

Final conclusion - tefl course

Profession, Teacher



Prior to starting the Trinity TEFL course, I had little teaching experience in a classroom environment and only in my own language. I had little knowledge of the teaching techniques and methodology used to teach a foreign language and having to put theory into practice almost from day one seemed quite daunting. From one lesson to another I learnt different type of technique used in the classroom: using flashcards, elicit vocabulary, concept checking throughout, encouraging pair work and group work, drilling and error corrections using finger techniques, peer correction and delayed error correction. The board work had to be clear and well planned. The staging of the lesson should be good to allow smooth transition from one task to another and the pace is snappy. Make sure that whole class engaged from the start and every student participated equally. I really enjoyed observing the lessons and felt it had given me an insight on how a good lesson should be prepared and staged using ELT techniques and methodology. From my personal experienced during the course I understood how important to grade your language, give clear instructions with ICQs — make student understand you and enjoy their lesson. Importance of monitoring, whole class feedback and error correction. I learnt to monitor students discreetly during their practice and production tasks and not interfere in their communications with each other. I learnt different techniques to correct students' errors and keep the atmosphere in the class relaxed and engaging. It was very student centred and the class were engaged in conversation throughout. The aim of the most of the lessons was effectively achieved. Having taught an elementary group for the past two weeks, I noticed a contrast of language knowledge and abilities within the class. The course book for this level is

good from the trainee teacher's perspective as it is graded, and the teacher's book has a lot of information and ideas. However, while it is a good syllabus to follow, it is more PPP focused and from what I have learned, a combination of PPP and TTT can sometimes be a good approach when teaching mixed levels. While PPP is very structured it is also very teacher centred. TTT is more student-centred and allows them more autonomy and is therefore ideal for intermediate level and higher. I understood how important a good rapport between teacher and students during the lesson. How motivating and relaxing student can be to meet new lexis and challenges of leaning techniques. It is very important to reduce Teacher Talking Time and let students to speak. 4. Design and planning of lessons (e. g. ideas for content and materials, staging and method — PPP etc.) Since starting the course, I have learned that there are many aspects to be considered before applying a particular theory to teaching a lesson whether it is a structure or a skill. While one method of teaching may be appropriate for beginner or elementary levels, it may not work so well for upper intermediate e. g. the advantages and disadvantages of the PPP approach versus the TTT (Test-Teach-Test) approach. From my own experience of teaching I have found that the use of flash cards and realia is a good method to introduce and teach new vocabulary. I have learned that lesson preparation and staging is very important. In my lesson I used realia to introduce the students to the theme of the lesson and also for concept checking vocabulary. I worked on staging the lesson effectively and focused on parts of speech, stress, pronunciation and phonemics. I tried to lead into the vocabulary as naturally as possible. By practising the techniques and methodology I had been

taught, the main and sub-aims of the lesson were achieved. I am now realising that perhaps being “ thrown in at the deep end” had its advantages and I realised that I was already putting theory into practice. I have benefited from peer observation: It was a very effective method of watching their work. I have observed each of them practise many of the techniques that we have been taught. Through our own strengths and weaknesses we have learned from each other.

5. Aims achievement (e. g. achieving main aims, reasons for achieving them or not, lessons learnt for future) From my own observations of the experienced teachers at St George International, my peers and my own experiences as a trainee, I have learned a lot more than I could have imagined about teaching as a foreign language in such a short space of time. I feel that this “ hands on” experience has been an integral part of the course. Not only has it played an invaluable part in my personal development but also it has given me a clearer understanding of the methodologies of teaching - something I could not have learned from a textbook based course alone. Gradually from lesson to lesson I achieved my main objectives — to become a good teacher. I feel more confident and controlled in the class, I know what to do and how to make lesson enjoyable and productive for the students. For me, this is the beginning of my personal and professional development as a teacher. I hope to build on the foundations that St George International has given me and my future plan is to continue to progress through my own assessment of my strengths and weaknesses and continue to learn from my peers, my superiors and my students.

6. Self-awareness of teaching strengths and weaknesses (e. g. others’ views vs. own impression, improvement during course, own

developing self awareness) From my own observations, those of my peers and my course Tutor, my strengths as a trainee teacher are good interpersonal skills, my ability to elicit information from the students using the techniques I have been taught, my planning and organisational skills, presenting materials that are appropriate and have a professional appearance and my perception of the students' needs. My weaknesses are timing and staging of my lessons, ensuring that I concentrate on the whole class, clearer instruction, effective concept checking and grading my language. I hope to improve on these points, and more, by focusing on them during my teaching practice and ensuring that these issues are addressed when preparing my lesson plan. I am confident that this will diminish as I gain more experience of putting into practice what I have learned.