

How Teaching Online Helps Teachers Develop ESL Insights and New Skills: The Case of VIPKid

The need for trained ESL teachers in today's public schools continues to increase as the number of ESL students continues to grow. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), there were 4.9 million ESL students in public schools at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, the most recent year for these statistics. The percentage of ESL students ranged from 0.9 percent in West Virginia to 20.2 percent in California.¹

Concentrations of ESL students are often found in underserved schools with insufficient or undertrained teachers. The number of qualified teachers to work with this student population is a significant and growing problem. More than 32 states reported inadequate staffing for ESL students.² So, teaching ESL with VIPKid provides a tremendous learning opportunity for teachers looking to add to their teaching credentials.

And so while some teachers signed up to teach with VIPKid to improve their ESL teaching skills, many found that they were able to do so – and so much more. “I wanted to up my teaching game,” explains Martha. “I started with VIPKid ... to learn strategies to be more effective in my brick-and-mortar classroom.” But then Martha explains that while she loves her role as a teacher, in her brick-and-mortar classroom she often plays myriad roles: psychologist, doctor, social worker, disciplinarian. Any school teacher can probably relate. But VIPKid allows her to just teach again.

In a recent survey conducted among VIPKid teachers, more than 500 VIPKid teachers responded with comments about the benefits on their teaching by teaching for VIPKid. It is striking throughout the responses, how often teachers mention that teaching for VIPKid has changed them, energized them, and caused them to teach in a new way, spurring personal and professional growth. And of course, respondents made particular mention about how learning to teach ESL with VIPKid has given them greater insights into working with ESL students at their bricks and mortar schools.

Throughout this article, we will be sharing verbatim comments from the teachers who took the survey. Hearing about their experiences in their own words best conveys the energy and passion that teaching online brings to their day, and school day overall.

¹ NCES.ed.gov

² Sanchez, Claudio. “English Language Learners: How Your State is Doing.” NPR. February 23, 2017.

Growing as a Professional

In their responses to multiple questions teachers expressed their sense of personal and professional growth, and appreciation for the opportunity to learn about another culture, thereby renewing their confidence as life-long learners and teachers. Some respondents noted that focusing on one student at a time when teaching online with VIPKid helped them to better adapt to children’s individual learning styles in their multi-student classrooms—making them a more effective teacher.



Diversity

The enthusiasm, energy, and emotion these teachers feel about teaching one-on-one for VIPKid literally jumps off the page. It allows them to make connections and build relationships with students and their families in other countries through the unique VIPKid online platform

Developing ESL Teaching Skills

Survey respondents reported that they have developed greater patience as an instructor as they work with ESL students in their “brick and mortar” classrooms using the techniques they learned in VIPKid online workshops. Some teachers mentioned that they now have a better appreciation for how different children learn and the importance of tailoring instruction to the individual child.

“

VIPKid has helped me improve my teaching skills and has helped me build confidence in my teaching abilities.

I love learning and laughing with my students. Having fun while learning creates lifelong meaningful lessons.

I take my teaching seriously, recognizing that I am responsible for helping cultivate and grow my students' minds and passion for learning!

It has brought me back to the basics of our language. It has given me so much empathy and understanding of learning English as a non-native speaker.

I am a SPED educator, and now on my way to becoming an ESL educator as well. It has encouraged me to get certified to teach ESL.

”

Some VIPKid teachers had previous ESL teaching experience; some are teaching ESL for the first time. But for many, teaching for VIPKid has given them valuable experience to take back to their classroom ESL students as well as a renewed dedication for this growing need in our country.

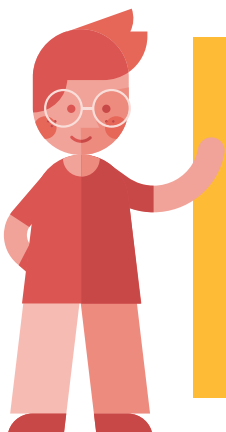


One teacher summed up the feeling that most VIPKid teachers have —“My journey has always been and will continue to be to change children’s lives through education.”

Teaching Online and Traditional Complement Each Other

Classroom teachers repeatedly expressed how teaching online for VIPKid and teaching in a regular classroom provided benefits for the other and spoke positively about the influence of each on their teaching.

VIPKid’s instructional model allows teachers to focus on one student at a time. It is this one-on-one relationship with their students that teachers appreciate the most. Seeing the spark in their students’ eyes as they “get it” are some of the most rewarding moments for teachers, and VIPKid’s unique online platform allows for many of these moments.



For more information about becoming a VIPKid teacher, visit us at www.vipkid.com. VIPKid is a global education technology company that connects children with the world’s best teachers for real-time online English language learning. VIPKid’s mission is to inspire and empower every child for the future and believes that education is not one-size-fits-all. Students are unique and the world is within their reach when connected with great teachers capable of personalizing learning and sparking curiosity. Follow [@thevipkidlife](https://www.instagram.com/thevipkidlife) on Instagram

“

It’s a continual learning and sharing process. When I find an example or method that works in one situation, it can be adapted to the other.

I use ideas from the classroom for VIPKID and vice versa. I use books from the classroom for my VIPKID students and props from VIPKID to bring into the classroom. I recently moved to an area that has more ESL learners and what I’ve learned through VIPKID has really helped me support them.

”