

# Statement of Teaching Philosophy – TEFL / TESOL

Josiah Lebowitz

The value of language cannot be overstated. It allows for clear communication, makes it possible to pass on news, history, and stories almost effortlessly, and helps foster understanding and camaraderie between people. Yet, as the spoken and written word is so much a part of our everyday lives, many people rarely if ever consider its importance and subtleties.

The study of any language can help bring about that understanding and the study of a foreign language even more so. By looking at the structure, speech patterns, and idioms of a language, you can gain a significant measure of understanding of the culture and mindset of the country where it's used. A door that is, of course, further opened as students use their growing abilities to explore foreign culture and media and, most importantly, communicate with those from other parts of the world.

For people from non-English speaking countries, English is an especially valuable language to learn as it is currently the closest thing we have to a universal language. Many English speaking countries (especially the US) are also driving forces in world politics, economy, and media. Despite, or perhaps because of, that there are many misleading beliefs and stereotypes about English speaking countries and people. Studying English helps dispel those misbeliefs and promotes better cultural understanding and communication.

I believe that students in Japan and other non-English speaking countries can benefit from English study in the following ways.

1. Broadening their horizons by learning about a country and culture very different from their own.
2. Promoting better understanding and relationships between themselves and foreigners.
3. Encouraging personal development through introduction to different cultures, ideas, and religions.
4. Developing a more outgoing nature and sense of curiosity about the world.
5. Expanding their pool of potential employers, clients, and the like after graduation.

But bringing on such learning requires more than simple grammar and vocabulary exercises. I believe it's also important to provide students with many practical applications through English conversations, media, and the like. Whenever possible, combining such techniques with students' interests and hobbies can further increase their immersion and retention. Having experienced similar growth and development myself when studying Japanese, I understand how life changing learning a foreign language can be and the importance of giving others that same chance to expand their horizons.