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education

Certificate in TESOL at BRACU



With the slogan 'Learn by doing', Centre for Languages (CfL) launched a certificate course in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) programme at BRAC University recently, writes Dr. Sayeedur Rahman.

TESOL focuses on the improvement of the participants' skills in teaching English by exposing them to a variety of theories and practices and teaching methods and techniques, with the use of quality teaching materials.

Aspirant teachers acquire skills of pedagogy hands-on in real-life classrooms. They are able to learn new information, 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.

Simultaneously, the course offers training in IT skills to help them prepare teaching materials, projects, lesson plans and test papers on their own, which can be effective while teaching students.

There is a crucial need to produce well-trained English language teachers, particularly at the school level. Everyone realises the importance of development of the students' language skills for their better future.

In the days to come, students will need to compete in a world where there is a tremendous demand for IT-skilled teachers of English. In order to do well in that market, they should hone both their English language and IT skills.

Structure of the TESOL programme

The certificate in TESOL is a six month full-time course that rationally and effectively blends both theory and practice to create proficient ELT teachers in Bangladesh.

Module details

The Certificate in TESOL 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 curriculum of the certificate in TESOL by CfL emphasises a practical approach to the teaching of English language, with reference to the application of known methods and approaches. The programme also has a strong technological element in a number of modules, with a full module on ICT-assisted language learning. The programme has two practicum courses where students will have to devise teaching materials, use these for classroom teaching, assess and report on the students' learning, and learn about their own development as a teacher by reflecting on their own and peers' performance.

The combination of methods and techniques used for teaching/learning includes: lectures, case-studies, seminars and workshops, creative production (of materials, syllabus, test), reflection papers, observation/practice teaching.

First batch of TESOL Certificate Course

The first certificate course in TESOL started at the Centre for Languages, BRAC University, on 10 February 2012. The first batch consists of fourteen participants who had qualified for this course, five of whom are BRAC employees. The rest of the participants came from various professions, including teaching and corporate sectors.

The first course was six months long, consisting of two semesters with three months' time for each. Two modules were taught during the first semester which started on the opening day, and concluded on the 28th of April. Two more modules are being taught at present, starting from 12 May and will end in July.

All modules of this course are practice oriented, with focus on the theory of language teaching and learning, testing, materials and syllabus design, and finally, observation of classrooms of various ages and levels of proficiency. For the teaching practicum module students had the opportunity to observe, and teach at, several primary schools of BRAC.

Throughout the teaching practicum, they were supervised and allowed to get hands-on experience required to become an efficient English teacher. All activities were arranged in accordance with the aim of the programme to initiate students into the requirements of teaching students at various age and proficiency levels.

The students who complete the certificate course will be allowed to pursue an MA in TESOL that will be launched in 2013. Such candidates will be given waivers for courses they complete successfully.

To know further about the Certificate and MA in TESOL, you can contact the Centre for Languages, on the 14th floor, BRAC University, Mohakhali Campus.

(The writer is a teacher of English, Dhaka University)