

TEACHING ENGLISH ABROAD

A Guide for First Year Teachers



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INTRODUCTION

Maybe it's the changing times, globalization, or a shrinking job market that have caused an increasing number of recent college graduates to seek employment abroad as teachers of English as a foreign language. Perhaps such opportunities offer a means of quenching the thirst for adventure that so many of us retain from our childhoods, or it could be the desire to share knowledge with others while at the same time gaining a broader perspective that has led a growing number of teachers to look for work beyond the borders of their native countries. Whatever the reason for an individual's decision to seek employment overseas, the fact is that the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) has been growing rapidly in conjunction with an increased demand for English language education around the world.

Among the challenges that a potential EFL (English as a foreign language) teacher faces is the lack of standardization in the field. While an aspiring teacher in Colorado can look up information regarding the kinds of coursework and licensure exams that he or she must complete in order to be certified, new EFL teachers may not find such direction readily available. Type the acronym "TEFL" into a Google search, and millions of results will appear within a matter of seconds, including an almost overwhelming number of training and certification programs. The majority of these programs are not standardized, and, to make matters more complicated, many job listings simply request proof of TEFL certification, without clarifying exactly what this certification should look like. Add to this the fact that some employers do not even require proof of certification, and you have one complicated job search on your hands.

Of course, even once a new teacher has secured a job placement abroad, there are many other factors to consider. While some schools have a rigid curriculum already in place, others may expect the teacher to create a plan for the courses that he or she is teaching. Also, as one might imagine, there are unique challenges associated with teaching students for whom English is a foreign language. Many times, teachers are not fluent in the language of the country in which they are teaching, and, while some schools see this as a benefit for students, it certainly affects the kind of communication that can go on in the classroom. Thus, even those who graduated with a license to teach in Colorado (or another part of the United States) may find that teaching abroad requires them to learn about ways of educating students that were not covered in their university coursework.

In light of these issues, the purpose of this guide is to provide a starting place for recent college graduates and others who are new to the field of TEFL. There are a multitude of other resources available, many of which are referenced throughout the work, and my goal is not to attempt to replace any of these. Rather, my hope is to bring these resources together in a

manageable and easy-to-navigate text that can serve as a point of entry into the rapidly changing TEFL field. This text also represents an effort to answer my own questions about the field, and so I hope that what I have discovered and synthesized will also be of use to the reader.

My Experience Teaching Abroad

I taught abroad in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia for a brief time during the summer of 2011, and, while my own experience teaching abroad may or may not be of any interest to the reader, I have decided to include it for the sake of those who might also like to teach in Mongolia and because I would like to be transparent as to my motives for compiling this text.

Honestly, I had toyed with the idea of teaching abroad for a few years before stumbling upon the opportunity to do so in Mongolia, and I would never have discovered this opportunity had it not been for the fact that I was good friends with some Mongolian college students. Luckily, though, I did have friends at the National University of Mongolia (NUM), and, one day, as I was reading about their university, I discovered that the school supported professional and preservice English teachers who would like to teach in the surrounding community of Ulaanbaatar. Excited at such a prospect, I put together the requested curriculum vitae, wrote a cover letter, and emailed my application. Much to my surprise, I received a response stating that, while local schools were not in need of teachers during the summer, I could teach an informal English class at NUM. My plans for the class were requested, so I immediately began asking for advice and digging through textbooks so that I could write a curriculum plan for the class.

Now, I debated including the next part of the story, but I will do so because I want to give an accurate description of what it can be like to teach abroad.

I did not hear back from the university after I sent my curriculum plan.

Of course, I was concerned, but I decided that perhaps they had not received my email. I sent another email, a copy of the first with a brief message added, and received no reply. At this point I concluded that, for whatever reason, the university no longer required my services. I was very busy with work and school at the time, so I chose not to dwell on the rejection and instead focused on the work at hand.

The summer began, and I still had heard nothing from NUM. I had been planning to complete my Spanish minor by studying abroad in Spain, though, so I left for Madrid in June and immersed myself in Spanish culture. Towards the middle of June, I thought of my attempt to teach in Mongolia and realized that, even if the university did not need or want me to teach, I should still try to tie up any loose ends so that there would be no awkwardness if I

was to try to work with NUM again. Thus, I wrote a brief email thanking the university for considering me, and stating that, while it appeared as though my services were not needed at the time, I hoped to stay in touch in case an opportunity emerged in a local elementary or secondary school.

Within forty-eight hours I received a reply. The coordinator of the program at NUM had been very busy, but she had organized a class and looked forward to seeing me in July. And that was how I ended up teaching English to two classes composed of university students and community members at the National University of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar.

The course was structured as a conversation class for intermediate level students, and it lasted ten days, five before the national holiday of Naadam, and five immediately following. I can honestly say that the experience for me was like riding on a very well-designed roller coaster. The highs were very, very high, and some of the lows were surprisingly close to the ground. I realized on the first day that my students were all highly motivated, which would make my job much easier, but that they had very different ability levels. This was the first time I had ever taught by myself, and I did not feel equipped to handle the challenges this class presented. Nevertheless, I think most people find ways to equip themselves for challenges that they cannot avoid, and I tried to do the same. I adapted my teaching by including additional support in the form of vocabulary lists for students who knew less English as well as incorporating more challenging idioms and conversation topics for advanced students. This seemed to work well, though, if I could go back and teach the class again, I would incorporate some kind of activity at the end of each day to find out what kind of prior knowledge the students would be bringing to the following day's lesson. Doing so would have allowed me to feel more confident about what I was teaching and to adjust my lesson plans to student needs and interests.

As for the highs and the lows, I will share those things that I think would be most useful for other prospective EFL teachers. First, sometimes I would ask students for feedback on a lesson so that I could make the next day's lesson more useful, and I would interpret their responses as being very critical. Perhaps they were, but, because written responses to the final student survey were generally positive and constructive, I doubt this. Rather, I suspect that sometimes students of a foreign language do not always know the "niceties" that native speakers include when trying to convey constructive criticism. Anyone who has tried to learn a foreign language can probably attest to this, and so, in the future, I would take student suggestions seriously, as I did before, but not take less than politely-worded suggestions as personal attacks.

Additionally, on the first day of class I chose to assess student levels by asking them to write responses to some questions about themselves. While one of these questions did relate to

their reasons for learning English, I feel that I did not have an entirely accurate understanding of my student's expectations for the class because their responses were limited by their knowledge of English and my inability to converse with them in Mongolian. Thus, I think I could have improved upon this assessment by using a Likert Scale, which provides a statement and then allows students to circle a response ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (Beers 140). This would have allowed students to rank the degree to which they were learning English for a particular reason. I will include my ideas for this later in the guide, though. The point is that I taught the class to the best of my ability and ended up with many ideas on how to teach it better, and that, while this left me feeling frustrated with myself for time, this is probably normal. I suspect that many first-time teachers, both in the United States and abroad, feel this way, and that EFL teachers should probably be prepared to learn almost as much about teaching as their students learn about English at first.

The last of the lows that seem worth mentioning is actually something that was outside of my control: food sickness. I would not even bring the whole ordeal into my writing were it not for the fact that it seems entirely likely that other EFL teachers have experienced or will experience some kind of illness abroad as well. Primarily, what I learned is that a teacher abroad is somewhat vulnerable in that he or she may not speak the language of the country and may not understand the medical system. I was lucky in that the friend that I was staying with happened to be related to a doctor who was willing to offer some suggestions, but to this day I am not entirely sure what kind of medication she gave me. All I know is that I was very thankful to have a bilingual friend with connections to the medical community and that, while many schools do not require foreign EFL teachers to speak a language besides English, it is prudent to learn as much as possible of the language of the country in which one will teach.

Each "low" that I just described presented a challenge for me at the time, but I learned far too much from these experiences to regret any of them. Besides, the high points of my time in Mongolia far made up for the rough spots. The adventure that I think many of us look for when going abroad was certainly present, and, I suppose, would not have seemed nearly so exciting had everything been easy. People were kind, and they were very excited to share their culture with me. Some of my students even organized a surprise lunch after our last day of class, so we all went out to a restaurant which served traditional Mongolian food. Of course, they made sure to order a sheep's head to share so that I would have a truly authentic experience!

I could go on about teaching in Mongolia, but I think I have said all that needs saying here. In short, this experience changed the way that I think about the world, others, and myself, and, like a teabag that only gradually diffuses flavor into warm water, the time that I spent

teaching in Mongolia is still making its way into different aspects of my life. Teaching abroad, even for a short time, was one of the best things I have ever done, and this guide is the culmination of my efforts to find out what it will take to become a successful EFL teacher for a longer period of time. I hope that readers also find that the information provided in the following pages is useful as they pursue dreams of going abroad as well.

Definitions of Common Acronyms

While some readers may already be familiar with the terms below, I have included basic definitions of terms and acronyms that show up relatively often in websites and other documents relating to TEFL. These acronyms represent a portion of those listed in *The Internet TESL Journal*. For a more complete list, visit <http://iteslj.org/acronyms.html>.

- ☞TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞TESL: Teaching English as a Second Language (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞EFL: English as a Foreign Language (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞ESL: English as a Second Language (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞ELL: English Language Learner (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (Note: Also name of a professional association) (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞IELTS: International English Language Testing System (Test for students whose native language is not English) (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞TOEFL: Test of English language proficiency for students whose native language is not English (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞L1: First/primary/native language (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞L2: Language being learned (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞BE: Bilingual Education (Acronyms Related to TESL)
- ☞ELA: English Language Acquisition

TEFL IN THE WORLD TODAY

Opportunities and Controversies

The incredible, exciting thing about TEFL as a field is that it is, almost by definition, international. A qualified teacher can find work in just about any part of the world in which students take English classes, which means that there are opportunities almost everywhere. With increased opportunities, however, come increased controversies, with a growing number of people voicing concerns of neocolonialism and native-speakerism within the TEFL field. In an effort to provide resources for people with varying interests, I have included what is, essentially, an annotated bibliography of resources for four distinct world regions as well as a summary of the concerns relating to neocolonialism.

Because most of the resources listed below pertain to world-regions as opposed to specific countries, it might be useful for those with a specific country in mind to consider visiting www.embassy.org to find the websites of the foreign embassies in Washington D.C. By visiting the official embassy website of the country in which one plans to teach, one can feel confident that visas are in order and that one is being given accurate information regarding work laws and visa requirements for foreign teachers.

Neocolonialism

While it is easy to become excited at the prospect of empowering students and learning about new cultures by teaching English abroad, it is important that EFL teachers take the time to critically examine the field of TEFL. Research suggests that it is necessary to consider the effect that societal pressures, demand for native-speakers to work as teachers, and even teaching practices have on the way students think about their own languages and cultures.

According to a study by Yan Guo and Gulbahar H. Beckett titled “The Hegemony of English as a Global Language: Reclaiming Local Knowledge and Culture in China,” EFL has, at least in China, become an agent of neocolonialism (Guo and Beckett 117). Neocolonialism, to clarify, is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “the use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence another country.” As the word itself suggests, neocolonialism is similar to colonialism in that it also refers to a kind of control that one nation exerts over another. In the case of China, Guo and Beckett argue that the neocolonial problem lies in the way in which English is valued above traditional languages such as Uighur, Tibetan, and Mongolian (126) as well as the problem of native-speakerism (122), a phrase that describes the idea that native speakers of a language are better able to teach it than non-

native speakers, even when non-native speakers have attained fluency in the language and have a teaching background.

Native speakerism appears also in the way in which EFL teachers sometimes try to change the behavior of their students to better match their pedagogical ideals. The idea that education should be student-centered, for example, sometimes clashes with the kind of pedagogy that is accepted in other countries. Some see the attempt to shift teaching methods in the EFL classroom as a kind of native-speakerism in that the assumption behind the shift is that the EFL teacher for whom English is a first language knows more about teaching than other EFL teachers (Holliday, 385-387). This poses important questions for native speakers of English who hope to teach abroad, most importantly:

What is the most ethical way for me to enter and work in the field of TEFL?

While I will not venture to answer this question for others, I think that it is safe to say that all teachers should take the time to understand the past interactions that the nation in which they will teach has had with the English language as well as current controversial and/or problematic affects of English language learning.

Lest the discussion of native-speakerism and neocolonialism leave hopeful EFL teachers discouraged, it should be noted that there are multiple perspectives on the issue. While native-speakerism remains a clear form of discrimination that should be eliminated from the field of TEFL, there are valid arguments in favor of teaching English abroad. The most intuitive of these has to do with empowering students so that they can make their voices heard globally. For all of the controversy surrounding the rise of English as an international language, the increased interest in English around the world has made it possible for people of very diverse backgrounds to communicate with one another because they hold a language in common: English. Additionally, there are those who hold to the idea that, as the English language becomes more widely spoken, it will belong less to one particular group and will develop a more international identity. (Byram and Risager, qtd. in Lochtman and Kappel, 25.)

Ultimately, it is up to each individual EFL teacher and student to make meaning of the controversies of neocolonialism today and to choose the most ethical way to respond to or be part of the field. This summary barely scratches the surface of the thinking that has been done about neocolonialism and its relevance to TEFL, but hopefully an awareness of the issue of neocolonialism in the field can inform decisions about how and why to teach so that the future of TEFL as a field will be one of empowerment.

Regional Resources: Asia

📍 *Transitions Abroad:*

<http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/work/esl/articles/workinasia.shtml>

📍 This website is published by *Transitions Abroad*, which has been publishing the *Transitions Abroad* magazine since 1977. The webpage listed here discusses in detail teaching in China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand in addition to listing additional country-specific resources.

📍 *Jet Programme:*

<http://www.jetprogramme.org/index.html>

📍 This is the link to the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET), which has been promoting “grass-roots international exchange between Japan and other nations” for twenty-four years. The program offers three different types of positions to participants, including “Assistant Language Teacher,” “Coordinator for International Relations,” and “Sports Exchange Advisor.”



📍 *US Embassy in Beijing:*

http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/acs_teach.html

📍 The United States Embassy in Beijing has created a non-official guide to assist those interested in teaching English in China. While the embassy cannot verify the legitimacy of a school or otherwise aid job-seekers in finding employment, the guide can provide information to help prospective teachers distinguish between reputable schools and problematic job situations.

📍 *US Embassy in Seoul:* <http://seoul.usembassy.gov/teach.html>

📍 The United States Embassy in Seoul, South Korea is in the process of creating this guide to teaching English in Korea. While the page is still under construction, one can access a wealth of information by clicking on the links on the right hand side.

Regional Resources: Europe

While there is a fair amount of demand for English teachers in many European nations, it appears to be rather difficult for non-EU citizens to find jobs here. The challenge is that the nations that make up the European Union generally require employers to open positions up to EU citizens before considering teachers of other nationalities. As some of the links below explain, this does not mean that US citizens cannot find jobs in the EU; it just means they will need to work harder to find them.

European nations that are not currently part of the EU include: Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Turkey, Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Norway, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine, and Vatican City (Europa).



This map, taken from the official EU website, shows nations that are EU members in Yellow, candidate countries in green, and non-members in tan. Copyright belongs to the European Commission, but reproduction is authorized. The map was last updated in 2004.

☞ *TEFL Logue*: <http://www.teflogue.com/teff-in-europe>:

☞ This website is copyrighted by *BootsnAll Travel Network*, which offers travel information for a variety of countries as well as assistance in finding affordable flights. The link provided here explains a little bit about the pros and cons of teaching in Europe, including the challenges facing non-EU citizens looking to teach in countries that are a part of the European Union.

📍 *Transitions Abroad:*

http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/work/articles/working_in_europe_new_opportunities.shtml

📍 This website is copyrighted by *Transitions Abroad*, which, according to the mission statement, has been publishing the *Transitions Abroad* magazine since 1977. This magazine, which is now published solely on the website, has as its purpose “the dissemination of practical information leading to a greater understanding of other cultures through direct participation in the daily life of the host community.” While the website contains a wealth of information in addition to this article on working in Europe, I think that the article is well worth reading.

📍 *Europa: Official Website of the European Union:*

http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/index_en.htm

📍 This page is part of the official website of the European Union, and it provides a brief description of what the EU is and how it functions. This would be well worth reading for anyone interested in looking for work in a country that is part of the EU.

Regional Resources: Africa

📍 *Transitions Abroad:* <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/work/esl/africa.shtml>

📍 This website, copyrighted by *Transitions Abroad*, contains useful information relating to many world regions, which is why it is included as a resource for Asia and Europe in addition to Africa. What is particularly useful about the webpage listed above, however, is that it lists organizations and programs that assist teachers in finding placements in African nations.

📍 *Teach with Africa:*

<http://www.teachwithafrica.org/>

📍 This program, founded by Marjo-



rie Schlenoff, seeks to assist South Africans with a major problem facing the country: “Lack of good public education and a dire shortage of teachers” (Teach with Africa). Since the program’s inception in 2007, Teach with Africa has sent sixty teachers to South Africa.

Regional Resources: Latin America

📍 Article: *Teaching English in South America:*

<http://careers.guardian.co.uk/careers-blog/teaching-english-in-south-america>

📍 This is an article posted in the “Careers Blog” section of *The Guardian*, a UK newspaper. In it, David Proctor describes his experiences teaching in Chile and Columbia.

📍 *The ESL Teacher’s Board:*

<http://www.eslteachersboard.com/cgi-bin/latam-schools/index.pl>

📍 *The ESL Teacher’s Board* website is a useful resource because of the amount of information it contains, but this information is provided by internet users and is not monitored for accuracy. Regardless, the web link above leads to a page that lists many of the English schools in Latin America and would be a helpful place to begin searching for jobs.



📍 *Transitions Abroad:*

<http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/work/esl/articles/workinlatinamerica.shtml>

📍 This is yet another link to a page on the *Transitions Abroad* website, but, again, the page provides a useful overview of teaching in Latin America along with a wealth of country-specific resources to make searching for a job easier.

TOOLBOX

Activities, Lesson Plans, and Handouts

Most pre-service teachers have probably heard from professors and experienced teachers that the first year of teaching is the most difficult and, for survival's sake, teachers, especially new ones, need to look for resources to support them in planning lessons, creating assessments, and working through the other challenges associated with teaching. This section seeks to provide some of those resources in the form of a sample unit plan, sample lesson plans, and ideas for teaching with technology, but, of course, it is by no means a comprehensive resource. Hopefully this can serve as a starting point that inspires the reader to look for further resources in the form of other teachers, books, the internet, and life.

Curriculum Mapping and Inquiry Based Learning

Some EFL teachers may find that the schools in which they teach have already established a curriculum. For example, Talk Talk English, located in Mongolia, advertises a unique curriculum, “developed for exclusive use within... [their] schools by... [their] Academic Development Team.” Thus, a teacher at this school might not need to map out a curriculum as this has already been done. Other schools, however, might require teachers to create their own unit plans. While there is not one “right” way to plan a unit, I have found the concepts behind *Understanding by Design*, created by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, to be very helpful. One advantage to planning a unit in this way is that the teacher is reminded to think about how to help students not only acquire knowledge and skills but also “make meaning” of what they have learned and “transfer” their knowledge to other contexts (Wiggins and McTighe). Many schools in the United States provide templates that their teachers can use to map out a unit plan using the principles of *Understanding by Design*, and I have used a similar template, provided by Dr. Louann Reid to her students in the *Methods in Teaching Language Arts* course to design a sample unit for tenth grade students. A slightly different *Understanding by Design* template can be found at <http://digitalliteracy.mwg.org/curriculum/template.html>.

Title of Unit	Describing People	Grade Level	10
Curriculum Area	English Language	Time Frame	2 weeks
Developed By	Lisa Dompier		

Identify Desired Results (Stage 1)

Content Standards

Normally, a teacher would demonstrate his or her unit’s alignment with the standards used by the school. For example, in Colorado, most teachers would need to include the Colorado State Standards being taught. I do not have a specific context for this unit plan, but, if I did, I would include the standards relevant to this unit here.

Understandings	Essential Questions	
Overarching Understanding	Overarching	Topical
There are many different words that can be used to describe people, and it is important to choose the most precise words possible in order to communicate effectively.	Why do we describe people, and how does the way that we describe a person affect how he/she feels?	How does the situation determine the appropriate way to describe someone? How does word choice affect the meaning of a description? For example, what is the difference between describing someone as “slender” or “trim” as opposed to “skinny” or “slight?”
<p style="text-align: center;">Related Misconceptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is only one word to describe specific physical or character attributes. (For example, there is only one word to describe someone with light hair.) • It does not make any difference at all what word I use, as long as I get my point across. • The ability to describe people is not an important skill to have. 		

Knowledge	Skills
Students will know...	Students will be able to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide variety of words to describe people, including words that describe physical appearance, character attributes, and emotions. • Some useful verbs for putting together descriptive sentences, such as “appears,” “is wearing,” “looks like,” “seems,” etc... • Words required to ask questions about a person’s appearance or characteristics, such as “What does he/she look like?” • How word choice affects meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe themselves and others in terms of physical appearance, character attributes, and emotional state. • Ask questions that would lead to a description of another person. • Choose the appropriate words based on the situation. • Incorporate the ability to describe people into a larger conversation.

Assessment Evidence (Stage 2)

Performance Task Description

Goal	Demonstrate the ability to describe a person using appropriate word-choice
Role	Storybook Writer
Audience	Teacher and Classmates

Situation	You are writing a storybook for children, and, because the book publisher is well-known for selling educational books, you have been asked to incorporate unique, interesting words into your story. In particular, your editor would like you to give rich descriptions of the characters in your story.
Product/Performance	All students will produce a written story in addition to reading the story to the class, publishing a Storybird, or adding original illustrations to the story.
Standards	Student completes the entire project including written story and supplementary presentation materials (oral, Storybird, or illustrations); student demonstrates ability to choose appropriate words to describe people; student demonstrates mastery of grammar covered earlier in the course

Other Evidence

Crime-scene activity, in which students will describe crime suspects; Partner work in which students describe their partner; other in-class games and activities; homework

Learning Plan (Stage 3)

Where are your students headed? Where have they been? How will you make sure the students know where they are going?	Students have been studying English since fourth grade, so this is their sixth year. They already know how to conjugate regular verbs, but they still need practice with many irregular verbs. They also know basic vocabulary, but they need to practice using it and build on what they already know. Some students hope to study in an English-speaking country like England, Australia, or the USA after graduation in a few years.
How will you hook students at the beginning of the unit?	Students will spend a class period listening to and working to understand the song "Meet Virginia" by Train.
What events will help students experience and explore the big idea and questions in the unit? How will you equip them with needed skills and knowledge?	The Train song will serve as an example of really effective description and will be a good conversation piece. Students will be able to consider the difference between artistic or literary descriptions and descriptions that would fit better into everyday conversation. Students will also have opportunities to read/listen to/view other authentic texts to see the kinds of language used in descriptions.
How will you cause students to reflect and rethink? How will you guide them in rehearsing, revising, and refining their work?	I will encourage students to use new vocabulary (and thus rethink the words they tend to use) to describe people by teaching them about the ways in which word choice affects meaning. For example, students might want to know the words "slender" and "skinny" and understand the differences between them so as to select the appropriate word in context. Also, bringing authentic texts into the classroom will expose students to new kinds of language. For example, "she doesn't own a dress," which is used in "Meet Virginia," is another way to say that a woman is very casual.
How will you help students to exhibit and self-evaluate their growing skills, knowledge, and understanding throughout the unit?	I will limit my lecture time to under ten minutes per class period whenever possible so that students will be able to exhibit their growing skills through activities and games.

How will you tailor and otherwise personalize the learning plan to optimize the engagement and effectiveness of ALL students, without compromising the goals of the unit?	I will choose some vocabulary from the authentic texts that I expect all students to learn and will quiz them on this vocabulary, but I will also ask students to keep their own word lists in which they will add new words and phrases that they would like to learn. This encourages students to continually improve their vocabularies and to take control of their learning experience. Also, the final project allows students to choose the format for presentation, which gives students who are less comfortable in front of their peers another outlet.
How will you organize and sequence the learning activities to optimize the engagement and achievement of ALL students?	I will organize the activities in such a way that they build on one another and thus create prior knowledge that can be accessed in the following lesson.

Lesson Plan Template

While some teachers may not be required to plan units, most will probably need to plan daily lessons based on a given curriculum. Included below is a lesson plan template that I created as a way to organize the components required for lesson plans in the *Methods in Teaching Language Arts* course at CSU, taught by Dr. Louann Reid. While many elements of the plan are fairly self-explanatory, some merit further discussion.

The portion labeled “standards” provides a space for the teacher to consider some of the underlying goals behind the lesson. In the United States, teachers are often expected to plan their lessons in conformance with state standards, which define those things that students at each level of schooling should be able to do. The standards that a teacher working abroad might teach to will differ depending on the context because there are no internationally recognized standards for the the teaching of English as a foreign language. The professional organization TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), for example, has created standards for the teaching of English as a second language in an effort to bring English language learners in the USA “closer to the educational mainstream by national standards that set high expectations for these students' command of English.” These standards, however, apply primarily to the teaching of English as an additional or second language in the United States rather than the teaching of English as a foreign language.

There is, however, at least one resource that provides standards relevant to the teaching of foreign languages, and it is the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). ACTFL actually focuses on foreign language learning within the United States, with a vision statement that emphasizes the importance of encouraging students in the USA to learn foreign languages, but the organization’s mission of “providing vision, leadership and support for quality teaching and learning of languages” suggests the potential usefulness of information obtained from ACTFL for English teachers abroad. In fact, the organization collaborated with three other groups to define eleven standards for foreign language educa-

tion, which fall into the five categories of “communication,” “cultures,” “connections,” “comparisons,” and “communities” (Standards for Foreign Language Learning). While some teachers may find standards limiting, others may actually prefer to have a set of standards to refer to as this helps to ensure that crucial aspects of language learning are not overlooked. A more complete explanation and list of standards can be accessed at <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3324>.

Another component of the lesson plan that requires further explanation is the portion labeled “differentiation.” This component gives space for the teacher to consider the importance of planning a lesson that will support the needs of many different kinds of learners. For example, effective teachers will work to structure lessons in a way that supports the learning of students with diverse strengths, or, as Howard Gardner termed them, “multiple intelligences.” These include linguistic, logical or mathematical, musical, bodily or kinesthetic, spacial, naturalist, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and existential intelligences (Gardner 98). In addition, teachers differentiate instruction so as to challenge every student while also providing the necessary support for every student to be successful. Essentially, differentiation is the way that teachers try to teach each individual in the most effective manner possible.

While completing a chart like this one can be tedious, I think that it helps teachers make sure that their lessons are focused, that an appropriate amount of material is covered during the class period, and that all students are adequately challenged and supported.

Lesson Title:			Date:
<u>Links to Other Lessons</u>			
Standards		How the Standards are Addressed	
<u>Materials Needed for Lesson</u>			
Instructional Sequence			<u>Differentiation</u>
Time	Teacher will...	Students will...	
<u>Assessment</u>			

Sample Lesson Plans

Below are two sample lesson plans designed as the first two days of the unit outlined earlier in the section. They are designed to build on one another so that the activities that students complete in day one serve as a point of entry into learning in day two. While the standards that a teacher would address will vary according to context, I have chosen to use the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, which were created by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages so as to provide an example of how one might create a lesson plan that addresses required standards.

Lesson Title: "Meet Virginia"			Date: Day 1
Links to Other Lessons			
This is the first lesson in the unit. The previous unit was the first of the year, and it was focused on reviewing concepts that students would be building on in this class.			
Standards		How the Standards are Addressed	
Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics (http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3392)		Students listen to and read the lyrics of "Meet Virginia" and then work to interpret these lyrics in small groups.	
Materials Needed for Lesson			
CD player or computer with speakers to play the song Printed lyrics of "Meet Virginia" with some words replaced by a blank line Handout titled "Words and Phrases to Describe People"			
Instructional Sequence			Differentiation Incorporation of music into the lesson encourages students who have strong musical intelligence to participate. Small group work encourages students with high interpersonal intelligence. As the teacher walks around, he or she can assist individuals in groups with specific questions or challenges. This means that the teacher can provide additional activities to enhance learning (by asking questions such as "What does this phrase mean?" or "Why does the singer say this?") when groups finish early. It also means that the teacher can provide extra
Time	Teacher will...	Students will...	
3 min	Welcome students to class and remind them to begin the set activity on the board. Take attendance and make sure that the CD player is ready.	See the following prompt on the board: "In your journals, please write about what the following phrases might mean—"she doesn't own a dress," "she never compromises," "she only drinks coffee at midnight," and respond to it in their journals.	
5 min	Lead a discussion on the set activity, making sure that all words are defined (either by students or teacher). Ask students to share their responses, and write these on the board.	Ask about any unknown words and share definitions to words that others did not know. Share responses to the prompt.	
5 min	Distribute "Meet Virginia" lyrics and ask students to try to figure out the missing words by listening to the song. Play "Meet Virginia" once all students have lyrics and have had a chance to ask questions.	Listen to "Meet Virginia" and try to fill in the missing lyrics.	

5 min	<p>Ask students how the activity went. They will probably tell you that they need to hear the song a second time in order to fill in more blanks, so play the song a second time. If there are any students who were able to fill in all the blanks the first time, ask them to check their work for accuracy and to consider the question "Who is Virginia?"</p> <p>As the song plays, distribute one playing card to each student. This card will determine the student's group. (Arrange cards in such a way that students will be in groups of three or four.)</p>	Share responses to the activity and listen to the song a second time in an effort to fill in lyrics.	the teacher can provide extra support to struggling groups.
20 min	<p>Ask students to use their fingers to show their level of understanding of the song at this point. (Five fingers=highest level of understanding). Ask students to find the other people who have the same number on their playing cards as they do.</p> <p>On the board, write the following instructions. :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare lyrics and make corrections as needed. 2. Look up at least five unknown words in the dictionary. 3. Try to answer these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the singer know Virginia? Has he ever met her? • Which people are important to Virginia? • What kind of person is Virginia? <p>Read the directions aloud as you write, and tell students that each group member should write a response to each question on the back of his/her lyric sheet</p> <p>Circulate the room to answer questions and check for understanding while students work. Use this time to make notes about as many specific students as possible as these notes will be useful in planning future activities and differentiation.</p> <p>Towards the end of this time (last five minutes), check in with students to see where they are at. Check to see if they are ready to move to the next part of the activity.</p>	<p>Find group members by looking for other students who have the same number on their cards.</p> <p>Work with group members to complete the directions on the board.</p> <p>Each student writes a response to every question on his or her lyric handout.</p>	

4 min	<p>Ask students to take a break for a moment.</p> <p>Ask students for an example of a description word or phrase, and, as students give examples, write these on the board.</p> <p>Ask students who can define the word "description."</p>	<p>Respond to questions in this teacher-led discussion and pay close attention to the contribution of classmates.</p>
5 min	<p>Ask students to find between two and five description words or phrases in the song and to write these beneath their other responses using the heading "Examples of Descriptors"</p> <p>Once students are working again, address any groups that may have fallen behind and help them identify the most important elements of the assignment to complete.</p>	<p>Continue with work in groups.</p>
3 min	<p>Let students know that they will now begin a unit on describing people, and that, for homework, they should list at least ten description words that they already know.</p> <p>Ask students if they have any questions.</p> <p>Ask students to give you the lyric worksheet as they leave. (Stand by the door to collect this.)</p>	<p>Write the homework assignment down.</p> <p>Give lyric worksheet to teacher before leaving.</p>
<p>Assessment</p> <p>Informal assessment as teacher makes notes on student understanding; responses to lyric worksheet will also serve as assessment</p>		

Lesson Title: Vocabulary Building			Day 2
<u>Links to Other Lessons</u>			
<p>On Day 1, students listened to and made meaning of the Train song, "Meet Virginia," pulling favorite words and phrases that they might use in the future to describe a person. For homework, students made a list of at least ten words or phrases that they already knew and could use as adjectives to describe people.</p>			
Standards		How the Standards are Addressed	
<p>Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.</p>		<p>Students respond in writing to the prompt at the beginning of class.</p> <p>Students present information to their groups as they work together to complete the in-class task.</p>	
<u>Materials Needed for Lesson</u>			
<p>Posters or construction paper Index cards or small pieces of paper Worksheet to remind students of their vocabulary list-making task</p>			
Instructional Sequence			<u>Differentiation</u>
Time	Teacher will...	Students will...	
Before Class	<p>Hang a poster or several pieces of construction paper in the front of the room with the adjectives from "Meet Virginia" that students had selected as favorites.</p> <p>Prepare index cards or small pieces of paper for the activity by writing one descriptor on each piece of paper.</p>	<p>Make a list of at least ten words/phrases that could be used to describe a person (preferably words that they already knew)</p>	
5 min	<p>Direct students to the set activity, which should be written on the board. Take attendance and talk briefly with any students who were absent.</p>	<p>Read and respond to the following prompt: "After reading through your responses to "Meet Virginia," the song that we listened to yesterday, I wrote the words and phrases that you liked best on the poster that you see near the board. Choose two or three of these words/phrases, and write a sentence using each one.</p>	
5 min	<p>Ask students if they would be willing to share their sentences.</p> <p>Write these sentences on the board (or allow students to write!) and gently correct or clarify usage if necessary.</p>	<p>Share sentences with the class. Listen to classmates' sentences and pay close attention to appropriate usage of phrases.</p>	
			<p>This activity allows students a degree of control over the vocabulary that they will learn since they are responsible for choosing five of the words on the vocabulary list.</p> <p>The set activity provides time for individual work so that students who feel less comfortable in groups have some quiet time before the group activity.</p> <p>If necessary, the teacher can plan group assignments before class in such a way that students with similar levels of understanding are in the same groups. This would allow the teacher to create additional scaffolding or challenges for individual groups. The teacher could also intentionally create heterogeneous groups in order to encourage students to learn from others who are different from them.</p>

40 min	<p>Explain to students that the work they do today will help to create the list of vocabulary words that they are expected to be able to use by the end of the unit. Explain that students will work in teams to create portions of the vocabulary list for the class. Explain that the teacher will later type all of the individual lists into a master vocabulary list for the class.</p> <p>Break students into groups of four, giving each group a worksheet with which they can create the vocabulary list. Also give each group a stack of index cards with vocabulary words printed on one side.</p> <p>Project, write, or otherwise post the following instructions in the front of the room:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the words lists that you made for homework to begin your vocabulary list. Your group should choose five words from the homework lists to include in the vocabulary list. 2. Organize the cards that you received into categories. You can decide how to organize them based on what makes the most sense to your group. 3. Look up the definitions of any words that you do not know in the Mongolian-English dictionary. 4. Create your list. You need to demonstrate some kind of organization for the words, and you need to define each word in English. 	Work in groups to complete the task. Every student should be participating and, for the most part, students should speak in English.
8 min	<p>Debrief the activity with students by asking the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did it go? • Were you able to complete the activity? • What was most challenging? 	Participate in a reflective conversation about the team activity.
2 min	Let students know that they have no homework. (Yay!) They will receive the complete vocabulary lists tomorrow in class.	Pay attention to some brief but important announcements.

Assessment

Students will turn in their vocabulary lists, and this will serve as a formative assessment to guide future lessons.

Technology in the EFL Classroom

Teachers and students may or may not have access to technologies such as computers, projectors, and the internet, but, as these resources become more wide-spread, teachers may wish to incorporate them into lessons as a way of enhancing learning. Most of the resources listed below provide opportunities for students to practice writing in English, but I will describe in more detail each individual resource and some thoughts on how it could support student learning.

☀ *Domo Animate*: <http://domo.goanimate.com/>

☀ Students can create a free account on the *Domo Animate* website, and, in doing so are able to create and save their own animations using backgrounds, images, and music provided by the site. This is a fun way for students to practice using English and could be used in a variety of ways. Students could research a topic, tell a story, or practice using new vocabulary by incorporating the content into an animation to share with peers. Teachers could also create animations to introduce vocabulary to students for the first time. Animations can be emailed or shared on popular sites such as blogger.com and wordpress.com as well.

☀ *Evernote*: <https://www.evernote.com/>

☀ Evernote, another free resource, is a tool that helps people to be more efficient. Teachers could use Evernote to collect information and ideas for lesson plans as well as to collaborate with colleagues. This is probably not a teaching tool in the EFL classroom, but it could help teachers to create richer, more engaging lesson plans.

☀ *Wordle*: <http://www.wordle.net/>

☀ Copy and paste or type as many words as desired into *Wordle*, and this website will create a visual using those words. This would be another way to introduce vocabulary to students.

☀ *Glogster*: <http://www.glogster.com/>

☀ Glogster is an online poster-making website, and there are as many potential uses for it as there are uses for a physical poster. In fact, a project that makes use of Glogster might be even more useful than one that makes use of traditional posters because students can incorporate videos and audio into their online posters, something that would be nearly impossible to do using a paper one. Students could create online posters to represent their learning in a research project, to demonstrate an opinion, or even to introduce themselves (Reid).

✿ *Edmodo*: <http://www.edmodo.com/>

✿ Edmodo has the appearance and social-networking utility of Facebook, but it provides additional security in that a teacher can limit who can view student profiles. This would be a great way to provide resources to students outside of class and to allow students to practice English online with one another after school.

✿ *Storybird*: <http://storybird.com/>

✿ Storybird is an online storybook writing website. Artists upload copies of their paintings and drawings so that users can illustrate their books. This would be a really wonderful way to have students write creatively in English.

✿ *Lyrics Training*: <http://www.lyricstraining.com/>

✿ One popular classroom activity is to provide students with song lyrics that have words missing and to ask them to fill in the blanks while listening to the song. *Lyrics Training* builds on this concept by providing *YouTube* videos of songs matched with scrolling lyrics that are missing words. Students type the missing words in, and the song will pause automatically at the end of each line to wait until the correct word is submitted. While teachers might not want to use this site in class, it would be worthwhile to pass the link along to students.

STUDENT EXAMS

What Your Students May Be Working Towards

TOEFL

The TOEFL exam, which is recognized by more than 8,000 universities and agencies around the world (ETS), is one of the most common exams taken by students who would like to study in a university in an English speaking country and for whom English is a second or foreign language. More information can be found at <http://www.ets.org/toefl>.

IELTS

The IELTS exam is recognized by more than 6,000 institutions around the world and is taken by many students who would like to attend a university in an English speaking country and for whom English is a second or foreign language. More information is available at <http://www.ielts.org/>.

TEACHER TRAINING

A Comparison of Certification Programs

Of all the complexities involved in becoming an EFL teacher, selecting a training program may be the most confusing part of all. After all, there is no internationally recognized program, and, for most prospective teachers, program cost is an important factor in deciding whether or not a training program is a viable option. Thankfully, TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) has published a position statement on independent TEFL/TESL programs to help new teachers sort through the many programs available. This statement, approved in June of 2003, states:

An independent TESL or TEFL certificate program, which is a program that is neither accredited nor affiliated with an accredited post-secondary institution, can serve as a gateway to the field and profession of English as a second or foreign language teaching for those who have proficiency in English. TESOL recommends that an independent TESL or TEFL certificate program should be taught by qualified teacher educators and offer a balance of theory and practice regarding pedagogy and methodology, including a minimum of 100 instructional hours plus a supervised practice teaching component (TESOL Position Statement on Independent TESL/TEFL Certificate Programs).

The chart below includes some of the major programs available in Colorado and takes into account factors such as time spent in the classroom, accreditation of teachers, and cost of the program. All information included is taken directly from program websites, and more information is available at the websites listed.

SCHOOL	PROGRAM TITLE	LENGTH OF PROGRAM	LOCATION	CLASSROOM TIME	PROGRAM ACCREDITATION/ INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS	COST	Website
TEFL Institute	TEFL Professional 150 Hour Online TEFL Certification	2 months	Anywhere— Online program	20 hours student teaching and/or observation	• Professor with a MA or PhD in TESOL/related discipline or 10+ years teaching experience, including time abroad	\$1,350	http://www.teflinstitute.com/tefl-professional.php
TEFL Institute	TEFL Institute International Courses	4 weeks	Choice of 32 countries around the world	20 hours student teaching/practicum	• Information is limited. Carefully outlined syllabus available on website.	Varies. Around \$2,000 plus living expenses.	http://www.teflinstitute.com/international.php

Bridge TEFL	Bridge IDELT (International Diploma in English Language Teaching)	4 weeks	Denver, CO	6 hours of assessed classroom teaching required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved by AC-CET (Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training) Recommended for university credit by PONSI (University of the State of New York National Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction) 	\$2,495	http://www.bridgetefl.com/bridge-idelt.php
Bridge TEFL	CELTA (University of Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) Certification	4 weeks	Denver, CO	6 hours observation, 6 hours teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainers have certification or MA in TEFL as well as teaching experience Denver center is an official CILTS (Cambridge Integrated Language Teaching Schemes) Center 	\$2,495	http://www.bridgetefl.com/celta.php
Oxford Seminars	TESOL/ TESL/ TEFL Certification	6 days + 40 hr. online portion	Denver, CO	n/a	Teachers all have masters degrees or PhDs. All have either a degree in TESOL or extensive experience teaching abroad.	\$1,195	http://www.oxfordseminars.com/tesol-tesl-tefl-course/citydates.php?city=Denver
Colorado State University	MA in TEFL/ TESL	35 credit hours	Fort Collins, CO	Practicum and internship required	University professors (experts in the field, hold PhDs)	\$444 per credit hour (in-state tuition)	http://english.colostate.edu/graduate/concentrations/tesl/ma-tefl-tesl
Colorado State University	Certificate in TEFL/ TESL	17-19 credit hours	Fort Collins, CO	Internship required	University professors (experts in the field, hold PhDs)	\$444 per credit hour (in-state tuition)	http://english.colostate.edu/docs/checksheets/tesl-checklist.pdf
University of Colorado	MA in TESOL	30-31 credit hours	Boulder, CO	Practicum, Work with international partners	University professors (experts in the field, hold PhDs)	Varies. 9 credits = \$4,689	http://www.colorado.edu/linguistics/tesol/

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