

Introduction

The Trinity CertTESOL is one of the most popular qualifications for prospective English language teachers, awarded to thousands of candidates worldwide every year. It provides an opportunity for trainees to learn the fundamental skills to enable them to start teaching English as a foreign/second language anywhere in the world. It is taken both by those who have no prior teaching experience and those with teaching experience who require certification. As well as important theory and hands-on teaching practice, graduates of CertTESOL courses also gain useful reflective practice skills that enable them to continue developing as teachers after the course.

While the qualification is certified by Trinity College London, the courses that lead to it are offered by independent organisations called 'course providers' (e.g. language schools, universities, colleges, etc.). Each course provider develops their own unique course that covers the core components of the Trinity CertTESOL syllabus, and meets Trinity requirements regarding total hours of tuition, teaching practice and guided observation of experienced teachers. Course providers tailor their courses to the needs of their typical course members, whether these are in Anglophone countries (e.g. UK, USA, etc.) or countries where English is a second or foreign language. Many course providers offer intensive full-time courses (often four weeks in duration), and some also offer part-time courses run over several months.

The Trinity CertTESOL syllabus consists of five units which shape the structure of all validated courses. They are as follows:

Unit 1: Teaching Skills

Your own teaching practice, including six hours of assessed teaching of *real* English language learners. This is assessed through your lesson planning, your teaching and your reflection on your teaching after each lesson. There's also a *Guided Observation Journal* to complete with your reflections on four hours of observations of experienced teachers.

Unit 2: Language Awareness and Skills

Your understanding and practical application of the content knowledge that all language teachers need. This includes your understanding of the grammar, lexis and phonology of English, and your understanding of the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), their composite sub-skills, and how these are practised in language learning classrooms.

Unit 3: Learner Profile

A written course assignment for which you interview and then describe the background, needs and linguistic profile of a real English language learner. You also teach a one-to-one lesson to this learner and provide recommendations for her/his further study in the future.

Unit 4: Materials Assignment

A course assignment for which you prepare and present one piece of teaching material and complete a written pro forma providing a rationale for, and evaluation of, the material. You will also present this material in an assessment interview with an external course moderator towards the end of your course.

Unit 5: Unknown Language

A written course assignment for which you participate as a learner in four hours of lessons in a foreign language at beginner level. You describe your experience in an *Unknown Language Journal* and also provide a summary of the overall experience.

What's in the CertTESOL Companion?

The five units of the CertTESOL syllabus form the core of this book, which is designed to support your learning throughout the course, firstly by explaining and unpacking the sometimes technical syllabus content, secondly by describing in detail what is required of you from each unit of the syllabus, and thirdly by providing guidance as you complete the assignments and teaching practice on the course itself.

Two additional units go beyond the CertTESOL syllabus to provide advice when preparing for your course, and guidance for your career and professional development after it. There's also an invaluable reference unit in the book called *The Knowledge* that includes, among other things, information on important aspects of the qualification itself, an overview of English language teaching exams and a useful grammar reference section.

Throughout the book you'll find extracts and examples from CertTESOL assignments, language teaching materials and lesson plans. These will provide useful support, showing one possible way of doing it, but always bear in mind that each course provider has their own requirements with regards to assignment rubric and lesson plan pro formas that you will need to follow. The exception to this is the Unit 4 *Materials Assignment*, for which the rubric and pro forma are specified by Trinity, so the completed example and advice for the interview provided gives clear, detailed guidance on how to get through this part of the course successfully.

The CertTESOL companion includes detailed *Contents* and an *Index* so you can find what you need quickly. There's also a *Glossary* at the back of the book which covers key terminology relating to language teaching and language analysis. Within the text itself, glossary terms are indicated in bold when first mentioned in a unit for your convenience and any unusual idioms or expressions are explained in the margin. CertTESOL courses are often intensive experiences, so it makes sense to have all the key information you need to complete your course successfully in one easy-to-use book. Where you may require further detail, or wish to do further reading, suggestions are provided in the text.

How to use this book

The Trinity CertTESOL Companion can be used in a number of ways to support your learning on your CertTESOL course. Where opportunity provides, you may begin using the CertTESOL companion before the start of your course, and read through it as part of your pre-course preparation, thereby enabling you to be ready for the demands and challenges you are likely to face. In such situations, this preparation will enable you to be aware of what's coming, how and why it's important, and how the different elements of the course link to the CertTESOL syllabus. Alternatively, you may begin using the book at the start of your course, or just after it. As mentioned above, the detailed *Contents* and *Index* will make it easy for you to find what you need quickly whenever you need support.

Texts, tasks and activities within the Trinity CertTESOL Companion may also be integrated into 'inputs' delivered by course providers. As such, the book may be used in the training room to facilitate discussion, support planning, and encourage reflection on the practice of English language teaching.

Each unit of the book (excluding *The Knowledge*) includes several key features to support your learning, and can be used either for self-study or for input activities during the course:

Learning opportunities

Learning opportunities are identified at the beginning of each unit to describe the intended learning within the unit. Unlike learning 'outcomes' or 'aims', the choice of the term 'learning opportunities' is intentional, recognising that learning cannot be forced, and that each reader always takes away something slightly different from other readers. You may find that you learn much more than what is described in the *Learning opportunities*!

Unit review

There's a review at the end of each unit in the form of a task with a number of questions or prompts for you to respond to. This helps you to self-evaluate whether you have learnt the most important content within the unit. It should also serve as a useful revision activity, helping you to process the learning more deeply. You'll find the answers to the unit review at the back of the book.

A grey thought bubble icon containing the text "Pause for thought".

Pause for
thought

Pause for thought activities

Pause for thought activities are integrated throughout each unit whenever there is an opportunity for you to benefit from thinking for a moment about what you are reading. This helps to make the reading process less passive, leading to more application, deeper understanding and more learning as a result. We can sometimes be tempted to gloss over such activities, especially when time is limited, yet it is a self-evident truth that if we read something and forget it soon after, we have wasted our time. So as the activity title suggests, pause for a moment and think about the question or task. You may want to take a few rough notes, scan back over what you've just read, or even discuss appropriate questions with those around you – it all helps to take in what you are reading. You'll find answers/suggested answers in the *Pause for thought Key* at the back of the book.

Pre-course preparation tasks

Trainees who are reading the book before the start of their CertTESOL course may also find it useful to complete the *Pre-course preparation tasks* provided at the back of the book. These tasks usually require personalised, often reflective responses that do not have a single correct answer, so no answer key is possible. They are useful because they require you to process and interpret what you are reading, and therefore hopefully to remember it as a result. Some course providers may ask you to complete some or all of these tasks as part of your mandatory pre-course preparation.

Whatever your preferred way of using the book, it is hoped that it will provide the support you need and serve as a useful companion to make your CertTESOL course a more memorable, enjoyable and rewarding experience. Wishing you the best of luck on your CertTESOL journey!