



Linking Young Minds Together

Volume 7 | Issue 09 | March 03, 2013 |

## TESOL Programme at BRACU

Dr Sayeedur Rahman



TESOL trainees get an experience in peer teaching as part of Teaching Practicum module.

courtesy

BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL) has recently launched a unique MA in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) programme at BRAC University with the motto 'Learning by Doing'. The need for qualified English teachers is now more critical than ever in Bangladesh. In this background BIL has taken this initiative from their social responsibility to address the severe shortage through its MA in TESOL programme.

The MA in TESOL programme focuses on the improvement of the participants' skills in teaching English by exposing them to a variety of theories and practices, and methods and techniques through the use of quality teaching materials. The trainee teachers will acquire skills of pedagogy hands-on in real-life classrooms. They will acquire new knowledge, observe teaching in classrooms at different levels, and practice their learning and pedagogic skills on peers as well as on students in actual classroom situations, under specialist supervision. The course gives a special focus on training in ICT skills to help them prepare teaching materials, projects, lesson plans and test papers on their own, which will be effective for classroom teaching.

The programme consists of introduction to approaches, methods and techniques in TESOL, aspects of second language learning, teaching and use of technology in classroom, teaching practice and micro-teaching, etc. The combination of methods and techniques used for teaching/learning includes: lectures, case-studies, seminars and workshops, creative production (of materials, syllabus, and test), reflection papers, observation/practice teaching. While many other MA programs are offered in ELT by various universities in Bangladesh, the programme at BIL is unique in many different ways: the course is very practical in nature, so that while students are taught the methods of language teaching, they will have to demonstrate the methods and techniques in the classroom, with their own materials and lesson plans.

The course has two teaching practicum modules, a special feature that gives participants the opportunity to get experience of all aspects of teaching English in classrooms at different levels, i.e. teaching the young and adults.

The new one-year MA program started in January 2013 is open to teachers of English, and others interested in the profession of TESOL. The programme is unique in its flexible approach that takes into account the difficulties of professionals who may need to take time off during a long course. This is why the programme is offered in three parts, certificate, diploma and the full MA degree, giving scope to teacher trainees to exit and reenter according to convenience. Since the course is also for practicing professionals, classes are held at weekends, from Thursday to Saturday, generally in the afternoons. Residential accommodation can be arranged for people who need it. The next intake for the course will take place on March 15, 2013.



TESOL students get hands-on experience in teaching adults at DevPro, BRAC courtesy

Some of the past and present participants' comments about their experience in the last TESOL Certificate and the current MA in TESOL Course are shared. “The TESOL Certificate Programme was an amazing learning experience. I really appreciate the practical, yet fun and creative tools we were given, which could be applied in many EFL teaching situations. The teaching practicum gave us a hands-one experience in teaching EFL. For the first time, I came across reflective teaching and differentiated learning. Thanks to the programme, as a core trainer of BRAC I could use different techniques I learnt in my training session. I am truly grateful to have been a part of a programme that has opened up numerous and incredible opportunities for me,” says a Faculty of BRAC learning division.

"I had no idea when I got enrolled in the programme with a strong recommendation from one of my colleagues who had such a rewarding experience during the last TESOL course. Soon, I was able to realise my progression from an irresolute teacher to someone who really felt comfortable and confident in teaching English language in a classroom," explained a Teacher of an English Medium School.

"The TESOL certificate course was a taste of a wonderfully rich and rewarding profession. It was thought-provoking, mind-expanding and totally great," stated Assistant Professor, of Government College.

(The author is the Co-ordinator, TESOL programme of BRAC Institute of Languages, BRACU)

---