

Study Skills for the Trinity Certificate in TESOL

Trinity TESOL Study Resource no 1 : December 2007



The **CertTESOL** course is an intense and rewarding learning experience leading to an international qualification.

You may still be thinking about whether to follow a Trinity course or you may have already registered for a particular course. In either case, it will be useful to you to have some more information about the work involved. We recommend that you also obtain a copy of the Trinity summary or course content document (available as hard copy or on the Trinity website).

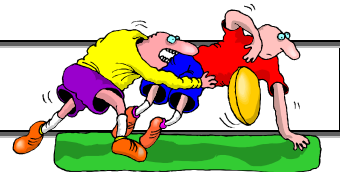
This module will introduce you briefly to the various study skills that will help you on the course.

- ▶ Working as a team
- ▶ Managing your time
- ▶ Feedback and reflection
- ▶ Taking notes
- ▶ Computer skills
- ▶ Participating in inputs
- ▶ Reading skills
- ▶ Writing assignments

WORKING AS A TEAM

You will be part of a group of trainees with different backgrounds and experience but all sharing a common goal. How well you do on the course depends on how well you work together towards that goal.

Are you a team player?



Through collaborative learning you share knowledge, ideas and suggestions. You will be able to encourage and motivate each other, and have a much more enjoyable time on the course. In this way, when you prepare your individual assignments and lesson plans, you are able to draw on what you have learnt from other people, as well as on your own ideas.

MANAGING YOUR TIME



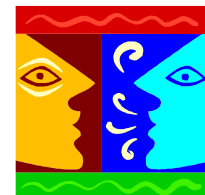
The CertTESOL is rich in content. In addition to teaching practice (TP) - teaching genuine learners of English - and input sessions, there are lesson plans, materials, reflection, assignments, and filing. To be successful on the CertTESOL, you need to organize your time carefully.

How well do you manage your time?

- ▶ If you have already registered for a course, then before the course starts, you will receive course information and a timetable. Try using these to make:
 - a provisional schedule or timetable for the whole course, so you have an overview of your lessons, assignments, and exams
 - a weekly plan, so you have time allocated for TP, assignments, and review
 - a daily list, so you can confidently and efficiently achieve your targets.
- ▶ Once you have started training, prioritise your activities - bear in mind your deadlines.
- ▶ Set realistic goals and reasonable standards.
- ▶ Organise all your materials into easily accessible folders (not the zipped kind!) with clear sections.

FEEDBACK AND REFLECTION

On the CertTESOL, a lot of your learning will come from practical application of newly acquired knowledge. In your TP feedback, you will reflect and share ideas on what you are doing well, and how you can improve your teaching, as well as receiving feedback and suggestions from your tutors.



How can you learn effectively from experience?

When giving feedback to others:

- ▶ balance positive comments with areas for improvement
- ▶ be encouraging - confidence inspires performance
- ▶ provide constructive ideas for how things can be improved.

When receiving feedback:

- ▶ thank the person
- ▶ take notes on both positive comments and areas to improve on
- ▶ ask for clarification if you don't quite understand the point being made
- ▶ use the comments to specify personal aims for your next TP session.

Reflect on your own teaching by asking yourself:

- ▶ what went well and why?
- ▶ what could I have done better? why? and how?



When observing others, think of:

- ▶ what they did well and why
- ▶ what you would like to incorporate into your own teaching
- ▶ how you can achieve this.

Be open to new ideas, confident and positive.

Apply what you have learnt to your next TP sessions.

TAKING NOTES

During observations and inputs, you need to listen, participate, think and take notes at the same time.



When taking notes :

- ▶ use a reasonably sized notebook and leave a margin or blank spaces for added information or comments
- ▶ don't note down everything; listen carefully and note main points
- ▶ listen for signal statements: *It's really important...*, *Don't forget ...*
- ▶ use **abbreviations**.

Use acronyms	<i>TTT (teacher talking time)</i> <i>CCQ (concept check question)</i>
Write the beginning of a long word	<i>diff(erent)</i> <i>pron(unciation)</i>
Leave out the vowels	wrksht (worksheet) cntxt (context)
Develop a code	pics (pictures) w/b (whiteboard)

After taking notes :

- ▶ summarize key points, especially those that relate to your upcoming TP sessions
- ▶ check with your peers to clarify or supplement your notes.

COMPUTER SKILLS

How computer literate are you?



Recommended computer skills include:

- ▶ emailing your tutors and your peers and downloading documents
- ▶ word processing assignments (and lesson plans)
- ▶ creating your own lesson materials: worksheets and OHP/datashow presentations, using text and images
- ▶ accessing and using internet sources for information and downloading.

PARTICIPATING IN INPUTS

In order to be successful on the CertTESOL, you need to take an active part in inputs, group work and feedback sessions.

Listen *actively*:

- ▶ think about what you already know and what you would like to find out
- ▶ bring a positive and engaged attitude
- ▶ take notes
- ▶ listen with an open mind and be receptive
- ▶ actively respond to what you hear: comment, ask questions and make suggestions.



READING SKILLS

During the course, you will read articles, sample assignments, websites, student books, and input notes.

Do you choose the way you read to suit the task?

Surveying - glancing through headings, contents, visuals, etc., to get an overview and determine whether it is useful for your purposes

Skimming - reading quickly to get a general idea of what the text is about.
Identifying main ideas and ignoring supporting details

Scanning - moving your eyes quickly over the text to find specific information, such as names or key words

Reading for detail - SQ3R
survey - question - read - recall - review

WRITING SKILLS

How would you tackle written assignments?



When writing assignments :

- ▶ be clear on requirements : you get detailed guidelines and samples for each assignment
- ▶ for creative thinking, use brainstorming, mind-mapping or other ways that suit your learning style
- ▶ start writing as early as possible
- ▶ connect your thoughts so they are easy to follow
- ▶ proofread your assignment out loud and then edit it.

Good writing :

- ▶ is clear, concise and unambiguous;
- ▶ uses accurate punctuation, grammar and spelling;
- ▶ uses appropriate style and register;
- ▶ is well organized and connected;
- ▶ is analytical as well as descriptive.



Use accurate **punctuation** to clarify the meaning in a sentence, and to indicate pauses and emphasis.

Use a **comma (,)** :

- ▶ after an introductory phrase or dependent clause :
Because she has no foreign friends, her use of English is limited.
- ▶ to separate extra information in a sentence :

The students, who all got on well, were not afraid to ask questions.

- ▶ after transitional words and phrases :
However, individual correction is not always possible in a large class.

⚠ Beware of **comma splices**.

She has no foreign friends, her use of English is limited. (X)
She has no foreign friends, so her use of English is limited. (✓)

Use a **colon (:)** to introduce a list or a quote.
She answered: "I work for a railway company".

Use a **semicolon (;)** :

- ▶ to join two closely linked independent clauses :
She loves reading; she always has a book with her.
- ▶ when the second clause begins with a transition :
She read extensively; her vocabulary, therefore, is very wide.

⚠ Use an **apostrophe (')** for contractions (*don't, she'll*) and possessives (*the students' books*). Don't confuse **its** (belonging to *it*) and **it's** (it is).

Use appropriate **style** for academic writing, and avoid:

- ▶ informal terms (*kids (X) / students (✓) , awesome (X) / effective (✓))*)
- ▶ abbreviations and symbols (Prof. / &)
- ▶ contractions (*didn't, I'd*).



Ensure your text is well laid out in **paragraphs**, with:

1. a topic sentence introducing facts, observations or opinions;
2. further information, explanations or details;
3. evidence or examples.

Use **transitional words and phrases** to make your writing well connected, logical and easy to follow.

addition	also, besides
opposition	despite, however
comparison / contrast	similarly, whereas
emphasis	above all, particularly
example	including, such as
generalization	as a rule, generally
cause and result	as a result, consequently

We hope you have enjoyed this introduction to some of the Study Skills used in the Trinity CertTESOL course. Thank you to Fusion Teaching (fusionteaching@yahoo.co.nz) for their work on this Trinity TESOL Study Resource no 1 (December 2007.)