

Mark J Durnford - General Report:

The teachers in Kilinochchi have a high level of English and have had previous training from the British Council in EFL teaching techniques.

However, many of them still have the teaching mentality where they feel it is important to explain things, rather than allowing the students the freedom to do this themselves. Students of English need to be given the freedom to speak more in class rooms.

It is important to constantly use concept checking questions during class activities instead of asking "Do you understand?" Students will only answer yes to this question and this won't give the teacher an accurate picture of his or her level of teaching.

The Sri Lankan teachers seem to have the attitude that it is all right to cheat in English activities. This is a serious problem because teachers should set a good example to children. As teachers we need to be role models for our students and cheating is one of the seriously bad examples we could ever set. They should think earnestly about this bad attitude and stop it immediately.

There is a general leaning towards teaching grammar in class, rather than teaching English as a FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE. Teachers should strive to teach English as naturally as possible.

The teachers in Kilinochchi are generally kind and respectful and many of them have a great sense of humour, which is so important when teaching any subject in any school.

Other comments:

Organisation and communication should be better. In Kilinochchi I was told by the organiser that I needed to incorporate an element of teaching writing skills, despite the focus being on SPEAKING English.

Due to the changing rules on Sri Lankan visas, my visa was not ready until the day of my flight. This is not Mohan's fault. If the powers that be want me (or anyone else) to teach in Sri Lanka, this needs to be organised well in advance and my ticket purchased well in advance.

The schedule was changed at the last minute. First I was going to teach in the first week of my visit, then it was changed to the second week of my visit. This necessitated organising special transportation for Miley from Kilinochchi, which wouldn't have happened had we stuck to the original schedule. Originally I was going to teach in Kandy and then the location was changed to Tangalle. I understand that unforeseeable events necessitate changes to schedules, but changes at the last minute are unprofessional and should be avoided at all costs.

I was expecting an extra 60 hours of work from Mohan, teaching which focussed on IELTS examination preparation, which sadly didn't come about. I made a promise to Mohan that I would come to Sri Lanka for the four weeks agreed upon: 5th October to 4th November, giving up some substantially well paid work in the UK.

This also has meant that I have had to bring my flight to Vietnam forward, costing me an unforeseen £150. This has resulted in a total monthly income of £630 for the month of October, staggeringly little and certainly not enough to pay for my mortgage and bills back home.

Please note that this is a report that I was asked to write, not a list of complaints. However, in any future plans to organise teaching work for myself or any other teacher, a more comprehensive plan and greater organisation is needed in order to make any form of teacher training by a native speaker a success.