

TEACHING BEGINNERS

American University TESOL Program

October 2004 – November 2004

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Office Hours: Mondays 5:00 – 5:30 and 8:00 – 8:30 PM

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES: This course will take a look at some important features of an effective class for beginning ESOL students. We will begin with identifying some language learning assumptions, conducting a needs assessment of the class participants, and listing topics appropriate in a class for beginners. Then through assigned readings, demonstrations and video, participants will become familiar with approaches, strategies and activities that work with beginning students. During the final two sessions, participants will demonstrate for the class one short lesson or activity that they have prepared for beginning level students. Textbook resources will be available for perusal and a bibliography will be distributed.

Grading Criteria:

Attendance: Because there are only 5 class meetings, it is expected that everyone will attend all five classes.

Readings: Because this is a one-hour course, the reading assignments have been kept to a minimum. Therefore, everyone should be able to discuss the readings thoughtfully and constructively.

Class participation: Because classroom interaction is an effective approach to teaching languages, this class will model many collaborative activities. Enthusiastic participation is encouraged.

Class products:

- A brief oral description of one text or other material. Some aspects to include would be:
 - What is the objective of the text?
 - Does it exemplify the language learning assumptions we discussed in class?
 - How is it organized?
 - To what kind of student body is it best suited?
 - Would you enjoy using it? Why? Why not?
- Fifteen-minute “End of course” presentation of an activity or lesson you could use in a beginning class.
 - Choose a context or setting that you can imagine yourself teaching in and aim at that particular group of learners.
 - Provide a handout of the presentation to your classmates for their future reference.
 - Incorporate into the presentation elements discussed in class, such as the objective of the activity, language skills to be practiced, a model of the activity, and assessment of student comprehension.
 - To make the presentation more realistic, use the class as your students.
 - Your work will be graded on clarity of presentation, understanding of language learning assumptions as evidenced in the activity, and preparation of level-appropriate materials.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

October 4	Course Introduction, Language Learning Assumptions,
	Needs Assessment, Teaching by Topic, Video of
	Beginning Level Class, Analysis of video lesson

Assignment: Choose a resource and prepare a brief (5 minute) descriptive oral report for the next class

October 18	Reports, 2 nd Teacher Training Video with background
	Reading, Discussion, Task related to video,
	Demonstration of other level appropriate activities

Assignment: Read ERIC Digest Q & A, Beginning to Work With Adult English Language Learners: Some Considerations by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez, Center for Applied Linguistics

October 25	Discussion of Reading, 3 rd Teacher Training Video with
	Background Reading, Discussion, Related Task,
	Demonstration of other level appropriate activities

Assignment: Read ERIC Digest Q & A, Improving ESL Learners' Listening Skills: At the Workplace and Beyond by Carol Van Duzer, Center for Applied Linguistics

November 1	Discussion of Reading, Presentation of projects,
	Demonstration of other level appropriate activities

Assignment: Read Beginning ESOL Learners' Advice to Their Teachers by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez, *Focus on Basics*, Volume 5, Issue A

November 8	Discussion of Reading, Presentation of projects,
	Assessment in Beginning classes