

# TEFL International Virtual TESOL Course

## TESOL Core Diploma Course

### Course Syllabus

Tutor: Dave Hopkins and TEFL International staff

Course Schedule: One year duration

Course Description: Credit: 3.

### I. The Course

This course aims to answer three questions:

1. What do we know about how languages are learned?
2. What is language and how can we describe it?
3. Why do we do things we do in the classroom?

This course will give the student the theoretical background needed to be an effective classroom teacher, and, to go beyond classroom teaching into areas such as teacher training, mentoring teachers, course design and materials development. This will require research and study in three areas:

- Language acquisition. How is language acquired and what do we know about the processes involved
- Language. The phonological, morphological and syntactical features of language are explored in terms of how we describe them
- Methodology. The recent history of language teaching methodology, and the current practices of communicative language teaching are explored

The course assumes that the student has an academic background adequate to:

- do independent research
- read and focus on key ideas and details
- write papers in an academically expository style
- can accept feedback and critical analysis
- understand the basics of academic research applied to a classroom setting

This is no small task and not to be undertaken lightly. The course is offered at the graduate level because that makes the assumptions above viable. It is tempting in such a course to go on to other areas such as the specifics of teacher training, curriculum development, materials development and course supervision. This will not be done. The "core" is:

- The learning - language acquisition
- The language - phonology, morphology and syntax
- The teaching - methodology, approaches and techniques

A teacher with this "core" of knowledge will be able to learn the additional specifics of teacher training, curriculum development and supervision through experience, continued reading and critical reflection.

### II. The Process

The course is a guided tutorial, but more important, it is a student centered, research learning experience. The student will be required to do the research from texts, the web and the classroom. What the student discovers in these explorations comprises the content of the course. The guidelines for this exploration are very clearly outlined below. To put it succinctly, the student must take responsibility for her or his own learning. The advantages of this approach are solidly grounded in the traditions of teaching - i.e. it is abundantly clear that students learn best when they are discovering knowledge and making it their own. The references here include Budhah, Socrates, John Dewey, Montessori, Carl Rogers, Cabel Gatteno, Charles Curran, Ivan Illyich and others. My favorites are Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Teacher, and Paulo Freire, Educacao Como a Practica da Liberdade. Thus, the role of the tutor or mentor becomes to ask the questions, and guide the mental experiments/explorations of the learner. The learner's role is to explore and make hypothesis based upon empirical evidence. At this point, the mentor may support or reject the hypothesis, not so much on the basis of its content, but the tutor's assessment of the process by which the learner made her/his conclusions.

### III. Conceptual Framework

## TEFL International Virtual TESOL Course

The mindset required for this source is critical, professional and academic. It is critical in that it requires the student to look critically on their own beliefs regarding teaching, and, be open to modifying these beliefs in the light of research. It is professional in that the work to be produced must be of a quality that can be published. It is academic in that it follows the norms of current academic practices in terms of referencing (footnotes and bibliography); originality (all ideas must be properly referenced and supported); and, style (norms of rhetorical style consistent with academic writing). The student must accept both the responsibilities and the risks of the teacher-researcher. That is to say, the burden of adding something new to what is already known about language teaching, and, the limitations of prejudicing our findings with our own a priori beliefs.

### IV. Course Outline. TESOL Diploma projects you must complete.

1. Language acquisition overview
  - a) 8-15 pages in length
  - b) academic style, referencing (footnoting), and bibliography covers
  - c) the basics of first language acquisition,
  - d) the last 50 years of second language acquisition theory
  - e) the current 'state of the art'
  - f) takes one to two months
2. Language acquisition classroom research project
  - a) a topic of interest to be studied through research in the classroom
  - b) see Donald Freeman, Doing Teacher Research for procedure
  - c) analysis of the results
  - d) a n 8-15 page report on the project, analysis and results
  - e) takes one to two months
3. Language: Phonology, Morphology and Syntax
  - a) an academic research paper 8-15 pages
  - b) covers the essential points of the three ways of looking at language
  - c) should touch upon minimalist syntax, semantics and the essential points of phonology
    1. phonemics
    2. intonation and stress
    3. points of articulation
    4. connected speech
  - b) takes one to two months to complete
4. In Depth Language Paper
  - a) intensive look at some aspect of phonology, morphology or syntax that has interested you in your initial study
  - b) more detailed research in that area
  - c) academic paper 8-15 pages long
  - d) takes one to two months to complete
5. Methodology Overview
  - a) covers
    - i. recent history of methodology in language teaching
    - ii. the so called "designer" methods after Audio Lingual
    - iii. the connections with theory at the time
    - iv. the current state of "communicative language teaching" and what that means in terms of,
      - i) previous methods and approaches
      - ii) the underlying theories
6. Methodology: Classroom Research
  - a) a topic of research identified during your teaching - i.e. something that you would like to 'test' under controlled circumstances, but not something you are 'trying to prove. More on this when we get there.
  - b) a controlled study in the classroom

TEFL International Virtual TESOL Course

- c) see Freeman, Doing Classroom Research for guidelines and examples
- d) analysis of results obtained
- e) an 8-15 page paper reporting on the results and your interpretation of the results
- f) takes at least two months to complete

V. Measurable Course Learning Objectives. By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Present a paper which describes at the introductory level the current theories of language acquisition.
2. Conduct classroom research to explore an aspect of learning, and present finding in a formal report.
3. Write an expository academic paper showing an understanding of phonology, morphology and syntax.
4. Conduct further research to explore some feature of language, and present the findings in a paper.
5. Present an overview of the recent history of language teaching methodology and the current state of communicative language teaching.
6. Conduct classroom research on some aspect of teaching and present in a formal report.
7. Maintain a "learners journal" on google docs updated at least every two weeks to show:
  - a) What they are learning?
  - b) How they are learning?
  - c) How does the learning relate to their Diploma projects

VI. Learning Processes – the student will

Objective	Activities	Products
Present a paper which describes at the introductory level the current theories of language acquisition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read required texts</li> <li>• do further research in texts or on the web</li> <li>• exchange ideas and questions with tutor</li> <li>• draft paper in a progressive manner on google docs</li> <li>• make first submissions for comments.</li> <li>• rewrite based on tutor comments</li> <li>• identify and topic for in class research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of current theories of language acquisition covering both L1 and SLA.</li> <li>• The paper will be 8-15 pages in length...</li> <li>• with supporting evidence for the ideas presented in terms of..</li> <li>• footnoting and bibliography...</li> <li>• in an academically acceptable style ...</li> <li>• with clear written expression.</li> </ul>

TEFL International Virtual TESOL Course

<p>Conduct classroom research to explore an aspect of learning, and present finding in a formal report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies the topic for research carefully</li> <li>• explains why this research is useful or meaningful</li> <li>• set the parameters of the classroom study in terms of subjects, time frames and output</li> <li>• consider the impact of the "researcher" on the research</li> <li>• conduct the research in a professionally prescribed manner (see Freeman)</li> <li>• analyze results objectively</li> <li>• set out conclusions and questions for further study</li> </ul>	<p>A classroom research project report that states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why the research is being done. Of what importance is it to the development of knowledge about language acquisition</li> <li>• What is to be researched. A careful definition of the topic of research that avoids ambiguities and overlap with other areas of study</li> <li>• How the research is to be conducted, including             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parameters of the study</li> <li>• time frames</li> <li>• groups</li> <li>• data collection</li> <li>• controls</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How the data is to be analyzed - i.e. what criteria will be used to assure the validity of the data and conclusions.</li> <li>• What conclusions there are, and, what further questions need to be researched</li> </ul>
<p>Write an expository academic paper showing an understanding of phonology, morphology and syntax.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read at least one graduate level introductory linguistics textbook (Fromkin, Radford et al)</li> <li>• read clarifying materials in books or from web sources to clarify and balance the basic reading.</li> <li>• consult with tutor as need to clarify ideas and questions</li> <li>• write an overview of these aspects of language to show a level of understanding consistent with graduate level work.</li> </ul>	<p>An academic essay to show the students understanding of the fields of phonology, morphology and syntax at the introductory graduate study level. This essay should explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the basics of phonological description</li> <li>• the basics of morphology</li> <li>• semantics with examples of how <i>meaning</i> impacts on other aspects of language</li> <li>• the basics of <i>minimalist syntax</i></li> </ul> <p>There is some latitude here for the weighting of each of these areas, and, it is up to the students to demonstrate that they can define the <i>basics</i>.</p>

TEFL International Virtual TESOL Course

<p>Conduct further research to explore some feature of language, and present the findings in a paper.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a feature of language for further exploration</li> <li>• find sources for further research on this feature</li> <li>• explain why this feature is worth studying</li> <li>• conduct the research</li> <li>• consult with tutor as needed</li> <li>• write a draft for consideration by tutor</li> <li>• submit final copy including suggestions from tutor</li> </ul>	<p>An academic research essay to explicate a feature of language that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clearly identifies the feature and examples</li> <li>• explains why the research is being conducted</li> <li>• reports on the research and what was discovered</li> <li>• is 8-15 pages in length</li> <li>• is in an academic rhetorical style with proper footnoting and bibliography.</li> </ul>
<p>Present an overview of the recent history of language teaching methodology and the current state of communicative language teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read the books assigned and conduct further research as needed</li> <li>• consult with tutor</li> <li>• consider methodology in terms of:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thought in action</li> <li>• comprehensible links</li> <li>• the "believing game"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• see Larsen-Freeman re the above</li> <li>• write a paper to show an understanding of methodology and the current state of communicative language teaching</li> </ul>	<p>An academic essay that provides an overview of "method" and the current state of communicative language teaching. This should include answering the questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what is in a method that makes it a method?</li> <li>• if "...we know that students don't learn because we teach..." (Larsen-Freeman) then what is the role of method in the classroom?</li> <li>• what are the origins of the communicative language teaching approach, and why don't we call it a "method?"</li> </ul>

TEFL International Virtual TESOL Course

<p>Conduct classroom research on some aspect of teaching and present in a formal report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a teaching activity to be tested in the classroom</li> <li>• define why it is significant to research this question</li> <li>• set up the ways and means to collect classroom data</li> <li>• define the time frames</li> <li>• assure "controls" to avoid ambiguity</li> <li>• collect the data</li> <li>• analyze the data</li> <li>• report out results</li> </ul>	<p>An academic paper that reports out the results of the research that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ defines the point to be researched</li> <li>▪ gives a rationale for the research</li> <li>▪ sets out the parameters for the classroom study</li> <li>▪ sets controls</li> <li>▪ reports the "raw" data"</li> <li>▪ interprets the results</li> <li>▪ poses questions for further research</li> </ul>
<p>Maintain a "learners journal" on google docs updated at least every two weeks to show:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What they are learning?</li> <li>2. How they are learning?</li> <li>3. how does the learning relate to their Diploma projects</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Set up a "learner's journal" google docs</li> <li>▪ Make entries into the journal regularly, at least every two weeks, to show             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is being learned</li> <li>○ How?</li> <li>○ And what questions have come out of your research?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Post for comment by tutor</li> </ul>	<p>The learner's journal will be an important part of the dialogue between the tutor and the students. It will show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What the student is learning</li> <li>▪ How</li> <li>▪ What questions need to be addressed</li> </ul> <p>The will be assessed as an indication of the work that the students is doing, and the learning progress.</p>

VII. Required Textbooks: Core Reading Assignments -

Language Acquisition

- The Language Instinct, Stephen Pinker
- Second Language Acquisition, Gass & Selinker

Language

- Linguistics: An Introduction, Radford, Atkinson et al, CUP
- \_\_\_\_\_, Fromkin

Methodology

- Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching, Diane Larsen-Freeman, Oxford
- Practical English Language Teaching, David Nunan, Longman's

Classroom Research

- Doing Teacher Research, Donald Freeman, Heinle & Heinle

It is required that the student supplement the above with further explorations and reading of their own from recognized texts in the field, or from the web.

It is important to consult the tutor in this regard as the onus of research has changed with the explosion of information available on the web. It is no longer the task to find information, but to select what information is reliable and represents professional sources. For example, the Wikipedia and Bill Bryson's delightful book, Mother Tongue do not

## TEFL International Virtual TESOL Course

represent currently acceptable academic resources.

### VIII. Course Outline:

The following is a tentative course outline. The lecturer may revise the outline to conform to the background, knowledge, and interests of the students.

Month	Topics	Activities	Assignment
1	Language acquisition (LA) overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading texts</li> <li>• further research</li> <li>• learner's journal</li> <li>• consultation with tutor</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. learner's journal</li> <li>2. draft of LA paper</li> </ol>
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learner's journal</li> <li>• submission of draft</li> <li>• rewriting and final submission</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. final submission of LA overview</li> </ol>
3	Language acquisition classroom research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• defining research topics</li> <li>• read Freeman <i>Doing Teacher Research</i></li> <li>• consultation with tutor</li> <li>• learner's journal</li> <li>• conduct LA classroom research</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. learner's journal</li> <li>2. conduct LA classroom research</li> </ol>
4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collect LA classroom research data</li> <li>• analyze results</li> <li>• consult with tutor</li> <li>• learner's journal</li> <li>• submit LA classroom research report</li> <li>• make revisions as needed</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. finalize LA classroom research project</li> <li>2. submit LA classroom research report</li> <li>3. make revisions</li> <li>4. learner's journal</li> </ol>
5	Research in Language: Phonology, morphology and Syntax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read assigned texts</li> <li>• consult with tutor</li> <li>• explore further resources</li> <li>• draft overview on Language</li> <li>• learner's journal</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. readings</li> <li>2. draft of Language paper</li> <li>3. learner's journal</li> </ol>
6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finalize submission of Language paper</li> <li>• consultations</li> <li>• learner's journal</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. submission and revisions of Language paper</li> <li>2. learner's journal</li> </ol>
7	In Depth Language Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• define a topics for further research</li> <li>• identify resources</li> <li>• explore the topic</li> <li>• consult with tutor</li> <li>• compile learner's journal</li> <li>• draft submission</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. draft of in dept Language research study</li> <li>2. learner's journal and consultations</li> </ol>
8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• further research</li> <li>• consultations</li> <li>• learner's journal;</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. final revisions and copy of in depth language paper</li> </ol>

TEFL International Virtual TESOL Course

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• submission of final copy of in depth language study</li> </ul>	2. learner's journal and consultations
9	Methodology overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• definition of terms</li> <li>• reading assigned text</li> <li>• further research</li> <li>• consultations and journal</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. complete notes on methodology</li> <li>2. begin draft</li> <li>3. consultations and journal</li> </ol>
10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finalize and revise Method paper</li> <li>• further research</li> <li>• consultations and journal</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. final revision and submission of Methodology overview</li> <li>2. consultations and journal</li> </ol>
11	Methodology classroom research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying topic</li> <li>• consultations</li> <li>• setting up classroom study</li> <li>• collection of data</li> <li>• learner's journal</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. setting up classroom project</li> <li>2. collection of data</li> <li>3. sorting of results</li> <li>4. consultations and journal</li> </ol>
12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analysis of research results</li> <li>• consultations</li> <li>• organizing draft of report</li> <li>• learner's journal</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. final revisions and consultations on Methods classroom project</li> <li>2. submission of final draft</li> <li>3. learner's journal</li> </ol>

IX. Assessment of Assignments:

Evaluation Competencies

TEFL International Virtual TESOL Course

DESCRIPTION		SIGNIFICANCE		
<p>The assignments will be of two types – academic papers and an ongoing learner’s journal. There will be six academic papers. All must meet the standards of academic expression, referencing and originality.</p>		<p>These are the products upon which the student’s performance will be measured. The grading will be weighted at 12% on each of the six papers, and 18% on the learner’s journal and exchanges with the tutor.</p>		
STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shows adequate research to cover the minimal requirements</li> <li>▪ Expression is acceptable</li> <li>▪ Footnoting and bibliography are present if not complete</li> <li>▪ Shows academic competence at minimal levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Content of research is above the basics</li> <li>▪ Expression is fairly good</li> <li>▪ Most footnoting and bibliography better than acceptable</li> <li>▪ Above minimal academic standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clearly above average research demonstrated</li> <li>▪ Quality if written expression is uniformly good</li> <li>▪ Footnoting and bibliography is complete</li> <li>▪ Shows progress in academic knowledge and skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The quality and quantity of the research is well above the norm and shows careful study</li> <li>▪ Written expression is concise, cohesive and always comprehensible</li> <li>▪ Extra research is indicated in footnoting and bibliography</li> <li>▪ Academic knowledge and skills are clearly at a higher level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exceptional quality of research and understanding of content</li> <li>▪ Written expression is superior in all respects</li> <li>▪ Research goes beyond what would be expected at this level</li> <li>▪ Academic skills and knowledge are exceptional</li> </ul>
DEFICIENCIES		STRENGTHS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inadequate research shown</li> <li>■ Poor understanding of the topics being explored</li> <li>■ Lack of understanding of the purpose of research</li> <li>■ Poor written expression in terms of sentence, paragraphing and overall written organization</li> <li>■ Little evidence that the student is learning or open to the learning experience</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Extensive research demonstrated</li> <li>■ Clear understanding of the topics in question</li> <li>■ Comprehensive and comprehensible expression in transparent language</li> <li>■ Fluency with the norms of referencing</li> <li>■ Obvious development of academic skills and knowledge</li> </ul>		

X. Grading Scale:

## TEFL International Virtual TESOL Course

Grade	Value	Comment
A	5	Excellent
B+	4	Very Good
B	3	Good
C+	2	Above Average
C	1	Average
F	0	Fail

### XI. Other Course Policies:

1. It is expected that the student will complete the assignments in one year from the date of commencement of study.
2. Extensions may be granted at the discretion of the tutor, but will require a fee.
3. Grades are final and will be recorded on course transcripts.

### XII. Course Evaluation

1. Questionnaire. The students will be asked to complete an online questionnaire at the end of the course
2. Journals. Both the quality and the quantity of the journal entries will be considered. If the course is successful, the journals should show:
  - a. Active participation by both the tutor and the student.
  - b. Regular entries
  - c. An expectable degree of knowledge of the subject areas
  - d. Critical questions
3. Blog interviews with students:
  - a) What is the best thing about the course?
  - b) What need the most improvement?
  - c) How would you characterize the course in a few words?
  - d) Would you recommend the course to others? Why?
  - e) Are you willing to be quoted from this interview?
4. The "publish ability" of the student papers.