Instructional Guide for Teachers

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1. WHAT IS ESL READINGSMART

1.1 Content

ESL ReadingSmart is a comprehensive, Web-based learning environment that provides teachers and students with a variety of choices and an abundance of resources. It offers individualized, content-based instruction to develop English language proficiency with emphasis on literacy and academic language development. ESL ReadingSmart provides 148 interactive lessons with fun and engaging student vocabulary and comprehension activities, vocabulary development and reading online instruction, online student tutorials, complete lesson plans, printable worksheets and reports to track student progress.

The program’s instructional materials are written to accommodate five different Levels of ESL proficiency: Level 0 (Newcomers); Level 1 (Beginner); Level 2 (Intermediate); Level 3 (Early Advanced); and Level 4 (Advanced). Each level includes a syllabus based on a language development sequence that moves students seamlessly from one proficiency level to the next.

1.2 Instructional Flexibility

The program is based on a unique instructional design. Teachers can implement it either as a student-centered, stand-alone application, or as a learning environment that integrates online student work and classroom instruction.

ESL ReadingSmart provides a placement test that generates an individualized path for each student to follow (My Path). Teachers can track student progress and follow their work on a daily basis. This is an ideal instructional environment for multilevel ESL/ELD classrooms, sheltered ESL classrooms, after-school programs, and general education classrooms with no specific support for ESL students.

Teachers can also select a specific ESL ReadingSmart level for a class, and the system will offer the same instructional path to all of the students in the class. In order to define the level of a class, teachers can use the placement test results offered by ESL ReadingSmart or, alternatively, they may follow the results of their district or state placement tests. This is an effective pedagogical solution for English learning classes that group students with similar English proficiency levels.

Student instructional paths are based on the sequence of lessons that conforms to each ESL ReadingSmart level. Lessons are written at a specific ESL level and support a standards-based English language acquisition program that integrates listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

1.3 Teacher Component

ESL ReadingSmart is divided into two online components or sections—one for teachers and one for students. The teacher may access both sections; however, students can only access the student component. The teacher component has diverse instructional materials including the following resources and tools:

- Comprehensive Syllabus by level
- Scope and Sequence for each lesson

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- Student Support Guides with Independent and In-Group handouts that allow teachers to differentiate instruction
- Standards-based, comprehensive lesson plans for small-group or whole class instruction
- Web resources
- Class management module
- Monitoring and assessment system: placement test, achievement test, and class and individual progress reports

1.4 Student Component
The student component includes the recommended order of lessons (My Path), a newcomers’ program and a multi-genre reading program with the following resources:
- Independent work handouts (On My Own Tutorial) to support online work designed for students using the program mainly as student-centered, online instructional environment with limited teacher support
- Handouts for small group work (In Group Tutorial) for students to work with a partner or in small groups
- Native language support for newcomers: Bilingual On My Own and In Group Tutorials as well as bilingual audio directions for vocabulary and comprehension activities (English/Spanish)
- Online translator to support 36 languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, and several European languages, among others
- Vocabulary activities
- Comprehension activities
- Online Workbooks with standards-based vocabulary and reading instruction and practice
- Cross-curricular resources
- On-demand report card
- On-demand certificates of all work completed

1.5 Newcomers’ Program
The Newcomers’ Program consists of 23 thematic lessons. Its design facilitates the introduction of basic vocabulary and sentence structure needed by beginning English language learners. These units enable students to experience immediate success in communicating in English while progressively developing skills necessary for success in Level 1. Online activities allow students to work independently. These activities can be repeated as often as necessary to ensure the mastery of beginning level reading skills and vocabulary development. Each lesson also provides online Tutorials for students to do on their own or in a group. Once students have completed the Newcomers section, they are ready to begin Level I stories and activities.

1.6 Reading Program
ESL ReadingSmart’s Reading Program offers 125 multicultural reading selections in the following genres: myths and legends, biographies, poetry, short stories, and articles. Instructional materials are written at four levels—Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4—and aligned to The Lexile® Framework for Reading, a scientific approach to reading measurement that provides a common scale for matching reader ability and text difficulty. It links the student’s ability to read to the linguistic complexity of the
selections provided. Alignment to the Lexile® Framework allows the educator to easily determine the reading level of their students and their progress within the Lexile® scale. ESL ReadingSmart instructional materials cover a wide readability span from 200L to 1300L, roughly equivalent to a grade level range from Grades 1 through 12. Furthermore, every level has sub-levels:

Level 1: Beginner (200L-490L)
   1.1 (200L-290L)
   1.2 (300L-390L)
   1.3 (400L-490L)

Level 2: Intermediate (500L-690L)
   2.1 (500L-560L)
   2.2 (570L-630L)
   2.3 (640L-690L)

Level 3: Early Advanced (700L-1050L)
   3.1 (700L-790L)
   3.2 (800L-890L)
   3.3 (900L-1050L)

Level 4: Advanced (1050L-1300L)
   4.1 (1050L-1150L)
   4.2 (1160L-1300L)

2. HOW TO IMPLEMENT ESL READING SMART

2.1 General Guidelines
The effective implementation of ESL ReadingSmart is best achieved when training is provided for all teachers using the program. We recommend that teachers follow these user-friendly guidelines.

Setting up Students
- Contact your school’s ESL ReadingSmart contact person, and give him/her a list of the classes that will use the program, the number of students in each class, and the type of online instruction that you wish to implement in each class:
Individualized computer-based learning—Each student will have an order of lessons to follow based on the ESL ReadingSmart placement test

Teacher-selected class level—Each student will have an order of lessons to follow based on the level in which you would like your students to start their online work

• Set up your students in the ESL ReadingSmart system. Instructions to do this are available online in the Help section.

Placement Test

• Give each student his/her account information, and schedule a computer session (45 minutes) for students to complete the placement test that will determine their ESL level in the program. Make sure that your students have the basic skills needed to access the Internet and work online.

Placement Test Results

• Log in to the site with your teacher account information, go to My Reports/Other Reports/Placement Test, and review the students’ placement test results for each of your classes.

• Go to My Reports/Other Reports/Student Paths, and review the students’ learning path for each of your classes. If you selected individualized computer-based instruction, each student will have a report with his own path to follow. If you selected the level for a class, you will find the path that all students in the class should follow.

How to Use ESL ReadingSmart

• Before going to the computer lab, give each student his/her corresponding Path Report.

• Organize a lesson on the use of ESL ReadingSmart in order to familiarize the students with the program:
  
  o Tell students what you expect them to accomplish using the program.
  
  o Tell students that they can access the site from home, from the library, or from any computer with an Internet connection.
  
  o Access ESL ReadingSmart with a student account. Show the students the site’s main screen and its main features: My Path, My Scores, My Certificates, Newcomers, Reading Selections, and Levels.
  
  o Tell them that after logging in to ESL ReadingSmart they should click on My Path. Discuss with your students My Path’s main features:
My Path offers each student a roadmap to follow. It shows the starting level and the starting lesson. Once the student completes the first lesson, the second lesson becomes available. Lessons to be completed are marked as Go.

Show students the Tutorial section that most lessons have. Tutorials provide students with independent and in-group activities to support their online work.

Encourage your students to complete all activities at mastery level, that is, scores equal to or higher than 80%. If a student completed the same activity twice or more times, the final score for that activity will be the highest score that the student achieved.

Emphasize that incomplete activities are not recorded in their reports. Students should answer all questions for their scores to show in their reports.

In order to master a lesson, the average score of all the lessons’ activities should be equal to or higher than 80%. Lessons in progress are marked as Working. Lessons failed are marked as Failing. In order to pass a lesson, students can retake the activities that they failed.

After completing all the lessons for a given level and passing more than 70% of these lessons, students will have mastered a level and will move on to the next one.

Students can track their online work and scores in My Scores. Tell students that there may be some delay between the completion of an activity and the updating of their Report Cards and My Path. However, this delay does not mean a failure of the system to record the data.

2.2 Specific Guidelines

Give students specific directions for their online work depending on the program they are working on: Newcomers’ Program or Reading Program

Specific Recommendations for Newcomers

- Show students the Tutorial section. Encourage them to follow the directions and complete the On My Own Vocabulary Tutorial handout. Tutorial handouts have been designed to support students’ online work.

- Tell students to work first on the interactive illustrations that each lesson provides.

- Ask students to have an ESL ReadingSmart notebook to write down new words or words that they have difficulty in remembering.

- Ask students to use headphones and listen to the audio that supports the illustrations and animations in each lesson.
After the students feel comfortable with the lesson’s vocabulary, tell them to complete all the activities.

Encourage students to check their scores in My Scores, and to achieve 80% before going to the next lesson.

Specific Recommendations for the Reading Program

- Show students the Tutorial section and encourage them to complete the On My Own Tutorial handouts.
- Ask students to keep a notebook/personal dictionary and 8-10 words for each lesson. Students might write a definition, a drawing, a translation, a synonym, etc.
- Tell students to use headphones and listen to the story as they read it. Online stories have a speaker icon on each page. By clicking on it, students will be able to listen to the selection page by page.
- Explain the roll-over definitions to the students.
- After having a general idea of what the selection is about, ask students to work on the vocabulary activities, and to read the story for a second time paying attention to details.
- Encourage students to complete all comprehension activities, go to My Scores, check their scores, and redo all activities with scores below 80%.
- Instruct students to complete the online Workbooks that are available for every reading selection at Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3.
- Tell students that ESL ReadingSmart allows them to choose between lessons that have the same level of difficulty, based on the Lexile measure.
- Discuss briefly with your students the different reading Levels, and show them each level and the list of selections and Lexile measures.
- Instruct students to master the lessons to improve their reading skills.

3. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

All previous guidelines apply to the implementation of ESL ReadingSmart either as a student-centered online program or as a hybrid learning environment. However, each instructional strategy requires a different role for the teacher or facilitator, as well as a specific instructional protocol to maximize the program’s effectiveness.
3.1 Student-Centered, Online Program

As a student-centered environment, the program supports diverse instructional environments: multilevel ESL/ELD classrooms, sheltered instruction, after-school programs, and general education classes with no specific support for ESL students.

Teachers may use the following strategies to implement the program effectively:

- Monitor students’ online work on a weekly basis using the Class Reports and the Individual Reports provided in My Reports.
- Give students the opportunity to access a computer a minimum of 4 hours each week.
- Encourage students to look at My Scores and track their online work on a daily basis.
- Check students’ ESL ReadingSmart notebooks every two weeks and encourage students to complete all of the worksheets available in the online Tutorial/On My Own section.
- Look at the Student Support Guides and Lesson Plans available for each lesson and print out any handouts and worksheets that the students can complete independently.
- Give students homework based on the Student Support Guides and Lesson Plan activities that are suitable for independent student work.

3.2 Hybrid Learning Environment

As a hybrid-learning environment, teachers can implement ESL ReadingSmart with a small group or with a whole class. The Lesson Plans are best suited for whole class instruction while the flexibility of the Student Support Guides is more effective for small-group instruction. Both the Student Support Guide and the Lesson Plans support the work students do in the lab. They are written to require minimal preparation for teachers and include convenient handouts. Students benefit from the discussions, questions, and assignments that address critical thinking skills and ESL/ELD standards. Activities are included in every lesson to build background and develop skills and concepts throughout the reading process. In the computer lab, students have a wide choice of online activities including interactive vocabulary work, reading/listening to the story, and comprehension exercises.

- Introduce the lesson in the classroom using selected activities from the lesson plan’s Speaking and Vocabulary sections.
- Schedule one computer session (45 minutes) for students to complete the vocabulary activities, read, and listen to the story.
- Select Reading, Writing, or Other Activities from the Lesson plans or the Student Support Guides.
- Schedule one computer session (45 minutes) for students to complete comprehension activities online.
• Monitor your students’ work using the daily, weekly and progress reports that are available online (My Reports).

3.2.1 Newcomers’ Program
In order to incorporate the Newcomers’ syllabus into an existing program of language development, teachers can use the following procedure:

• Follow the recommended order of the Newcomers’ syllabus -- the same order that your students follow in My Path.

• Review the teacher lesson plans and select activities and printable materials to support classroom instruction.

• Introduce the lesson in the classroom using selected activities from the Speaking and Vocabulary sections.

• Give your students time to complete the online work for the lesson.

• Check the Class Reports and Individual Reports and reassign activities as necessary.

• Revisit online student activities for review and reinforcement.

• Evaluate student mastery by reviewing student Progress Reports and/or teacher-made tests.

3.2.2 Reading Program for Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4
The Reading Selections may be used as an adjunct to an existing English Language program or as a stand-alone program. They are arranged according to readability from least to most challenging with appropriate activities in the teacher lesson plans and in the student section online. Each reading lesson has four instructional sections: Tutorial, Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Workbooks. The latter are designed to develop specific vocabulary and reading skills and strategies for beginner (Level 1), intermediate (Level 2), and early advanced (level 3) English learners. Teachers can monitor the development of specific skills using the Workbooks Skills Report available for each student in My Reports.

To use in conjunction with an ongoing program of language development, use the order recommended in the My Reports/Student Paths, and follow these steps:

• Select from the lessons those that best suit your teaching preferences and students’ needs.

• Implement each lesson following an instructional strategy that combines classroom activities with students’ independent work on a computer.

• Select from the teacher lesson plans some pre-reading and post-reading activities.

• Activate prior knowledge and introduce vocabulary before assigning online student work.
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- Assign online activities for vocabulary development (Student Section) and have students read and listen to the story online.

- Select Reading and/or Writing activities from the teacher lesson plans to accommodate higher proficiency students or mixed classes. Assign activities that are more challenging from Other Activities as described in the Teacher Lesson Plans.

- Assign online comprehension activities for students to complete.

- Check the Class Reports and Individual Reports and reassign activities as necessary.

- Run Student Progress Reports on a monthly basis.

3.3 Instructional Model: ESL Level 1, “The Cherry Tree”

ESL ReadingSmart provides an abundance of resources that have been designed to allow teachers to choose those that suit their teaching preferences. This section offers an instructional strategy for the implementation of the reading selection “The Cherry Tree” which can also be used for other units.

- Locate "The Cherry Tree" in the Syllabus and review the Lesson Plans and the Student Section.

- Introduce the lesson before assigning the online activities, using the following activities in Pre-Reading Lesson Plans.
  
  o Activate prior knowledge

  o Share cultures

  o Introduce genre

  o Select and introduce vocabulary chosen from the Vocabulary List provided in the Printable section

- In the lab, assign the following computer work:

  o Vocabulary activities

  o Reading

  o Comprehension activities

- In the classroom, implement the following activities:

  o Lesson Plan for Reading: Questions emphasize critical thinking (mainly inference/conclusions)

  o Lesson Plan for Writing: Scaffolding provides support for students

- In the lab, have students complete the following computer work:
• Listen to the story page by page
• Repeat Comprehension activities
• Scavenger Hunt (group project) and/or Create a Comic

• If needed, you may implement the following activities:
  o Other Activities/Timeline
  o Note that there are several activities to choose from.

• Implement the following vocabulary activities:
  o Copy the Vocabulary List into a Word document, and remove all but the list of words that you choose to introduce in the Pre-Reading activities.

• Select a few words for intensive study:
  o create semantic word maps
  o study meaning in context
  o study meaning of roots, prefixes, suffixes
  o create entries for a word wall
  o use in writing assignments

• Use the list as a word bank for students to classify or select words according to:
  o Parts of speech
  o Prefixes/suffixes/roots
  o Compound words
  o Spelling rules
  o Singular/plural
  o Present/past tense of verbs
  o Antonyms or synonyms