

Teaching ESL to children in Japan is easy with the right tools!

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By Craig Desorcy

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Kids have the attention span of an ant! Why wouldn't they?
They have everything they could ever want given to them in
a New York second.

Your biggest competition in keeping their attention is their GAMEBOY and GAMECUBE and that is
some REAL competition.

Not to worry because I got this down big time and I'm going to give it to you. The Key points I will share
with you are GOLD
so don't think because it's simple you can skip taking mental notes. This act could be fatal to your
success in working
with kids.

Have you ever watched Sesame Street? I grew up watching
that show.

I suggest you watch it again to refresh your mind. What you should be looking for is the flow of how
they educate you.
It's very interesting.

There is a theme for each show and all the activities are
wrapped around this theme.

Each show may be only thirty minutes. However, in this time
they manage to get about 11 to 13 powerful activities into
this short time frame!

I call this style "edutainment" – education / entertainment.

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In Japan the children English classes that are in the top 20% are very entertaining and educational.

If you feel you can't teach kids, don't worry. On my first day teaching kids I came home after work and told my wife that I would never do that again! But I learned and you will, too. Remember, too, that I had no one to guide me back then but you've got me J!

Let's take a walk through one of my kid's classes together.

My kiddy class has 6 kids from three to five years of age.

The class is forty minutes, once a week, four times a month.

Each child has a nametag. If your school doesn't have them, you can make them.

Before the class starts I'm playing some kid's music in the background (Ever been to Disneyland? The music you hear sets the tone as you approach that awesome place.).

The kids always come a little early, so before the class starts the music is playing and I toss a balloon around with them. On the floor or table are their nametags. Help them put them on and soon they can recognize their own name in English.

(You must, no matter what, remember all their names and use them through out the class at least five times per student.)

1. As soon as it's time I put away the ball, put on my hello song and start singing and waving my hand high in the air. They will follow because I have built considerable rapport with them before the class started.

2. I sit on the floor and pull out a card with the letter I on it. I point to myself and say, "I am Michael" and pass the card. Each kid will do the same and if one child doesn't, then I just move on to the next child. (I do this with YOU cards, YOUR cards, HE, SHE and so on.)

3. I pull out a bag and ask what's in it? They have no idea. I put my hands in the air and say "I don't know with a confused look on my face. They all repeat and they have just learned the expression, "I don't know." I pass the bag to all the students, they feel it and try to guess what's inside. If a child keeps it too long I say 3, 2, 1 pass!

4. I tell them to go sit down please because we are now going to play bingo. Each bingo I do has a total of six pictures with the English word for the picture under it. For example I have vowel bingo that has only "A" words with pictures of things like a ball, apple, ant and so on.

5. After Bingo comes story time. I read a story book to them which has an easy sentence structure and

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the kids can repeat after the second time of reading this book to them

One book I use is called "I like." I like to eat, I like to play ball, I like to read and so on. These books are a set from <http://www.scholastic.com/elt/highfrequency.htm>

They are over-sized books and these are exactly the type of books you want to be using to keep the students attention. These books are by far the best investment I have made in my teacher's toolbox since I've been here!

5. Now I show them fish cards with many cool colors. We flip them trying to make a set.

(Always team the students up in pairs. If there are not enough students you will need to jump in and play.) Before you do this game you may want to drill the colors for a minute and ask them what the colors are. Now is a good time to teach them to raise their hand saying at the same time say "I know!" If they get it right give them the card but get it back quickly so you can play the real game.

(While doing activities make sure you are working the room. Letting your students know that they're doing well, lots of give me fives and smiling! Encourage and support them and they will just love you and your class!!)

6. Color time! (Teaching them color time, story time and other TIMES teaches them that there is a time

for everything.) With color time all the students have a sketchpad they bought from the dollar shop with crayons. I have them draw a big circle, triangle and square. Next I have a hand out and they say, "Give me one, please." The handouts are letters with a matching photo they can color. But first they have to say, "Give me glue, please," so that I can glue the handout into their sketch book. I do the gluing because I'm fast. The kids use too much glue and are slow and messy which is fine in art class but in a forty-minute class that only meets once a week speed is essential.

7. Next we have song time. Get them moving after sitting for some time.

You can use songs such as "Head-shoulders-knees and Toes", "If you're Happy and you Know it."

8. Vowel Drill time. I have a vowel poster with words and pictures glued to a big piece of cardboard and I drill the vowels. I say the sound and word of a vowel and they repeat. Again speed is the key. I also use a funny voice and chant the vowel sound and word. Make up some silly chant and they will follow, loving it and you!

9. Counting. I count 1 to 10 but it goes like this. I say one, they say two and so on.

Do it really fast and they'll like it.

10. I throw about 25 cards all over the room. Today we are doing the vowel "a" so the cards are all words and photos starting with the letter a. Each card has 4 to 5 of the same thing so everyone can get one. Then I call out "Ahhh" and then say the word apple! They have to find all the cards with an apple on it.

Once this is done they count the cards and tell me how many they have.

11. They sit down and we do a page from their textbook and workbook.

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Next is the "Good-bye" song and a big "See you next week!"

I change the procedure every six classes but the color handouts and textbook materials change every class.

Most teachers will not put this kind of power and preparation into their classes and that's why they're part of the 80% that are just getting by.

Whatever... Here are the key ingredients to remember in order to be successful working with kids.

Every activity should have a goal/objective that contains an educational and entertaining element to it.

Time-wasting, meaningless activities are for the weak and lazy. If you do this you are just another fly by night foreigner who will be found out and tossed out.

Touch your kids. Shake their hands, give them high fives, tickle gently them and so on.

Kids don't have word power yet and they depend heavily on their feelings to guide them and communicate with others.

Playing with them physically will build the rapport which is needed to guide them through your lessons. (Some schools have rules against physical contact but it's mostly for adult students.)

Respect your kids by thanking them in advance for doing activities. Always use "Please", "Thank you", "You're the best", "Good job" and so on.

Praise them every chance you get and build them up honestly.

If you notice some of your activities are bombing during a class drop them, go into your next one (always have one or two back up, sure-fire activities just in case) without missing a beat. Later, figure out why the activities were bombing but don't discard them. Don't ever blame the kids for your difficulties.

Join ETJ online discussion forum for teachers teaching in Japan.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/search?query=ETJ>

Here you can ponder with others over the activities you are trying to fine tune and find other related help.

Each activity should be done in a different part of the room. Keep the kids moving!

Of course you should always take courses on teaching kids while you're here and read as many books as you can on the subject.

You can find books on teaching Japanese children English at any online bookstore.

In Japan there are 100-yen shops. Back home they're called dollar shops.

Here's where you can get ideas and great material to create killer activities for the little ones. But don't

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spend too much. You many want to put 2,000 yen away per month for this stuff (2,000 yen is about US\$19).

Use a lot of TPR in your classes with kids and adults.
TRP stands for "Total physical Response Teaching."
Check out the following links for info on TPR
Total Physical Response

Follow my instruction and you will be way ahead of anyone just coming here trying to figure things out alone.

To your ESL teaching success and beyond,

Craig Desorcy

P.S. Want to live and work in Japan? Already in Japan?
Want to do really well in Japan as an English teacher even with no experience?
Please have a look at my ebook.
<http://www.teaching-in-japan.com>

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Craig Desorcy is a very popular ESL teacher living and working in Japan for eight years now. He is the
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I hated the "jobs" so I created my own in Japan

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I was having such a hard time working for English schools in Japan like so many others. From being
made to sell over-priced text books to students, not having sufficient time to prepare lessons, having
students put in my advanced classes with-out being able to say I like pizza in English, etc...

After three years teaching in Japan I entered management and what an eye opener that was! Besides
being expected to work 70 to 80 hours a week, I was also expected to hire, and train teachers which is

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fine but after a new teacher starts and sees what's going on they turn to me! What can I do? The real ball was not in my hands and it hurt because the new teachers trusted me and counted on me not to take advantage of them. After being in Japan for three years I just about had it when a friend suggested I start my own school.

To make a long story short, that's what I did and it's been the BEST!

In Japan you do not need any special business certificates to open a school.

I started in my home and a year later opened up a business location. Sure you need to pay your tax but so what! It's a small price to pay to be free!

Now I can make all my own ESL games, lesson plans, etc. I never put beginner students in advanced classes and I do not charge students outrageous fees to join my school.

If you don't know, many schools charge anywhere from 100 to 300 dollars (Just using dollars as an example) to enter the school system. What's this money for? Who knows! That always bothered me.

If you plan to stay in Japan for a while and don't like the teacher situation at the J.O.B. get out there and make your own job.

To your Success.

Craig Desorcy

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Craig Desorcy is an ESL teacher in Japan teaching English at his own school for the past five years. He is also the Author of "The Super Teaching in Japan Handbook" which can be found at www.teaching-in-japan.com

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