Statement of Purpose

Around the world, English is becoming one of the most important languages for people to learn. Schools around the world and in the U.S. are wanting or continuing to offer English as a second language to students. In the U.S., a country made up of one-time immigrants, ESL classrooms are especially common at all levels of education. Immigrants, first generation American, foreign exchange, and international students are now present at almost every school in the nation. When arriving in the U.S., most of these students do not know English fluently and are at varying levels of English language understanding. The students are from diverse educational, developmental, cultural, religious, ethnic, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds. When these students from varying backgrounds and varying English language skills are put into one classroom, it creates a challenging situation for the students and teachers. Every student has their own needs, yet instructors may feel that they can treat each the same. If these diverse needs are not accounted for, then ESL students will not be able to learn effectively.

This curriculum design project will focus on meeting the needs of the ESL classroom and the individual ESL learner. Curtin (2005) states in her article, “In this study I concluded that the Interactive teachers seemed to be the most culturally responsive and more cognizant of the instructional and learning needs of the ESL students (pg. 42)”. The most important problem that occurs in many ESL classrooms is the improper use of teaching methods. Many teachers do not know how to adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs of ESL learners. This workshop for teachers will train teachers how to use successful ESL teaching methods so that the needs of the ESL learners are met in the classroom. Ajayi’s (2008) recent research study supports using meaningful and transformational instructional practices in the ESL classroom.

One other typical problem that occurs in the ESL classroom is poor communication between students and teachers. ESL students are already at a disadvantage by not knowing English. If poor communication methods are used by the teacher, the students will feel lost, left out, and confused. Students must understand what is expected of them, the rules of the classroom, directions for assignments, and how to express their needs to teachers. These students require clear, direct, spoken, and written communication methods articulated to them at all times. Vance & Fitzpatrick (2007) explain in their article that the use of successful communication methods is what makes good ESL teachers, great ESL teachers. The workshop will explain the need for proper materials like textbooks, teaching tools, etc. when teaching students English too.

As explained in the beginning of this statement, English is now a popular language taught in schools around the world. Society is demanding that schools and teachers know and do teach English to students. Jobs around the world are also demanding that job seekers speak English fluently. This is increasing the demand for ESL classes everywhere. Students are no longer staying within their birth countries either to attend school, work, or live. As people travel to the U.S., Europe, Australia, and many other countries in order to do these things. So, learning English fluently is essential. Of course, when teaching English to diverse groups of students, teachers must be culturally aware of the diversity of their students. Today, society is stressing that everyone is culturally sensitive. This is the last topic the workshop will address.

Due to the number of people learning English, the importance of knowing how to teach ESL students using the best methods, materials, communication devices, and understanding how to be culturally sensitive is critical. This is the rationale for this workshop for schools and teacher who wish to learn these elements or implement an ESL course correctly in their school or classroom. The goal of this course is to demonstrate to schools and teachers what teaching methods, materials, communication devices, and cultural sensitivity works best in the ESL classroom. It will place an emphasis on why these four elements are so important in the ESL classroom as well.

References

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Vance, K. & Fitzpatrick, D. (2007). Teaching tips and assignment ideas for ESL students. *Business Communication Quarterly: Focus on Teaching*, March(2007), 63-69.