth of different syllables is essential to understanding the physical mechanics of the English language for ELLs. This is useful knowledge that can be applied in the classroom when tackling difficult to pronounce words and repeating sounds in English. Along with this is the concept of phonemic awareness and the phonetic alphabet (a universal sound-based alphabet). Learning about the phonetic alphabet was so important to me because it forced me to think about the English language from an outsider's perspective. Knowledge of morphology of words as it relates to the lexicon was particularly interesting as well because the evolution of the English language is derived from multiple other languages and so "rules" of words are not always absolute. As a language learner, this can be a big hangup, so it is important to at least have a basic understanding of the concepts as a teacher.

Overall, the nitty gritty aspects of the English language are the most interesting to me, and I truly enjoy creating specialized activities and lesson plans to target the different skills involved with English language acquisition. I would be perfectly happy creating curriculum for ESL teaching as a full-time job. I hope to gain some experience as a teacher first, and then develop my own website/contracting service to create custom lesson plans and activities for teachers all over the world to suit their individual students' needs.

For practical experience, I am hoping to apply for work in Vietnam to start. I want to get into one of their established programs. English is the premier foreign language learned in Vietnam (Van, 2010). They only more recently started utilizing Communicative Language Teaching and still have lots of room for growth (Le S.T., 2011). Vietnam has a temperate tropical climate and is connected to mainland southeast Asia, so it is an ideal opportunity for me to explore that region of the world and make connections in the ESL Teaching community abroad.

References

Le, S. T. (2011). *Teaching English in Vietnam: Improving the provision in the private sector* (Doctoral dissertation, Victoria University).

Van Van, H. (2010). The current situation and issues of the teaching of English in Vietnam. 立命館言語文化研究, 22(1), 7-18.