



ESL MiniConference

Making a Difference In a Community TEFL Life Introduces New Pre-Service Model

Spring 09

Jodi Crandall
at TALGS

AM Sessions
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ITA Program

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The Intercultural Teaching Assistants (ITA) program provides volunteers with the opportunity to expand their worldview of primary and secondary students in provincial settings where international contacts are rare. As intercultural informants the ITA's offer students a personal experience with a foreign culture. At the same time the volunteer can assist the host country teacher with classroom content in English, science and math courses. The ITA gains hands on experience in a foreign culture, and a chance to give something back. Transforming lives through intercultural experiences is the program goal.

The International Teaching Assistants are recruited from universities in a variety of fields. They are not expected to "teach," but to collaborate with the local teachers. In this way they gain invaluable experience in education and intercultural communication. The pre-service training program provides the volunteers with a wealth of activities to engage students in classroom and extracurricular activities. A local community network supports the ITA's, coordinated by the TEFL International team.

ITAP is aimed at provincial schools that could not normally afford to hire a foreign teacher. All the teaching assistants complete a four-week pre-service training course that includes inputs in language and culture, intercultural awareness and directing learning activities. The first two weeks include student profiling and in class training; the last two weeks are a "directed learning experience" where the ITA's develop their skills in real classroom situations.

The International Teaching Assistant Program asks schools to pay a modest fee, or provide 'in kind' contributions for the maintenance of the volunteer. The fees paid by the participant cover training, support and the administrative costs of the program. Participants are encouraged to contact the officials in their university in regard to obtaining college credit for a "semester abroad." TEFL International will grant a 'certificate of successful completion' for the Intercultural Teaching Assistant Program, and assist the participant in documenting the value to the program.

The program is directed by Jidapa Promruang who has a master's in education and extensive teaching and training experience. Other program staff includes Dave Hopkins and Fritz de Groot who both have graduate degrees and considerable training and academic experience.

The Intercultural Teaching Assistants Program was developed by TEFL International as a direct response to the thousands of schools, teachers and students that we have worked with over the last ten years. We hope that this program will give us a chance to work together to "make a difference."

Press Release

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