
LEE COLBURN

MA TESOL | BSC PRODUCT DESIGN | TEFL CERTIFICATION

6+ YEARS ENGLISH TEACHING AND TUTORING EXPERIENCE

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Teaching Philosophy Statement

Brief History

Since graduating secondary education, teaching and the transfer of knowledge has been central to my development as a professional in a multitude of positions. My working career began away from academia in the field of electrical installation as an electrical engineer and it was here, whilst working with apprentice technicians, where my intrinsic passion for teaching first became apparent. The personal satisfaction I gained from assisting young colleagues with their acquisition of electrical knowledge and overseeing their growth as individuals, was of greater importance to me than any financial benefit. After five years of educating as an electrician, I decided to begin my pedagogical journey and take the necessary steps to educate as a teacher.

My primary intention in 2013 was to complete a PGCE and gain QTS status in the UK in order to teach Design and Technology at the secondary level, harnessing my skillset as an engineer in the process. However, during my final year of undergraduate study at the University of Brighton, an opportunity arose to join the English Program In Korea (EPIK) and spend a year teaching in Daejeon. I accepted a position at Munjeong Middle School with the outlook that investing one year observing the fundamentals of classroom management, experimenting with teaching methodologies, and acknowledging how professional teachers approach their academic tasks, would be highly beneficial to my own future educational roles. This year swiftly developed into four, as I fell in love with the country, the people, my students, and my responsibilities. It was during this period that I made the decision to return to the University of Brighton to complete my postgraduate MA degree in preparation for my future in Korea.

University of Brighton MA TESOL

The MA TESOL course and dissertation project at the University of Brighton allowed me to explore the theories behind the teaching methods I had been implementing during my time in Daejeon in greater depth. With the help of the outstanding faculty, I completed six modules covering the theoretical understandings of second language acquisition, teaching material design, language teacher reflection, English language teaching practices, World Englishes and accents, and gained a deeper awareness of language use, phonics, and structure.

My final dissertation research project investigated the perceived benefits of English teaching material localisation, and to what extent native English teachers (NET's) facilitate this practice into their Korean educational spaces. The qualitative study revealed that although contextual factors play a significant part in reducing developmental freedoms for NET's, localisation is believed to be highly beneficial for instructors aiming to raise learner engagement and participation levels, and for student visualisation of English language study in relation to relevance of individual needs and future ambitions.

The conversations I held with English instructors in Korea were incredibly rewarding, and academic research is something I hope to continue during my career. The MA TESOL course also cemented my ambition to work with adult students, whom may have a clearer focus on their future careers, the approaches they require from their instructors, and their use of the English language.

Personal Teaching Methodology

I truly believe that an outstanding educator is somebody who fully understands that students are the soul of any institution. My classroom and developed materials are shaped around supporting the free expression and exploration of diverse student interests and goals. Although English communication is the overall subject of study, I believe there is no fundamental rationale why individual passions cannot and should not be encouraged and built into individual lessons or course curricula.

English communication is ultimately stimulated by a triad of essential conditions; *someone* to talk to, *something* to talk about, and a *desire* to understand and be understood. I am committed to always standing as that *someone* to talk to, willing to communicate to my students at any time with good faith, humour, and respect, as well as fostering an energetic educational environment where students can and want to communicate with one another. Stimulating English teaching materials and the relatable content they are built around stand as the *something* to talk about, and it is critical that the discussions which emerge support the diverse interests of my learners. I am committed to investing the time and energy required to tailor each class appropriately, as without this tailored content a student's *desire* to understand and be understood cannot be completely harnessed for the largest communicatory benefit.

As many educators can attest to, maintaining focus throughout the school semester can be a complicated assignment. My approach in response to this difficulty is to carefully consider how the use of unpredictability can be used to preserve and stimulate attentiveness, and something I actively plan into my lectures. I firmly believe that a University campus and an English communication classroom should facilitate unpredictability, chance, creativity, and challenge, working adjacent and complementary to planned, routine activities always. The English language is a tool for communication and can be a plaything with endless possibilities, not a predictable, bland or linear experience.

Summary

I am fully committed as an educator of English to speakers of other languages, to contribute to my students learning by actively understanding and responding to the difficulties they may face. I will provide an enjoyable challenge designed with assisting them with their future endeavors while remaining flexible and creative in adapting to their evolving needs. I sincerely hope this commitment will reflect the gratitude I have to the great and inspirational teachers that have encouraged me to pursue an academic career, from whom I have learned what I know, and that my future students can view me in a similar vein.

My teaching skills and philosophy have evolved and grown over time, and the frameworks and guidelines I possess for effective teaching reflect the insights I have extracted from critical examinations of my own past teaching and student experiences. I vow to continue my learning and improvements as a teacher in every future position I hold, and I am most certain that I will remain as motivated and enthusiastic throughout my career as I was when I began my educational journey.

I am confident that the experiences I have had so far in my career in combination with the academic studies I have recently completed, have prepared me for the next stage of my career, along with the challenges which are attached to teaching at the University level. I relish the opportunity to assist young adults with their improvements in English communication, their preparations for life outside of education, and the communicatory skills they will require for the individual careers they seek to enter.

Regards,

Mr. Lee Colburn.

