

Tech Beat

Technology with a heartbeat

Leecy Wise
<http://www.swadulred.com>
4cvrc@swadulred.com
970-565-1552

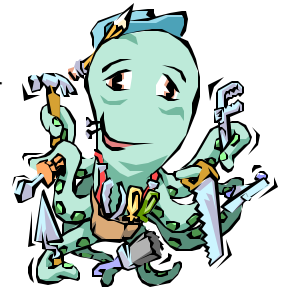
Multi-Level ESL Issues

Instructors face challenges in any multilevel environments, but nowhere more than in ESL classrooms, particularly among students who speak different native languages.

What do we do to engage students in learning where only one instructor holds the responsibility for outcomes? — Share the responsibility with students!

I recently met with ESL instructors from Montrose and surrounding areas. Among the strategies we discussed and applied were the following:

- Switch supervised assignments among different groups. While some are working alone or on teams at their own level, others are working with the instructor.
- Teach students to teach each other. The best learning occurs while teaching. Have more advanced students learn to lead short drills, develop and teach dialogues, tape stories with accurate pronunciation and dictate short passages to others and to lower-level students.
- Create projects where all students can work together using each others' strengths. Maybe one student does not speak well, yet, but he can offer skills that others may not have to complete a project: graphics, music, cooking, carpentry, computer skills, photography, video editing, crafts, on and on. Use students' strengths and show them how to share and teach skills with each other.
- The Internet offers the best solution for working with multi-level classes, in my opinion. With a couple of computers with Internet connection in the classroom, students can conduct team and individual projects, exercises and activities while their classmates are working with the instructor, switching continually during the course or a session. Students can also teach each other computer skills using English with each other.



Following are some resources for activities of different kinds and articles discussing the multilevel issue in ESL:

Great Sites for listening, grammar, games and other individual activities for ESL students at different levels:

- [Lingua Center resources in a variety of media](http://www.iei.uiuc.edu/web/pages/esl.html)—<http://www.iei.uiuc.edu/web/pages/esl.html>
- [Sites with activities for lower-level students](http://hills.ccsf.org/~esltech/Lessons/Internet/lowerlevels.html)—<http://hills.ccsf.org/~esltech/Lessons/Internet/lowerlevels.html>
- [Instructional Technology \(IT\) in ESOL, from the U of Oregon](http://otec.uoregon.edu/esol.htm)—<http://otec.uoregon.edu/esol.htm>
- [Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and culture activities, including very low level](http://www.isabelperez.com/grammar.htm)—<http://www.isabelperez.com/grammar.htm>
- [The Language Box, with a Learning Zone—Click on English and go for it!](http://www.languagebox.com/OLCEnglish.html) <http://www.languagebox.com/OLCEnglish.html>

MultiLevel Articles

- [Ten Tips on Multilevel ESL Teaching](http://www.thecenterweb.org/adult/esl_ideas.htm)—http://www.thecenterweb.org/adult/esl_ideas.htm
- [ERIC lists of great articles on ESL](http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/)—<http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/>
- [Betsy Parrish's article in The English Teacher's Assistant](http://www.etanewsletter.com/multilevel.shtml)—<http://www.etanewsletter.com/multilevel.shtml>
- [Focus on Basics resources on multi-level ESL](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ncsall/fob/1997/balliot.htm)—<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ncsall/fob/1997/balliot.htm>
- [Choose among the ESL Lesson Plan Activities](http://www.tefl.net/lessonplans/)—<http://www.tefl.net/lessonplans/>
- [From Connections, a bunch of PDF files with great articles. Download them and read them at your leisure!](http://hub1.worlded.org/docs/connections/tableofcontents.htm) - <http://hub1.worlded.org/docs/connections/tableofcontents.htm>