

Fulbright ETA Tips 2013

For the profesorado (based on my experience):

- Be as flexible as possible when it comes to the schedule.
 - *Some days class might be cancelled last minute, others you might not have as much time as you thought. For each one-hour class, plan for 45-minutes and then think of an extra activity in case you have time left over (in my experience, I never needed to use any extra activity-classroom time seemed to fly by).*
- Try not to have expectations.
 - *Throw away what you know about institutions of higher learning in the U.S. In Argentina they are completely different. It is much more laid-back and even subjective when it comes to grades. Also, there are not as many services for students compared to universities in the U.S. For example, my institution did not have internet access. If I wanted to show a video I had to use savetube.com (for YouTube) or screenr.com/record (records what is on your screen for up to 5 minutes) to download the video onto my computer. If you can, send your students any websites, presentations, etc., in advance and have them download them and bring their netbooks to class so you don't have to worry about reserving projectors or any technological problems.*
- Talk as much as you can about yourself and culture in the U.S.
 - *My students were very grateful for this information. In their other classes they learned theories, language, literature, etc., and they didn't learn much about culture. Nor did they have an informal conversation class, so I tried to integrate the two by showing them interesting cultural information (nightlife, university life, food/restaurants) and then doing some sort of creative, participatory activity (role play, debate). I tried to keep these activities fun and light so they could enjoy them and feel relaxed and able to speak freely. After my grant had ended my students thanked me for doing this and they said they looked forward to my class every week because it was informative, fun, and they were able to practice speaking English with a native speaker. They really are interested in your life and who YOU are as well. I tried to always talk about things I knew well, for example the Green Party. I taught U.S. politics this way because I was able to compare all of the major political parties in the U.S. and they appreciated my views and opinions. This also makes your job as an ETA easier.*

- From a student: Do some sort of activity that unites all of the students you teach and allows them to learn about each other.
 - *I asked a student of mine in the profesorado about what he would like an ETA to do. He mentioned that something similar to the MTV show “If You Really Knew Me” would be a good way for all of the students to meet each other and get to know each other. This could be done in the form of games or challenges, team-building exercises, etc. Another example (which I did not come up with, but was a yearly event at my profesorado) is a “Literary Café.” The theme was “music.” The students were given chances to read, sing, dance, or perform anything they wanted in English, as long as it was related to music. Most students participated (willingly and on their own accord) and we learned a lot about each other through the choices of passages, music, or performance. It even became a community event (with prizes!).*
- If you feel comfortable, arrange to have your “own” teaching time that is for you and you only, and is the same every week.
 - *Arrange with the professors ahead of time to take portions of their classes (one hour each week for example). This works well because your schedule never changes and the teachers and students know what to expect each week. Then, if possible (and if you would like to), enlist the help of these teachers to plan projects for their classes. For example, I worked with the literature teacher to make a “Book Club” that was part of the literature course. The students met with me 2 hours a week and I picked some passages from some of my favorite books for them to read (Bill Bryson and David Sedaris). With the help of the literature teacher, we were able to plan the entire semester before classes even started. The final result was spectacular.*

Adjusting to life in your city:

- Become a “native” of your city, not a tourist.
 - *Honestly, adjusting to life in my city (Puerto Madryn) was very easy because I imagined myself as a native, so I did what the people there did and set aside some of my habits to make room for new ones. This way I didn’t feel disappointed in what I could or couldn’t do or could or couldn’t have.*
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help.
 - *Argentines are EXTREMELY generous and they want to help you! Your referents, students, and friends know that you’re in a new place and they*

will be there for you when you need something. It might just be a matter of asking!

- Talk to everyone!
 - *Get to know as many people as you can in your city and make as many friends as possible. For example, I made friends with the people who worked at the verdulería I went to and also the dietética I frequented. It was nice because I didn't feel alone in the city and it helped to become a "native" like I mentioned earlier. The owners of the dietética even invited me to celebrate Christmas with them! This also includes your students. They are the easiest way to make friends since you will be with them every day. Some of my students are now really great friends. I've lived with them, celebrated holidays with them, and even been "adopted" by one who has a family. It's helped me to feel stable here since I have such an immense support group.*
- Everyone is going to tell you this, but once again, just enjoy your time in Argentina as much as you can!
 - *You'll notice it's a slower pace of life so you have more time to sit back and enjoy some mates! Another tip: learn the mate rituals ASAP because you'll be drinking lots of it!*

Thank you and I hope you have a great stay! Feel free to contact me with any questions you have! Melissa.mallon@fulbrightmail.org