

Introduction

1 CONTENTS AND ORGANISATION

1.1 Who the course is for

Teach English is a teacher training course which develops practical skills in teaching English as a foreign language. It can be used:

- on in-service training courses for teachers working at secondary level in schools or language institutes;
- in pre-service training of secondary teachers, as a practical component of a methodology course and as preparation for teaching practice;
- as part of a ‘refresher course’ in practical methodology for more experienced teachers.

The course is especially designed to meet the needs of teachers who:

- teach in large, inflexible classes with few resources;
- follow a set syllabus and textbook, and have little control over course content or choice of material;
- are not native speakers of English;
- have little time available for lesson planning or preparation.

The course therefore concentrates on methods and techniques which do not require lengthy preparation of material, elaborate use of aids or equipment, or complex forms of classroom organisation.

1.2 Structure of the course

The course contains 24 units. Each unit focusses on a different area of methodology and provides material for about four hours’ teacher training.

The course has a modular structure, so although the units appear in a numbered sequence, they are completely self-contained and can be used independently of each other. Units can be omitted or used in a different sequence without disrupting the course. There is some overlap between units, allowing for natural recycling as teachers move through the material.

The course is designed to be used actively by a trainer working with a group of up to 30 teachers, and has two components: a **Trainer’s Handbook** (this volume) and a **Teacher’s Workbook**.

Introduction

The Trainer's Handbook

The Trainer's Handbook contains detailed instructions for each training session. It includes transcripts of demonstrations, points for discussion with suggested answers, suggestions for organising activities, and master copies of visual material. It also contains all the Teacher's Workbook activities, apart from the 'Lesson preparation' sections.

The Trainer's Handbook is in the form of a step-by-step instruction manual. This is so that the course can be used without extensive preparation, and is intended to give support to less experienced trainers. It is of course expected that trainers will add their own ideas and adapt the material to suit their own needs and circumstances.

The Teacher's Workbook

The Teacher's Workbook is intended for use by the teachers on the training course, and contains activities which make up the practical part of the training session. These activities take the form of discussion, practice and simple workshop tasks, and are designed to develop insights into teaching methods as well as give practice in teaching techniques.

Each unit in the Teacher's Workbook contains five or six activities. The final activity is 'Lesson preparation', in which teachers apply techniques from the unit to one of their own lessons. This is followed by a 'Self-evaluation sheet', which helps teachers to reflect on their own teaching after the training session.

The Teacher's Workbook also contains four 'Background texts', which deal with more theoretical aspects of methodology. These appear after every fifth unit, but can be read at any point in the course. They also appear in the Trainer's Handbook.

At the end of the Teacher's Workbook, there are brief summaries of each unit for reference.

2 USING THE COURSE

2.1 The training session

Teach English is designed to encourage an active style of teacher training, with teachers participating as fully as possible. For the course to be effective it should be used with groups of not more than 30 teachers.

If possible, every teacher on the course should have his or her own copy of the Teacher's Workbook. For some activities, teachers will also need copies of the textbook they are using or another textbook at an

Introduction

appropriate level (see 2.4 below). Any special materials or equipment that are required for the training session are indicated at the beginning of the unit in the Trainer's Handbook.

Using the course on a training session will involve three main kinds of activity: *demonstrations*, *discussions* and *pair and group activities*.

Demonstrations

When a new technique is introduced, it is usually demonstrated, so that teachers can see how it works. The demonstration is sometimes at the teachers' own language level, so that they can experience the technique from the learner's point of view; sometimes it is at the language level of their students, so that they can see what would happen in their own classes.

The Trainer's Handbook gives notes on how to conduct each demonstration, and sometimes gives a 'script' of the demonstration.

Discussions

The new ideas in each unit are usually presented not through straight lectures but in the form of discussions, in which the teachers participate and contribute their own ideas. This has the advantage of involving the teachers more and allowing them to bring their own experience to bear on the topic under discussion; it also helps the trainer to see how well they have understood the new ideas being presented.

The Trainer's Handbook gives notes on the main points to be brought out of each discussion; these are intended as suggestions and as ways of providing a focus for the discussion, not as 'correct answers'. For the discussion to be successful, it is important for the trainer not to impose his or her own ideas too rigidly and to accept different points of view.

Pair and group activities

Many of the activities in the Teacher's Workbook are designed to be done by teachers working together in pairs or small groups. This allows more teachers to be involved in the activity, and gives a chance for teachers to help each other and develop ideas together.

Most pair or group activities have three stages:

1. *Introduction* to the activity. The trainer introduces the activity and makes sure that teachers understand what to do.
2. The *activity* itself. During this stage, teachers are working independently in their pairs or groups. The trainer moves from group to group, listening and giving help where necessary.
3. A *round-up* stage. The trainer asks teachers from different pairs or groups what answers they gave, or, after a discussion activity, what

Introduction

conclusions they came to. If the activity involved preparing an exercise or a teaching technique, the trainer may ask individual teachers to try out their ideas using the others as a class.

Detailed notes on how to organise each activity are given in the Trainer's Handbook.

2.2 Lesson preparation

The final activity in each unit is 'Lesson preparation', in which teachers plan part of a lesson incorporating ideas and techniques that have been introduced in the training session. This is intended to act as a link between the training session and classroom teaching, and to encourage teachers to try out new techniques in their own classes.

If there is time, the preparation can be done in the training session under the trainer's guidance, either as a discussion with all the teachers together or with teachers working in pairs or small groups. Alternatively, teachers can be asked to prepare the lesson in their own time after the training session. Detailed instructions for the 'Lesson preparation' following each unit are given in the Teacher's Workbook.

Ideally, teachers should try out the lesson they have prepared in one of their own classes soon after the training session. If this is not possible (for example, on an intensive training course during a holiday period), the preparation could lead to either of the following activities:

1. *Peer teaching practice:* After the training session, teachers prepare part of a lesson, following the instructions in the Teacher's Workbook. In the next training session, a few teachers demonstrate, with the other teachers acting as a class.
2. *Written lesson plan:* Instead of preparing an actual lesson, teachers write a lesson plan, showing exactly how they would apply the techniques in teaching one of their own classes. This can be given to the trainer for comments, and be used as a basis for discussion in the next training session.

2.3 Self-evaluation sheets

At the end of every unit in the Teacher's Workbook there is a 'Self-evaluation sheet', with questions relating to the 'trial lesson' the teacher has given. The purpose of these sheets is to develop teachers' own self-awareness, so that they can improve their own teaching independently of the training sessions. By asking questions about the students and what they have gained from the lesson, the 'Self-evaluation sheets' also encourage teachers to think of their lessons from the learners' point of view, and shift the focus of attention from teaching to learning.

Introduction

The 'Self-evaluation sheets' can be used in a variety of ways, according to how the training is being organised:

- If the teachers are able to try out techniques with their own class, they can complete the sheet privately after their lesson. It can then be used as a basis for feedback and discussion in the following training session.
- If several teachers from the same school or the same area are attending the training course, the sheets can be used for informal discussion sessions organised by groups of teachers.
- If teachers are giving lessons as part of supervised teaching practice, the sheet can be completed both by the teacher and the supervisor observing the lesson, and then used for discussion and comment.
- If techniques are tried out in peer teaching practice, the sheet can be used as an observation sheet by other teachers. Half the teachers can act as a 'class', and the other half observe the lesson and complete the sheet.

A summary of different possible training patterns is shown in the table on page 6.

2.4 Using the textbook

At several points in the course, teachers are asked to refer to the textbook they are using with their own class; this assumes that the teachers attending the training course are all using the same textbook and that they all have copies of it available. If this is not the case, it will be necessary to provide copies of a suitable textbook, or to make copies of individual lessons or exercises for teachers to refer to.

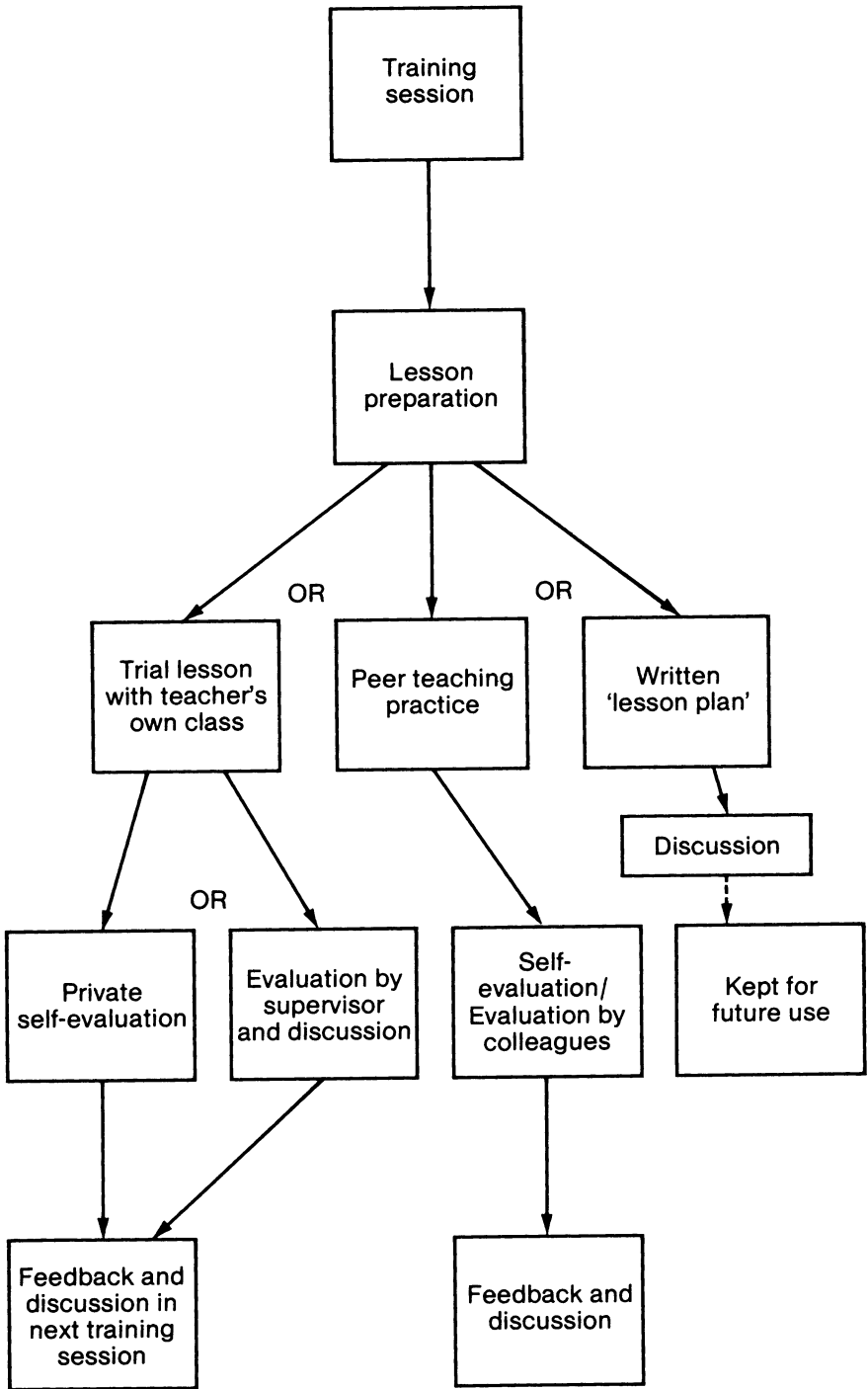
If the training course is being attended by teachers from several different countries, sample lessons can be taken from well-known international textbooks, at whatever level is relevant to most teachers' needs.

2.5 Adapting the course

The examples, texts and situations used in *Teach English* are intended to be applicable to a wide range of different teaching circumstances, but may not precisely suit any single country or group of teachers. If all the teachers on the training course are teaching at the same level and using the same textbook, the material can be adapted in the following ways:

- Examples, vocabulary and situations can be replaced by equivalent ones from the teachers' own textbook (e.g. Unit 1 Activities 2 and 3).
- Where necessary, situations for practice can be adapted to make them locally relevant (e.g. Unit 13 Activity 3, Unit 14 Activity 1).
- Where texts are intended as examples for use in class, they can be substituted by equivalent texts from the teachers' own textbook (e.g. Unit 5 Activities 3 and 4, Unit 15 Activity 1).

Introduction



2.6 Further reading

Teach English is mainly concerned with practical classroom teaching. For trainers who wish to explore topics in greater depth, there is a 'Further reading' section at the end of each unit in the Trainer's Handbook, which lists relevant books on each subject. These lists are highly selective, and include only books which are widely available, which have direct applications to teaching and which are written in non-technical language. They include both specialist books on each subject, and also sections from general methodology books where they have something particularly useful to offer. They do not include articles from journals, as these are not readily obtainable in many countries.

3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Syllabus

A fundamental division of teaching behaviour is often made into *preparation skills* ('before the lesson'), *teaching* and *class management skills* ('during the lesson'), and *evaluation skills* ('after the lesson'). These categories are reflected in the units of *Teach English* in the following ways:

- Most units are concerned primarily with teaching and/or class management skills, but develop relevant preparation or evaluation skills through particular activities (e.g. Unit 1: in Activity 6 teachers select active and passive vocabulary from a text; in Activity 2, teachers study inadequate examples and improve them).
- Preparation skills are the main focus of two of the units (Unit 8: Planning a lesson and Unit 23: Planning a week's teaching), and are developed through the 'Lesson preparation' at the end of each unit.
- Evaluation skills are the main focus of two of the units (Unit 22: Classroom tests and Unit 24: Self-evaluation), and are developed through the 'Self-evaluation sheets' following each unit.

The units concerned with teaching and class management skills cover the following broad skill areas:

1. *Language and skills development*: This area covers the basic procedures for presenting and practising language, and for organising speaking, listening, reading and writing activities.
2. *Use of aids and materials*: This area covers the teacher's use of the blackboard and other basic visual aids, the use of texts and of home-produced material on workcards.
3. *Classroom interaction*: This area covers the basic types of interaction between teacher and students and between students themselves.

Introduction

The units of *Teach English* are organised as a series of separate but inter-related modules, each module focussing on one skill area. This allows for a natural overlapping between different skills which reflects the structure of actual teaching behaviour. For example, Unit 2: Asking questions focusses on basic question types and nomination strategies, but also includes a range of contexts in which teachers often need to ask questions: checking comprehension of new words and structures, organising the class, eliciting personal information from students, etc. The skill of 'asking questions' is also included in other units, where it appears as one of a number of different skills, e.g. Unit 1 (questions to consolidate vocabulary), Unit 5 (questions on a text), Unit 12 (question/answer work in pairs), Unit 14 (getting students to guess).

The main points of overlap between skills are indicated by cross-references at the beginning of each unit in the Trainer's Handbook.

3.2 Approaches to teacher training

Most people involved in teacher education are aware of the existence of two separate worlds. One is the world of native-speaker teachers and teacher trainers, who work in small, flexible classes with adequate resources and who are mainly responsible for developing new ideas in methodology. The other is the world of most other teachers, who work in large school classes to a set syllabus, and who attempt to apply the new methodology to their own teaching. It is the great differences between these two worlds that accounts for the failure of much teacher training; they are differences not only in resources and physical conditions, but also in underlying assumptions (e.g. about language, about learning, about the teacher's role) and in degree of freedom (e.g. freedom to experiment, to create material, to approach class relationships in a new way).

Teach English attempts to bridge the gap between these two worlds by presenting methodology in a form that is accessible to most teachers. The approach it adopts is based on the following underlying principles:

- The material aims to be *appropriate*; it is limited to ideas and techniques that teachers can apply to their own teaching.
- New ideas and techniques are presented *explicitly*. Even basic concepts in teaching and learning, such as 'presenting a structure', 'reading a text', or 'learning a rule' may be understood quite differently by different teachers, and simply describing techniques and procedures can lead to fundamental misunderstanding. Wherever possible, therefore, new techniques are demonstrated and teachers are given a chance to experience them directly.
- Most teachers of English are not native speakers, and this limits their ability to adopt new teaching techniques. An important element in the

Introduction

course is therefore *language improvement*. This is not treated separately, but integrated into the Teacher's Workbook activities: teachers are given practice in asking questions, writing examples, identifying structures, etc., and general oral fluency is developed through discussion and practice activities.

- The adoption of new teaching methods depends on teachers developing new insights and attitudes; so the course is concerned not only with practical training but also with *teacher education*. The teacher education is mainly carried out implicitly through the Teacher's Workbook activities; for example, teachers are asked to evaluate teaching techniques or choose between alternative teaching strategies.
- Teachers are not necessarily convinced by or interested in applied linguistic theory, but they usually do have well-developed insights into teaching and learning. So although new ideas presented in the course are often derived from applied linguistic theory and research, they are explained and justified in terms of common sense.
- The success of a training course depends on the extent to which teachers accept new ideas as 'their own'. This is more likely to happen if teachers are allowed to try out new techniques in the relative freedom and privacy of their own classes, rather than be forced to practise them immediately in front of their colleagues. For this reason, each unit of the course aims to lead teachers towards actual classroom practice, through a series of tasks and activities, but stops short of asking teachers to perform in the training session itself.

3.3 English teaching methodology

Over the last 20 years, ELT methodology has developed very rapidly and has been subject to changes and controversies that teachers often find bewildering. The methods and techniques included in *Teach English* are intended to represent a 'common core', drawing on what is of value both in traditional and in more recent approaches. Thus the course includes traditional techniques, such as substitution practice and presenting a structure through a situation, which are still in widespread use; it also includes more recent teaching ideas, such as eliciting, pre-reading activities, and information gap exercises, which have now become established and are part of the repertoire of most good teachers. The course does not include techniques which belong to 'fringe' approaches such as the Silent Way or Total Physical Response, since they cannot easily be integrated into normal patterns of teaching; nor does it include techniques which are only suited to particular kinds of classes because they require elaborate organisation (e.g. jigsaw listening).

An important recent development in methodology has been the shift of emphasis from the teacher to the learner, and this is reflected in this

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-34864-5 - Teach English: A Training Course for Teachers: Trainer's Handbook

Adrian Doff

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

course. Throughout the course, teachers are asked to experience and evaluate techniques from the learner's point of view, and the 'Self-evaluation sheets' following each unit encourage teachers to judge their own lessons by what the students appear to have learnt from them. Thus, although its subject is teaching English, the course aims to make teachers more aware of their role as helpers in the learning process.