



"We make learning special"

Language and Methodology: A Refresher Course for Teachers of English

This course is aimed at those interested in upgrading their awareness of how these key factors in the teaching of English interact.

Objectives

- To review how English is used both inside and outside the classroom
- To review the principles and practice of teaching English as a second or foreign language
- To introduce and critically survey recent developments in methodology and the analysis of language for teaching
- To examine the relationship between language and methodology
- To encourage course participants to re-examine their own teaching.

Overview

The **'Language Focus'** elements will allow participants to improve their own English in a variety of ways. Every part of the course will contribute to the development of the participants' language and pedagogic skills, through 'loop input' approaches. There will be work on both personal and pedagogic grammar, covering not only 'sentence-level' grammar, but grammar at 'word level' and 'beyond the sentence', as well as the grammar of spoken English. We will address individuals' language needs. We will work to extend each participant's range of vocabulary, and their ability to use both individual words and 'chunks' of language, like idioms, in appropriate ways. We will offer opportunities to develop fluency and flexibility of expression and to increase competence and confidence.

'Focus on Methodology' is both a thread running through the course and a specific focus of some of the sessions. Participants will have the opportunity to experience a variety of modes of delivery and of interaction. They will reflect on and discuss key factors in effective teaching, including classroom management, the roles of teachers and learners, alternative approaches and ways of combining some of the best aspects of more 'traditional' teaching with more innovative procedures involving task-based, learner-centred, interactive methods.

Course content

Each course is tailored to the common needs of the particular participants as reflected in the questionnaires they send to NILE. In fulfilling the objectives outlined above, the programme has typically covered the following broad areas, with the balance of focus negotiated with the course participants:

Advanced Language Focus: Personal language improvement for those where English is already of an advanced level; grammatical accuracy, extension of lexical range; phonological accuracy and fluency; developing improved communication and presentation skills; how English works, inside and outside the classroom; how language changes and how English is changing; the language of the media; the relationship of language with culture; classroom language and metalanguage; personal v pedagogic grammar; correctness and appropriacy.

Focus on Methodology: Key principles underlying effective ELT; what is good teaching; self-observation, critical reflection and self-evaluation – how do I teach and how can I teach better? Review of past and present

trends in methodology; humanistic, learner-centred and task-based approaches; key issues in motivation and class management; handling difficult classes, e.g. mixed levels; creative and innovative approaches, incl. using literature in ELT; key issues and current trends in testing and assessment.

Course Methodology

NILE courses are taught in a range of ways, but the underlying principle is that all courses should be taught using methodology that course participants can adapt and emulate for themselves on returning to their classrooms. Sessions are built into each course to allow course participants to reflect on the way that they have been taught and review the suitability of the strategies and techniques for their own circumstances.

Preparation and follow-up

All course participants are issued with a pre-course questionnaire to be returned prior to the course. This is to ensure that the areas of most significance to participants within the general course area are covered. In addition, participants are sent an indicative reading list covering some of the topics to be dealt with on the course. Participants are also asked to bring along to the course information and materials relating to any project they are involved in or have recently completed, which could benefit from supportive critical comment during the course.

Towards the end of the course there is a “where next” session with the group as a whole, or with individuals. This session is used to review the concepts and practices dealt with on the course and to see how they will apply to the participants’ workplace on their return. Open-ended follow-up consultation is available to all course participants after the course via email.

Timetable

All courses are held between the hours of 9 am and 5.30 pm. The working day normally starts at 9.15 am and ends at 3.30 or 5.15 pm. All courses last for a minimum of 25 hours per week.

In addition to the main course team, courses often have one or more visiting guest speakers. These are usually well-known figures from the world of EFL/ESL who have published and lectured widely or who are well-versed in the changing face of Britain and the role of English in the world-wide community. Recent speakers on NILE’s Summer Guest Speaker Programme (June – September) have included: Claudia Ferradas, Gwyneth Fox, Laura Renart, Prof. David Nunan, Prof. Mike McCarthy, Prof. Ron Carter, Dr. Brian Tomlinson, Luke Prodromou, Philip Prowse, H.A. Swan and Melanie Williams.

Since most of NILE’s courses are for serving teachers or teachers in training, these sessions with visiting speakers, along with the extra-curricular programme, represent an ideal opportunity for course participants to mix socially and professionally with teachers from a wide variety of different countries and contexts.