

ADE/B.Ed. (Hons) Elementary
Syllabus
Teaching English
Semester 4

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Technical Support: Education Development Centre (EDC); Teachers College, Columbia University

Syllabus: Teaching English

YEAR/SEMESTER: Year 2/Semester 4

CREDITS: 3 credits

PRE-REQUISITES: successful completion of courses in semesters 1-3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This three-credit course has been designed to enable prospective teachers to teach English using an interactive communicative approach to students aged 6 to 13. It will be taught over 16 weeks with three face-to-face sessions per week, making a total of 48 sessions. The course aims to be comprehensive in its coverage and depth so that, on its completion, participants will have gained both a theoretical understanding of the basic principles of Second Language Acquisition and the practical knowledge of how to apply these principles effectively in the language classroom. The course focuses on ways of teaching young learners the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing to enable them to reach a basic level of communicative competence in both spoken and written English. In addition to learning how to teach and integrate the four skills in an interactive, learner-centered manner, participants will gain an understanding of how grammar awareness raising and vocabulary acquisition can be incorporated into a communicative teaching approach. Finally, student teachers will learn how to design and develop their own teaching materials and activities, and how to assess and test their students' language proficiency and progress.

COURSE OUTCOMES

On completing the course, student teachers are expected to:

- a. have gained a basic understanding of how second/foreign languages are acquired and possess a working knowledge of the following methods/approaches to Second Language Acquisition: grammar-translation, audio-lingualism, the natural approach, communicative language teaching.
- b. be able to teach the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing to young learners using an interactive communicative approach.
- c. be able to design suitable teaching materials which focus on helping learners acquire a basic level of communicative competence.
- d. be able to assess their students' language performance and progress using their own self-designed assessment procedures.
- e. know how to help learners develop basic grammatical competence and vocabulary knowledge in English using a learner-centered communicative teaching approach.
- f. be aware of the differences between teaching and testing when they are designing their own classroom materials and activities.

LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES

The communicative approach to language learning and teaching (CLT) has as its goal the acquisition of communicative competence by second language learners, and proposes a communicative syllabus and methodology as the way to achieve this goal. Since its inception in the 1980s, CLT has continued to evolve and develop, and current communicative language teaching theory and practice now draw on a number of different educational traditions and methods. As a result of this blend of teaching practices, CLT today refers not to a strict methodology but to a set of generally agreed principles that can be applied in various ways depending upon the cultural context, the level and age of the learners, and the proposed learning outcomes. This course, *Teaching English*, aims to equip prospective teachers with the effective methods and strategies they can use to help their students attain a basic level of communicative competence in English. Some traditional methods such as jazz chants and grammar consciousness-raising will be introduced to the participants as well as more authentic CLT-based methods such as task-based learning and problem solving. By the end of the course, student teachers should be in a position to select the methods, strategies and techniques which are most relevant and appropriate for teaching their students to communicate successfully in speech and writing.

SEMESTER OUTLINE FOR THE COURSE (6 units / 16 weeks)

Unit One: Introduction to Second Language Acquisition (2 weeks / 6 hours)

This unit will cover the first six sessions (two weeks) of the course. The objective is to give the course participants the background they will need for understanding how human beings acquire languages and the most influential ESL teaching methods and approaches that have been used in recent years.

Week One

Week 1	• Introduction to the Course <i>Teaching English</i> • Introduction to Unit One and Initial Activity: Exploring course participants' views of how languages are learned. • What do people need to know to speak a foreign language well? • Four influential ESL approaches • The Grammar-Translation method and its limitations • Behaviourism and the Audio-Lingual Method • The Natural Approach
Week 2	• The Interactionist Approach • Practical teaching activities using the Interactionist Approach • Criticism of the Interactionist Approach • A quiz to review the four approaches to SLA • Implications of the Post-Methods Era • Factors Affecting Second Language Learning: Investigating learner differences and learning styles • What is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)?

Unit Two: Receptive Skills (Listening & Reading) (4 weeks / 12 hours)

Listening

The listening component of this unit will show the course participants ways of helping young learners to improve their listening skills by offering them a combination of extensive and intensive learning material. This component will also outline the different types of listening activities that have been used in the communicative classroom (including pre-, mid- and post-listening activities). In addition, it will highlight some of the problems learners face in real-life listening and suggest ways of overcoming these problems.

Reading

The reading component of this unit will begin by making the course participants more aware of what is involved in the reading process in the beginning stages (e.g. perceiving and decoding letters in order to read words, gathering meaning from the words in a written text, etc.). It will then go on to examine how teachers can help learners to develop their reading skills so that they are able to deal with more complex texts and become efficient readers who get genuine pleasure out of reading.

Week 3 Listening	• What are listening skills? • Listening as a skill: some listening theories • How do children learn to listen? • Some suggestions for classroom listening • What does real-life listening involve? • Extensive and Intensive Listening
Week 4 Listening	• Techniques and Activities for Teaching Listening Skills communicatively in the classroom • Pre-Listening, While-Listening, and Post-Listening activities • Designing effective listening materials and activities for the language classroom • Practical microteaching of listening skills in the classroom
Week 5 Reading	• What is reading? • What is the purpose of reading inside and outside the classroom? • The power of reading • Reading comprehension skills • Some suggestions for reading activities • Factors affecting learning to read in a second language • The role of the teacher in extensive and intensive reading
Week 6 Reading	• Techniques and activities for teaching reading communicatively • Pre-Reading, While-Reading, and Post-Reading activities • Designing and developing effective reading activities for the language classroom • Practical microteaching of reading skills in the classroom

Unit Three: Productive Skills - Speaking and Writing (4 weeks / 12 hours)

Speaking

The aim of this component of the unit is to present student teachers with a principled approach to the teaching of speaking skills so that their students can develop a basic level of communicative competence in English. The unit outlines different types of tasks and activities that can be used by the teacher to help young learners develop fluency and accuracy in their speech.

Writing

This component of the unit will examine some of the approaches to writing that have been used in ESL teaching (controlled writing, guided writing, genre-based writing, the product approach, the process approach) and outline practical activities and tasks that can be used to help young learners develop their writing skills.

Week 7 Speaking	• What are Speaking Skills? • Helping learners to improve their pronunciation through the use of simple exercises and tasks • How to introduce learners to the sound system of English – Use of varied drills • Ways of helping learners to improve their pronunciation through practical classroom exercises (jazz chants, songs, rhymes, etc.) • Teaching Basic Communication Strategies – relating functions to appropriate language forms
Week 8 Speaking	• Experiencing, Designing and Evaluating Speaking Activities for the Communicative Language Classroom I ○ Using songs to encourage speaking ○ Asking and Answering simple questions ○ A discussion game ‘Shipwrecked’ • Experiencing, Designing and Evaluating Speaking Activities for the Communicative Language Classroom II ○ Using pictures in a speaking exercise ○ Using a story for acting and developing speaking • Assessing CLT activities – a questionnaire • Practical microteaching of speaking skills in the classroom and evaluation
Week 9 Writing	• Key concepts in teaching second language writing : controlled writing, guided writing, genre-based writing, the product approach, the process approach • Types of writing tasks that have been used effectively in Communicative Language Teaching • Practical CLT Writing activities such as describing a view, writing about a personal experience, writing a dialogue between two friends, etc.

Week 10 Writing	• How to help students by giving them language scaffolding • Giving useful feedback to learners on their writing. • Designing writing materials and activities for the language classroom • Practical microteaching of writing skills by groups in the classroom and evaluation of the presentations
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Unit Four: Teaching Grammar Communicatively (2 weeks / 6 hours)

This unit is intended to show course participants how they can teach grammar in a creative, entertaining and communicative manner to help learners improve both their fluency and accuracy in speech and writing. It begins by reviewing some basic grammatical structures in English (such as subject-verb agreement, formation of questions and negatives, etc.) so that student teachers have a clear understanding of how to form and use these structures accurately themselves before they go on to teach this basic grammar to their young students. The unit then suggests ways of presenting grammar in a fun, enjoyable and meaningful way to children.

Week 11	• A review of basic concepts in grammar: tense, subject-verb agreement, formation of interrogative and negative verb forms, SVO word order, simple/compound/complex sentences. • Student teachers work through practical exercises and activities in the above areas to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the appropriate grammatical forms required for the structures outlined above. The course facilitator gives student teachers some tips on how to edit their work for errors. • The place of grammar teaching in the second language acquisition process; evaluating different approaches to grammar teaching taken by course book writers
Week Twelve	• What is a communicative approach to teaching grammar? • Teaching techniques and activities to support communicative-based grammar learning • Designing and evaluating communicative grammar materials for the language classroom • Preparation by student teachers of their own activities for teaching grammar • Micro-teaching by student teachers in groups of the activities they have prepared and evaluation of these activities by the class.

Unit Five: Teaching Vocabulary Effectively (2 weeks / 6 hours)

One aim of this unit is to show the course participants how vocabulary can be divided into function words vs. lexical words, and high frequency words vs. low frequency words. The main focus of the unit, however, is to give student teachers some practical ideas for designing their own activities and tasks for vocabulary teaching/learning.

Week 13	• Function words vs. lexical words • High frequency vs. low frequency words • Discussion of which English words young learners will need to know to be able to speak and write at a basic level. How should these items be presented to the learners? • Student teachers do web searches to choose 50 words they would like to teach to their students. Discussion in class on how and why the 50 words were selected. • Making vocabulary a useful part of a language course – when and how should vocabulary be taught to English learners?
Week 14	• Practical activities for teaching and reviewing vocabulary • Evaluating vocabulary activities • Student teachers prepare 15-minute vocabulary teaching activities in groups • Micro-teaching by the student teachers in groups of the activities prepared in the previous session

Unit Six: Assessing Language Performance (2 weeks / 6 hours)

This unit introduces the participants to some key concepts in assessment theory and to some practical ways of testing the language skills of young learners. It also outlines the kinds of tests the prospective teachers can develop themselves in order to measure how successfully their course learning objectives have been achieved.

Week 15	• Some basic principles and key concepts in assessment • Basic principles for assessing children's language learning • Why do we test students? • Tips and special considerations for Testing Young Learners • Conflicts between classroom learning and classroom testing and ways of reducing these conflicts • Ways of Marking Language Tests and Giving Feedback • Designing Language Tests for Young Learners
Week 16	• Samples of test types that can be used to test young learners • In groups, student teachers prepare their own materials for testing one of the four skills for a 15-minute presentation • Micro-teaching in groups and evaluation of the testing materials by the class

SUGGESTED REFERENCES

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COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

Course participants will be required to submit one short assignment and take a short quiz after completing each unit of the course. Details of these assignments and tests will be shared by the course instructor. It is suggested that course work count for at least 50% of the final grade. In addition to course work, there will be mid and end-of-semester examinations.