

Introductory Unit

Teaching English as a Foreign Language Certificate (TEFL)



NORWOOD
ENGLISH

Educational Institution



FIREFISH
LINGUISTICS

SEA Representative

Welcome to the Norwood English Certificate-level course in teaching English as a Foreign Language. To get the most value from this course you should try and complete each unit in one or two sessions, with at least one week between units. If you are asked questions in the text try and answer them before you read on. You should complete exercises when they arise. Background reading should be done after you complete the unit but before you work on the assignment.



Introductory Unit:

Contents

Introduction to TEFL

Common Acronyms

Overview of Methodologies

Theories & Approaches

Qualities of 'The Good Teacher'

Assignment One

Recommended Reading

'No-one forgets a good teacher' according to a recent government sponsored recruitment campaign. But what is a good teacher? More pertinently, what are the qualities of a good language teacher?

An Introduction to TEFL

English is not the first language to be used as a 'world' language. Around 2,500 years ago Greek became the principal language of trade in the Mediterranean. The Greeks also taught a variety of local foreign languages and students were sent to Athens from all parts of the area. In the third century BC the Romans formalised the teaching of Greek as their trade with the rest of the region increased.

As the Roman Empire grew Latin overtook Greek as the language of learning and business. The Romans formalised and defined the rules of grammar for Latin and taught it in every part of the Empire. Knowledge of Latin became a prerequisite for any sort of career within the Empire (including Britain where Latin was the tongue of the ruling elite for at least three centuries). Contemporary accounts

show that Latin was taught by grammar-translation: Study of the rules of grammar was combined with translation, back and forth, between languages. This method of language learning predominated well into this century. It is still used to teach English in some countries.

English didn't really become a world language until the 19th century although the process which led to that dominance began much earlier. The agricultural and industrial revolutions provided the impetus whilst the growth of the British Empire and

predominance in trade consolidated English as a 'World' language. Now English is by far the most widely used of the approximately 4,500 living languages. English is the first language of business, politics, sport and entertainment. Most scientific and medical research is promulgated in English. The growth of the internet has strengthened the position of English. Despite huge increases in the numbers of Chinese and Hispanic speakers the demand for English language teachers continues to grow and seems set to do so for the foreseeable future.

Students who are unfamiliar with the history and development of the English Language are advised to read the entry in a good encyclopaedia; the excellent prefix to the Concise Oxford Dictionary or a complete text such as *'History of the English Language'* by Albert C. Baugi.

Whether you intend to make teaching English as a Foreign Language a career or you just want to teach to subsidise your travelling some form of training is essential. This course aims to increase your awareness of the problems faced by students and teachers and prepare you for your first encounter with a live class or for a more intensive course including teaching practice.

There are many acronyms in use amongst English teaching professionals and the list seems to be growing daily. Here are some of the most important ones.

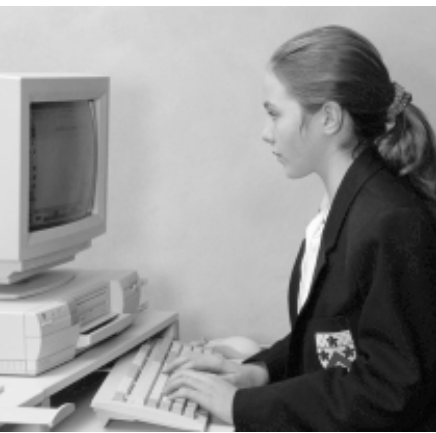
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TEFLA	Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (Used in the USA)
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Special Purposes
EST	English for Science and Technology
L1	The first or native language
L2	The target language
TTT	Teacher Talking Time
STT	Student Talking Time
PPP	Presentation, Practice & Production (Your mantra when planning or teaching a lesson)
RSA/ UCLES CTEFLA	Royal Society of Arts/University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate Certificate in Teaching English As A Foreign Language to Adults!
DTEFLA	As above but the Diploma version.

ESL is usually taught to immigrants to the country of the target language or to natives of a country such as India where English is an officially recognised second language. The differences between some of the terms (e.g. ESOL, ESL) are often so slight as to render them meaningless. Generally North Americans, and thus most of the English-learning world, use ESOL for what we refer to as EFL and ESL in the UK. There are numerous acronyms for examinations. Some of these are covered in Unit Four.

Overview of Methodologies

The terms below refer to major theories of language teaching; what do you think they mean? Write down your answer before you continue.

1. Audio Lingual
2. Communicative Approach
3. Humanistic Approach
4. The Eclectic Approach
5. Direct Method
6. Grammar/Translation
7. The Silent Way
8. Cognitive Code



Below are eight brief descriptions of the theories above. Match them with the titles.

A

Most or all instruction is given in L1. The main activities are reading aloud, translation and grammatical analysis. Mistakes are frowned upon.

B

All instructions are given in L2. The syllabus is structural. The teacher is in total control and makes extensive use of drilling and repetition of dialogues. Speaking and listening are considered the most important skills. Mistakes are frowned upon.

C

Although similar to (B) in many respects this method is less restrictive and allows students more freedom. As students progress through the syllabus there is an attempt to integrate reading and writing into the course.

D

This theory is a reaction to (B) and (C). Students apply explicit mental processes to understanding and using the language. Mistakes are considered an acceptable and essential part of the process. Communication is rule-based creativity.

E

Emphasis is on genuine communication. The basic principle of classroom activities is the information gap. Fluency takes precedence over accuracy and functions over structure.

F

A method based upon maths teaching where coloured rods are used to represent grammatical structures and pronunciation charts are used extensively. Both are intended to stimulate student responses. There is very little or no direct input from the teacher. Correction is by the student or his/her peers. Mistakes are tolerated.

G

The feelings, needs, situation and relationships of the students are paramount. Students are considered as people first and language learners second. Teachers may utilise a number of approaches.

H

This is theoretically a combination of the positive aspects of all other methods.

Syllabuses integrate functions, structures, lexis and all four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing). Teachers try to balance accuracy with fluency and input with output. The teacher's role and the attitude towards correction vary according to the stage of the lesson. Interaction between students is maximised.

Check your answers on the penultimate page of this unit.

Theories And Approaches

These are only a selection of the various methods and approaches you may encounter. Most stem from the explosion in linguistic and educational research which began in the 1950's and 1960's. Some are strongly associated with individual theorists: for example the Cognitive Code with Noam Chomsky; The Silent Way (Caleb Gallegno); and audiolingualism (Skinner). Unless you intend to study at Diploma or Masters level a detailed knowledge of the history and development of language theory is not essential although you should be aware that there are a number of theories and that some are mutually exclusive.

No theory has, so far, offered a complete solution to the problems of teaching languages or fully explained how we learn a language. Each has exponents and each has been fashionable for a brief period. In the 1960's and 70's a small fortune was spent by state schools and private language colleges on language labs. When the expected results failed to materialise the blame was placed on teachers and poor training. It took more than a decade for the inherent failings of the approach to become accepted. Language labs gradually became obsolete or were used in a different way to that originally intended. In the 1980's video was similarly lauded; the limitations of the medium only becoming apparent once it was widely tested in the classroom.

In the 1990's 'Suggestopedia' has won many advocates and a number of language schools have built their business around this. It is basically an holistic version of the humanist approach but places the learning environment at the forefront. Formal classrooms are dispensed with in favour of comfortable 'language lounges'. Throughout the lesson music or ambient sounds are played to relax the students. The relationship between teacher and student is based on friendship and trust; the pressures and anxieties many students feel in a classroom are reduced to a minimum. Reports suggest that such methods, when combined with skilful teaching, can produce excellent results particularly with shy individuals or small groups. In many situations, however, it is impractical; in large groups or multi-cultural groups for example.

The Royal Society of Arts and Trinity College TEFL courses require their student-teachers to adopt an eclectic approach, showing awareness of (and competence in) the most effective techniques associated with each theory. Practical experience shows that successful EFL teachers are adaptable, flexible and open-minded. What works for one student or one situation may be totally inappropriate for another student or situation.

The situation in private language schools is both diverse and confusing, as one might expect in what is still a largely unregulated, uncoordinated industry. Some schools adhere to a particular theory; others follow the pattern imposed by the chosen textbooks; in some the input of the teacher(s) is paramount. An example of the first type is the Berlitz chain of schools which use the Berlitz method in all of their schools around the world. This is basically a refined version of the direct method and all Berlitz teachers, regardless of their qualifications and experience, have to undergo a period of training in the method before they are allowed to teach in the classroom. Classrooms, usually small and sparse, are fitted with hidden microphones so that staff can eavesdrop on lessons to ensure the 'method' is being strictly followed. The emphasis is on the method rather than the teacher and the scope for innovation or experimentation is practically nonexistent. For a new or inexperienced teacher it can be a gentle way to enter the EFL profession although there is some evidence that former Berlitz teachers perform badly on the RSA and Trinity courses.

Most reputable schools use only the target language to teach that language. In multi-national groups where the students speak different first languages this is the only possible approach. However where the students all speak the same L1 and the teacher also understands this language there may be a temptation to use L1 to explain L2 or give instructions: **DO NOT SUCCUMB TO THIS TEMPTATION!** Although it may seem a convenient short cut it is usually counter-productive. The objective is to get the student to THINK in L2 and to use that language naturally. It is better to spend ten minutes teaching the meaning of a word or phrase using the target language than to use translation. Unless the lesson is taking place in a country where English is the main language, that lesson may be the only opportunity the student has to communicate in English. It should not be wasted. At Norwood English the only theory we positively endorse is that only the target language should be used in the classroom. You may have reservations about this but we hope by the end of the course you will agree with us.

In 1970 a study by Denis Girard asked over 1000 students aged between 12 and 17 “What makes a good language teacher?” The students were then asked to grade the most popular answers from 1–10, with number 1 being the most important and number 10 the least important. The most popular qualities of a good language teacher were as follows:

- Insists on spoken language
- Uses audio-lingual method
- Teaches good pronunciation
- Makes all students participate
- Speaks clearly
- Makes the course interesting
- Shows the same interest in all students
- Makes students work
- Shows great patience
- Speaks good English

Exercise:

What do you think? Grade the above qualities from 1 to 10 with 1 being the most important and 10 the least important. Do not read the next page until you have completed this exercise.

The students in Dr. Girard’s study gave the following answers:

1. Makes the course interesting (most interesting)
2. Teaches good pronunciation
3. Speaks clearly
4. Speaks good English
5. Shows the same interest in all students
6. Makes all students participate
7. Shows great patience
8. Insists on the spoken language
9. Makes students work
10. Uses an audio-lingual method (least interesting)

How do the student’s answers compare with your own? Early in 1997 we asked 12 EFL teachers (each with a minimum of 2 years teaching experience) to take the Girard Test. Their answers were as follows:

1. Insists on the spoken language (most interesting)
2. Makes all students participate
3. Shows the same interest in all students
4. Makes the course interesting
5. Speaks clearly
6. Makes students work
7. Shows great patience
8. Teaches good pronunciation
9. Speaks good English
10. Uses an audio-lingual method (least interesting)

The audio-lingual approach was becoming more scientific and modern in 1970– teachers then may have placed it higher on the list. Students associated it with the dreaded language labs.

With the possible exception of number 10 all of the above are important. Note that the students placed ‘Insists on the spoken language’ at number 8 whilst for teachers it was at number 1. Getting students to speak the language is paramount for effective language learning but students are often reluctant to speak. The reasons are usually because of shyness or the fear of making mistakes. Sometimes there are cultural reasons. In parts of Eastern Asia students often remain silent rather than risk losing face through an ‘incorrect’ answer. The teacher has to gain their trust and convince them that mistakes are natural and a necessary part of the learning process. Conversely in Japan many excellent students will pretend not to understand to avoid standing out from the crowd or appearing to show off.

Making all students participate is a vital part of your classroom management routine. It is much easier for the teacher to direct questions and tasks towards the most able or interested of a group of students. However this approach can lead to a loss of motivation/confidence amongst those who are ignored. Hence the need to show the same interest in all students. You will have favourites but don’t let this affect your judgement or teaching practice.

Making a course interesting would be easy if you had several hours a day to prepare for lessons and had control over class sizes, attendance and the materials you use. In reality teachers in private language schools often have only a few minutes to prepare lessons; class sizes and attendance will probably vary considerably; and you are often forced to use materials (usually a set text book) which is inherently boring and in which you have little or no confidence.



In many foreign (and a lot of British) schools you will have little say about what you teach. Making a course interesting depends mostly on how you teach. Personality is certainly an aspect of this but knowing how best to use the available materials is more important. Always make an effort to get to know the books you have to use and consider different ways in which you might present the same exercise. If the book has teaching notes read them carefully but critically. Always try and relate the material to the students in your class. An exercise which mentions the Beatles and Bob Dylan might be more interesting if you substituted Oasis or Madonna . Students are often happier talking about their own indigenous rock, pop and movie stars.

How aware are you of your own speaking voice? Ask your friends about it. Try and make a tape of yourself speaking naturally. Do you speak clearly? Is every word carefully enunciated? Do you speak quickly or slowly? What about the rhythm of your speech? Few of us are very sensitive to how we sound or make an effort to talk in a particular way. Language students, however, are highly aware of their teacher's voice and delivery. Speak too quickly and they will soon lose interest. The same if your voice is very soft and barely audible. Most teachers find they have to develop a 'classroom voice' for talking to or teaching students. You should aim to speak clearly, slowly (but not so slow as to sound unnatural) and loud enough to be heard by all students (but not so loud as to sound aggressive). This may seem obvious but it is a common complaint from students that teachers speak too quickly or mumble incomprehensibly. In many parts of the world such complaints are sufficient to get you the sack!

Your ability to make students work depends heavily on the type of class or student you are teaching. Students often expect the teacher to do 'the work' whilst they passively absorb what is being taught. Unfortunately for such students languages are not very effectively taught by lecture. Some untrained or inexperienced teachers fall into the trap of increasing their own contribution to a lesson in response to the passivity of their students. Avoid this at all costs. You have to convince your students that they will only be successful language-learners if they actively participate. This is discussed further in Unit One in the section on motivation. If you lack patience; if you find it difficult to tolerate the failings and weaknesses of others; if your expectations are not tempered by reality, forget about teaching EFL! Teaching good pronunciation generally means teaching 'Standard English'. This is the form of British English to which most students aspire. It doesn't mean you have to talk like the Queen or take expensive elocution lessons to rid yourself of your regional accent. You should, however, be aware of standard pronunciation and of your own intonation. Good English is also associated with Standard English although it is the subject of much debate.

"I got the job following an interview in England and when I arrived in Korea I soon realised I knew nothing about the school beyond the pay and length of contract. On my first day at the school I was given a list of classes for the week. I had to teach nine fifty-minute classes a day; they ranged from single students to classes of fifteen. I'd brought a lot of materials with me from England but I was told I had to stick to the text books provided. Students were supposed to move through the different levels of the book series but more than half of them went back to the beginning of the book they were using so you were often teaching the same material to the same students. There was little room for flexibility. The text books were awful— full of references to the USA in the 1970's. The material was excruciatingly boring for both teacher and students. I managed to make my classes more interesting by developing a series of activities and short games which reinforced the material in the books but could be presented in a lively way. It wasn't ideal but the students seemed to enjoy the lessons more and I think they made more progress with the language than they would have done if I'd just taught by the book."

- David taught in Korea for three years.

"After taking a teaching job in Japan I was convinced that my Scottish accent would be a problem. It came as quite a shock to discover that most Japanese people noticed no difference between my accent and that of other teachers in my school. They were from America, England and Australia. The textbooks we used were all American English and we were told not to tell the students by teaching British spelling or pronunciation. When I returned to Scotland, after three years away, friends commented on my Meryl Streep accent!"

- Sheila still teaches in Japan after eight years.

Standard English is generally, and rather loosely, defined as 'the language spoken by the majority of British-educated English speakers'. The debate rages between prescriptive grammarians who treat "Good English" as a grammatical template which is only altered by the addition of new vocabulary, and others who see it as a process, adapting to new situations and generational idiosyncracies. Whatever your own view you should try and avoid 'lazy' or obscure English.

What's a Language Lab?

In a language laboratory students wear headphones and speak into microphones. These are connected to a central console which is controlled by the teacher. The teacher can address the class as a whole or individual students. One aim was to reduce the embarrassment felt by many students speaking a new language as only the teacher could hear their mistakes. Although it had many merits it ignored fundamental aspects of verbal communication such as facial expression and body language. Nowadays many language laboratories are used by students practicing alone with audio tapes.



Recommended Reading

There is no need to buy books for this course. There are thousands of EFL books available and we recommend that you visit a library if possible and look at several. The books below have all been endorsed by numerous practising teachers and are used extensively by Norwood English personnel. Other publications will be recommended later in the course.

General Handbooks

The Practice of English Language Teaching

Jeremy Harmer Longman (1991 or latest edition)

The most useful single book on EFL and a vital resource for anyone on the RSA or Trinity College full-time courses.

Learning Teaching Methodology

David Nunan Phoenix ELT (1991)

A book recommended by several practising teachers; intended for trainee language teachers in the secondary sector but excellent coverage of all areas.

Introduction To English Language Teaching

J.Haycroft Longman (1979)

Still regarded by many teachers as an essential reference.

Reference

Practical English Usage

Michael Swan OUP (1980)

If you only buy one book buy this! Swan provides examples and clarifications on just about every grammar problem you might encounter. It is amazingly simple to use and understand.

A Practical English Grammar

A.J.Thompson & A.V.Martinet OUP (1990/regularly updated)

Similar to the above but takes a different approach and is an excellent companion to Swan.

A Dictionary of Modern English Usage

H.W.Fowler (revised by Ernest Gowers) OUP (1986)

Originally published in the 1920's and something of a curiosity now but the updated editions provide an insight into the development of the Language and prove useful more often than you might expect.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary

Clarendon Press Oxford (latest edition if possible)

Arguably the best dictionary of useful size. Almost worth buying for the appendices alone. The brief history of the English Language included is a classic of brevity and authority.

Specialist

Patterns of Spoken English: An Introduction To English Phonetics

Gerald Knowles Longman (1987)

A good starting point for anyone interested in phonetics. All teachers should look at this at some stage.

Teaching Writing Skills

Teaching Oral English

D. Byrne Longman (1988)

Both books are comprehensive and relevant to classroom teachers.

Communication in The Classroom

edited by K.Johnson & K.Morrow Longman (1981)

Excellent theory and good practical ideas.

Mistakes and Correction

J.Edge Longman (1989)

Points out many flaws in teacher's approach to the subject. If you would like information about books covering other topics [such as audio, video, computers etc.] please ask your tutor or contact Norwood English direct.

Unit One: Preview

Students: Culture/Motivation/ Learning Difficulties

Classroom Management

Adults & Children as Learners

Planning

Presentation; Practice; Production.

Beginning a Lesson: Warm Up Activities

Beginning a Lesson: Presentation

Before studying unit one you might like to ponder the following questions:

- How many reasons can you think of for studying English?
- Does the culture of students impact on the way you should teach a lesson?
- Do all students share the same motivations?
- Should the teacher have to motivate the students as well as teach them?
- Are you likely to experience any disciplinary problems in the classroom?
If so, what?
- How do children differ from adults as learners?
- Are there any particular difficulties experienced by adult learners?
- Should you correct every mistake a student makes?
- Is planning essential to good teaching?

Answers to Exercises Methodologies:

- A. Grammar-translation
- B. Audiolingual
- C. Direct method
- D. Cognitive Code
- E. Communicative Approach
- F. The Silent Way
- G. Humanistic Approach
- H. The Eclectic Approach

Introductory Unit: Assignment

Describe two learning experiences you have had and explain how they have informed your view of both teaching and learning. What part did the teacher play in these experiences?

(Short Essay: 750–1000 words)

When you have completed the assignment for this unit please send it to your tutor by post, fax or e-mail. It will be assessed and returned to you along with the next unit in this series.

Norwood English

Ireland Office

22 The Downs,
Stradbally Road,
Portlaoise, Co.
Laois, Eire.
Tel/Fax: + 353 502 72851
Email: info@norwoodenglish.com

United Kingdom Office

20 Hadley Gardens
Norwood Green
Southall Middlesex
UB2 5SQ
Tel/Fax: 0181 893 6253
E-Mail: NorwoodEng@aol.com

Firefish Linguistics

28B Office A
Murray Street
Singapore 079532
Tel : (65) 225 1744
Fax : (65) 225 1745
E-Mail: info@firefish.com