

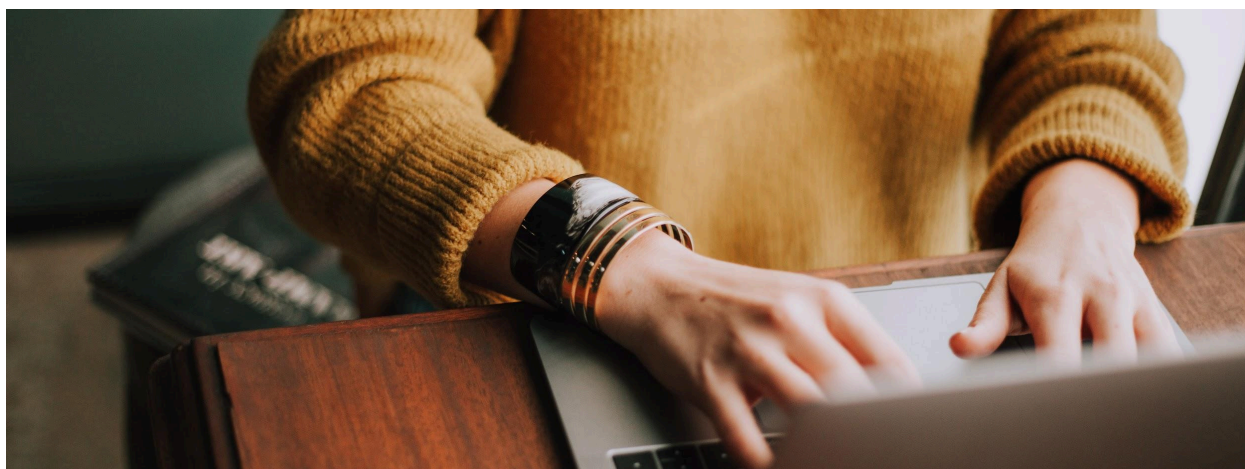
CATESOL'S CLASSROOM

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages in California and Beyond



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Teaching ESL Online

Help Students Get to Know Each Other – and You!

Belinda Braunstein // University of California Merced, Merced



Students tend to be more hesitant to participate when they don't know anyone else in the room – physical or virtual. **I recommend using a free Padlet.com digital bulletin board at the start of the term to have students post a photo (or optional video) and information about themselves, based on the model you post about yourself first.** I also suggest giving them a list of categories to choose from – as many of them as they want to include – as a guide, some examples being hobbies, unusual talents, something most people don't know about you, preferred name, favorite X, 3 adjectives that your friends would use to describe you, etc. Encourage them to comment on a few of the others' posts. As the Padlet account holder, **you get the first three Padlets for free**, and you can moderate what students post if needed. Best of all, they don't have to create logins to post on your board!

Personal, Kinesthetic Introductions



Elizabeth Eastman // West Valley Community College, San Francisco Bay Area

Use the fact that students are home to your advantage by having them find things in their house for meaningful conversation and so you are

doing something kinesthetic. **For example, you can ask them to find two things in their home that are important to them and that they can show everyone, and explain why.** (I did this and students brought a birthday balloon, a souvenir from a trip, a gift from a friend, a cross, a picture of their sister, etc.) Or, it could be something they use to cope with the social isolation/distancing we are all experiencing--it is a good way to reinforce wellness. These activities create a way for students to learn more about each other and for them to connect with what is meaningful in their life. You can also create a scavenger hunt, where you give them things they have to find in their home and bring back (such as things that rhyme with a certain sound, or things that represent "community," or "health").

Raise Your Hand - Fielding Questions



Keith Folse // University of Central Florida, Orlando

Any online class is a lot more work than a face-to-face class. One thing that can take a lot of time is the increased email from students with logistical questions like “How do I submit the homework?” or “Where are the articles we’re supposed to read?” In order to reduce your email load, **create a special discussion board called “RAISE MY HAND”** in your discussion area of your learning management system. Explain to students that they should ask their questions there. This will take a little training initially, but what I find is that other classmates will actually answer their questions before I can do so. In other to do this, the first students has to write a question in English and the classmates need to read it and then respond in writing, so this task, which will save you time and effort, is actually a good way for students to negotiate meaning in English. You may even want to award bonus points to the top students who answer the queries frequently.

Presenting Content - Teaching Online



Marsha Chan - Pronunciation Doctor // Mission College, Santa Clara

Teaching online does not mean you have to do everything digitally. Suppose you are holding video conference lessons. If you know how to share Powerpoints to your screen, write on a digital whiteboard, or set up Google docs for students to interact with, great! **But using an old-fashioned clipboard with a stack of paper (buff or other pastel color to avoid glare) and a wide marker is easy, too.** Write in big letters on your 'board' and show it to students. You can read it aloud and give students the benefit of seeing you pronounce, hearing the words and phrases, and seeing the written form. Rather than sitting close to your screen, stand away from your computer and use your whole body and props to demonstrate concepts, actions, and relationships.

Guess Words - A Chat Activity



Elizabeth Eastman // West Valley Community College, San Francisco Bay Area

Use the Chat feature. For example, after learning occupation vocabulary and pronunciation, and how to ask "Yes/No" questions, we will play a game. **I will send a private message to students who are willing to be the person who is asked questions. For example, "doctor." The other students will ask "Do you work inside?" or "Do you work with people?" and the student can only answer "Yes" or "No."** Text can also work well to send a private message, such as to say you want to talk to the student individually later. Additionally, through texts, students ask a question without interrupting the speaker.

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