

Teaching English as a second language

Teaching English as a second language (TESL) refers to teaching English to students whose first language is not English, usually offered in a region where English is the dominant language and natural English language immersion situations are apt to be plentiful. Usually focused on survival language.

The teaching profession has historically used different names for TEFL and TESL; however, the more generic term **teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL)** is increasingly used to describe the profession, it covers both TESL and TEFL as an umbrella term. Both native speakers and non-native speakers successfully train to be English language teachers. In order to teach English as a Second Language to English Language Learners, or ELL's, one must pass a written and oral test in English to demonstrate proficiency.

The TESOL profession made progress during the 1970s and 1980s in achieving desired goals, such as shifting its focus from product-oriented to process-oriented teaching and from a rigid curriculum to a more flexible one.

The use of these various terms has led to confusion about the training options for both prospective students and for employers. Because there is no global standard for the training of English language teacher, it is important to look beyond the actual acronym/title to the components of the training program. Short term certificate programs that do not have an academic affiliation resulting in credits or degrees (such as CELTA or other non-credit programs) can be a good launching pad for beginning positions internationally, but they will generally not provide sufficient training for a career (unless a person already has substantial experience and a degree in a closely related field). People interested in pursuing a career as an English language teacher should invest in credit-bearing programs that result in a university recognized certificate or degree program (MA/TESOL, MA/Applied Linguistics) particularly if one wants to work in higher education. Because of the confusing certification situation, employers now generally look for a certificate that reflects at least 100 hours of instruction in order to determine if the candidate has sufficient preparation to begin teaching English. Institutions with higher standards will require applicants to possess a master's degree for employment.

Teaching techniques

Reading

Literature reading is vital in learners' literacy development. TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) that uses literature aimed at children and teenagers is rising in popularity. Youth-oriented literature offers simpler material ("simplified readers" are produced by major publishers), and often provides a more conversational style than literature for adults. Children's literature in particular sometimes provides subtle cues to pronunciation, through rhyming and other word play. One method for using these books is the multiple-pass technique. The instructor reads the book, pausing often to explain certain words and concepts. On the second pass, the instructor reads the book completely through without stopping. Textbooks contain a variety of literature like poetry, stories, essays, plays etc. through which certain linguistic items are taught.

Reading aloud to students who are learning English as a foreign language is a highly effective strategy to assist them in learning the basic rules and understandings of the process of reading. When teachers read aloud to their students, they simply model fluency and comprehension, while also adding visual support, periodic paraphrasing, and extension. When choosing an appropriate text for the student, both the vocabulary and concepts of the text that may be new to the student need to be considered. To make sure they get definite understanding of the text, engaging the students during reading will assist them with making connections between what is being read and the new vocabulary.

Communicative language teaching

Communicative language teaching (CLT) emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. Despite a number of criticisms, it continues to be popular, particularly in Japan, Taiwan, and Europe. In India CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) has adopted this approach in its affiliated schools.

The task-based language learning approach to CLT has gained ground in recent years. Proponents believe CLT is important for developing and improving speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills, and that it prevents students' merely listening passively to the teacher without interaction. Dogme is a similar communicative approach that encourages teaching without published textbooks, instead focusing on conversational communication among the learners and the teacher.

Blended learning

Blended learning is a combination of multimedia elements (also known as computer-assisted language learning), achieved through a virtual learning environment (VLE) with classroom instruction, a teacher, and peers. Blended learning utilizes technology to provide massive amounts of comprehensible input to its learners through video and other types of multimedia, without a teacher present.

VLEs have been a major growth point in the English Language Teaching (ELT) industry over the last five years. There are two types:

- Externally hosted platforms that a school or institution exports content to (e.g., the proprietary Web Course Tools, or the open source Moodle)
- Content-supplied, course-managed learning platforms (e.g. the *Macmillan English Campus*)

The former provides pre-designed structures and tools, while the latter supports course-building by the language school—teachers can **blend** existing courses with games, activities, listening exercises, and grammar reference units contained online. This supports classroom, self-study or remote practice (for example in an internet café).

Online classroom

Advances in technology have made it possible to get a TEFL qualification online. Students can enroll in online classes that are accredited by organizations such as the British Council or Cambridge ESOL. There is no single overarching accreditation body for TEFL; however, private for-profit companies have been known to invent accreditation affiliates and use them to cheat the customer.^[10]

Study materials are divided into modules that students are tested on. Support is handled by tutors, who can be reached via email. After successfully finishing the last module, the student is granted a certificate that comes in digital form or can be shipped to the student's address. Getting such a certificate can be beneficial as many employers require a TEFL certificate.

Qualifications for TEFL teachers

Qualification requirements vary considerably from country to country and among employers within the same country. In many institutions it is possible to teach without a degree or teaching certificate. Some institutions will consider it necessary to be a native speaker with an MA TESOL. A university degree in English language and literature can also be of value, as indeed can any specialist

degree. Other institutions consider a proof of English proficiency, a University degree and a basic teaching qualification to be more than sufficient. However, the level of academic qualification need not be the most important qualification, as many schools will be more interested in one's interpersonal skills. For trainers wishing to enter the academic field, publications can be as important as qualifications, especially if they relate to English use in the field. Where there is a high demand for teachers and no statutory requirements, employers may accept otherwise unqualified candidates. Each country is different, and acceptance depends on demand for English teachers and the teacher's previous teaching and life experiences.^[11]

Private language schools are likely to require at least a certificate based on successful completion of a course consisting of a minimum of 100 hours. Major programs like EPIK will offer a higher salary to teachers who have completed any TEFL Course, online or otherwise, so long as the program meets the minimum 100-hour requirement.^[12] Internet-based TEFL courses are generally accepted worldwide, and particularly in Asia, where the largest job markets exist in China, Korea, Taiwan and Japan.^[13] For China the minimum TEFL requirement is 120 hours.

In Asia there has also been a tendency to hire TEFL teachers on superficial criteria, such as race (with Caucasians preferred) on the assumption that an English teacher or native English speaker should be 'white', this is proven especially true in Thailand, a big employer of TEFL teachers, with adverts frequently calling explicitly for native-English speakers. Partly this is driven by commercial expectations in the private sector, where parents feel that paying extra fees for TEFL teacher should warrant an American or British TEFL teacher, the schools will not risk losing students over this.

Age/gender requirements might also be encountered. In some countries outside Europe and America, for example the Middle East, schools might hire men over women or vice versa. And they might hire only teachers in a certain age range; usually between 20 and 40 years of age. In China, age requirements can differ across the country due to provincial government regulations. Anyone under 19 may be able to teach TEFL, but usually only in a volunteer situation, such as a refugee camp.