

Student Guidebook

Expectations of Primary Instructors

- Create a lesson before class
- Implement the lesson plan and make decisions during the class
- Communicate with Classroom Assistants (including calling or meeting before class)
- Provide a lesson plan to CAs
- Assure that all the resources necessary to do the class arrive there – including people!
- Try to get your class covered if you can't be there, but let us know if you can't
- Basically, handle the decision making and coordinating of your class, but seek out our guidance and support
- Be responsive to learner needs
- Communicate with site coordinators and host agencies (please cc PPT on emails)
- Communicate with PPT coordinators about problems & issues – come to office hours!
- Respond to PPT communications in a timely manner (including participation in meetings) – things change quickly at this point in the program!
 - You need either daily access to the internet or text function on your phone – if you have neither, we will have to make a communication plan (such as regular attendance at Office Hours)
 - You should respond to texts as soon as you can
 - You should respond to phone calls the same day

These are guidelines.. we are going to do the best we can to work with everyone where they are at, but communication lags make coordinating very difficult

- Assure CAs carry out documentation functions (time tracking and reflection)
- Respond to CAs and Host Agencies needs (keep your CAs busy in class!)
- Communicate with other teachers at your site – we try to build a team to share information, strategies and ideas. This is more support for you!
- Work just a little harder than your students (model the enthusiasm and struggle you expect from them)
- Arrive to class 15 minutes before it starts
- Work with your CA whatever their strengths – create a Practice Space (classroom) space that is open and safe for all, except for the Dangerous, Disrespectful, or Drunken
- Provide “quick summary” via text or email or facebook (or other electronic media as we move forward) about each class: # students, CA's attended, and what you would do differently next time.
- Provide lesson plan & reflection to PPT via email or hardcopy and keep a copy for yourself – the lesson plan is the primary documentation we use to chart your advancement through the program
- Recognize your privileges and the responsibilities that go along with them
- Try to be a good teacher
- Try to remain relaxed and flexible
- Try to work with different learning styles, work styles and communication styles
- Try to respectfully cross cultural boundaries and carefully develop lasting equal relationships with learners
- Consent to background screening when applicable

An Instructor is a person who wants to share their skill or knowledge. A Practitioner is someone engaged with the techniques of teaching skills or knowledge. A Teacher is a lot more than that – a Performer, a Community Resource, a Facilitator, an Organizer, a Strategist, a Visionary, a Leader, a Model, and an Advocate. Teachers are more interested in what their students can do than in what they know. You will know when you are a good teacher, and so will everyone else. And, everyone can be a good teacher with enough work. If you doubt whether you've made it, give it another year.

You have to care, you have to respect everyone, but you don't have to be nice (but please don't be mean!!!). When you're good, communicate clearly, and you set good boundaries, you get to be nice, like, **90%** of the time, and the other 10% is mostly protecting other people from people who are not being nice.

Expectations of Classroom Assistants (CA's)

- Be responsive to communications with PIs, including returning phone calls and arriving to meetings/classes on time
- Try to understand the activities the PI is doing and give all your energy and support to them
- You should be like a ninja in the Practice Space – anticipating, moving around, providing support where it is needed
- Bring anything to the class the PI requests, within reason, of course
- Communicate your needs and desires to the PI
- Bring any serious problems to the attention of PPT or Site Coordinator
- Be friendly with students and encourage cooperation and collaboration in the class
- Hand out logbooks at the beginning of class, and any handouts; greet students who come in late and get them situated so the class doesn't have to stop; provide logbooks to new students, log hours in the logbooks; document what happens in class on the lesson plan to share with the PI in reflection afterwards
- Arrive on the scene 15 minutes beforehand
- Be energetic, present, respectful, and game
- Make a good faith effort to cover the PI if she is late or absent – wing it! You'll learn a ton, and the Ss will respect you for it
- Consent to Host Agencies' policies and procedures
- Recognize your privileges and the responsibilities that accompany them

What you can expect from PPT

We are here to provide you support while you develop teaching skills and cross-cultural competence. We believe that good-faith completion of the & Program will provide you with practical skills that will serve you in many areas of your life – such as increased confidence, flexibility, perceptiveness, and resourcefulness. Every person is different, so every person needs different guidance to reach those goals. But there is no short cut: teaching, classroom management, and cross-cultural competence are **skills** – plus, they are social skills.. they require *practice & reflection*. You have to go through it. It takes time. And you're gonna make a lot of mistakes. It's ok. That's why we need each other.

It is incredibly hard for our egos to realize that we aren't automatically good teachers just because we're smart – but we no more born good teachers then we are born good piano players. You **might** be a virtuoso... but the idea of the genius who walks up to a piano and plays it without any practice is a lie. Genius piano players play every day and they were not born knowing how to operate a piano. Still, the world needs **competence** far more than it needs **virtuosity**.

With our language learners, we are not looking for them to produce perfect English the first day they come in – if they did, they wouldn't need us. We push them to the place where they start making mistakes – useful, interesting mistakes – and remain engaged and enjoying the challenge.

And that's our goal with you. We don't want to hear how **well** the class went – we want to hear how you are struggling to improve! And we're going to push you there – but in a supported way. Frustration is normal, and a good sign that you should reach out. Humiliation happens, but it's what we're trying to minimize, ultimately.

Towards that end, we will...

Support you in whatever way we can
Push you to be a better person (on your terms)
Remind you of your responsibilities
Require you to take ownership over your learning process

- stay in contact with you by responding to your communications in a timely manner
 - texts get an immediate reply
 - phone calls returned within 24 hours (before noon the following day)
 - Emails within 24 hours
- Multiple channels of communication will shorten your response time – if any of the above time periods pass, you can contact again! If 48 hours pass without a response, you can be sure we've lost track of it, please contact us again!
- Provide you with lesson plan guidance, activity ideas, curriculum direction, and classroom materials to the greatest extent possible
- Provide you with classroom assistance whenever possible – CAs, covering your class if you

can't find an assistant, or teaching for you if we don't have an assistant (you can get PI credit if a person with less experience than you teaches for you and you provide them a lesson plan and support)

- Be flexible and direct with you as a developing teacher – learning requires mistakes, and none of us starts out as a great teacher.. it is a skill that requires practice.
- Be fair and firm with boundaries
- Not ask you to do anything we wouldn't be willing to do
- Allow you to take as much time to finish the program as possible
- Make all efforts to work with your schedule, lifestyle, and resources
- Provide you with a community of practitioners and facetime at the Office Hours
- Bar you from the program without refund and /or pursue legal remedies for actions that are Disrespectful, Dangerous, or Drunken
- Keep track of your hours responsibly and keep you up to date on your progress
- Provide you with access to trainings and information that you require
- Recognize our privileges and the responsibilities that go along with them

Working cross-culturally often means re-evaluating every assumption that you have. Those of us committed to this work appreciate the ambiguity, even though it is stressful and confusing at times. Often, our only guideposts are: to be open, be real, keep our word, and be the first to admit our mistakes.

Rather than offering you a clearly defined path through well-known territory, we are offering you a support network through ill-defined territory. You will clarify your own values, and will very likely come into contact with situations and people that will cause you to examine your world view. For this reason we have to be **flexible**. The trade-off for flexibility is that things change suddenly. There is a lot of power in stable, well-defined systems, and we value them in the wider society when they work. But it should be allowed that all well-defined US institutions are (obviously) **ethnocentric**. It doesn't mean they're essentially wrong (though many of them seem inhuman at times) – they just assume that a mainstream US cultural perspective is the norm. Even our curriculum reflects this norm – the content is designed to enable our learners to navigate the mainstream culture better. But the **methods** in US culture are not built on flexibility – and hence, they are not culturally appropriate for many immigrants and refugees. This is part of the reason why so many ESOL programs fail to inspire the communities they purport to serve.

We are building a business based on the belief that in order to release the value of the ethnic and cultural diversity in our communities, we must create flexible, family-friendly institutions that connect to the mainstream institutions. In this way, we empower immigrants and refugees in the US seeking a better life, and open up the experience of mainstream US residents to worlds of experience right in their own neighborhoods. And we have seen that both mainstream and marginalized America will be transformed in that process.

We are America's Welcome Wagon – climb aboard! We're the only ones who can stop us!

