

- » **Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)**
- » Linguistics
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## Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Department of English and American Studies at the Europa-University Flensburg

» Listen

In addition to literature, cultural studies and linguistics, studying English also involves teaching and learning English as a foreign language. TEFL, short for **Teaching English as a Foreign Language**, is concerned with the systematic teaching of English as a foreign language and with how students whose first language is different learn the English language. In close relation to the other disciplines in this subject, TEFL also deals with how English-speaking literatures and cultures are taught. Given its interdisciplinary scope, TEFL shares research interests with other language-related fields such as Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition and Teaching.

Theory and practice are closely related in this field. Concepts for learning and teaching are developed theoretically, tested in practice, and investigated empirically to find out how learning processes can be optimized and what factors contribute towards teaching and learning English successfully. Issues concerning English language teaching and learning in all school types and at different levels (primary and secondary) are theoretically modelled and practically explored. Among the prime concerns of TEFL is the scientific study of the goals, content, and methods of foreign language teaching as well as their interrelationship in actual lessons. This scientific interest in teaching processes and learning outcomes also includes the design and analysis of teaching material as well as the role of media in instruction and acquisition processes.

The English and American Studies program in Flensburg offers courses in a modular structure. During the Bachelor's degree program, the theoretical bases of TEFL are introduced in the 4th semester. Students progress from the history of foreign language teaching to approaches and methods of FL teaching; they acquire basic knowledge of second language acquisition and learn about the main language skills and how these are taught. In close coordination with the basic module, BA students take a course which prepares and accompanies a practical internship (*Fachpraktikum*), in which they spend a three-week period in school observing lessons and gaining first-hand experience in teaching (English). In the Master's degree programs, courses specifically address the goals of the respective study qualifications. Courses on *Playful English Teaching* are offered for those who major in TEFL in primary school. The TEFL program for secondary school candidates regularly offers courses on *Communicative/Task-based Language Teaching*, *Intercultural Communicative Competence*, and *Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)*. A central element of all teacher-training Master's programs is a 10-week practical internship in school, during which students explore their future workplace, experience the professional tasks and routines of an (English) teacher, and conduct an independent research study (e.g. during English lessons). The internship is also accompanied by a TEFL course at university, in which current issues of practical importance are discussed. If students choose English as their priority subject during this practice period, a professor of TEFL supervises their internship.

In terms of research, the Flensburg TEFL staff is collaborating within the project "Research Group TEFL", conducting qualitative classroom studies from an applied linguistic and foreign language teaching/learning perspective. The main goal of these studies is to make meaningful and relevant contributions toward foreign language didactics. This involves helping English learners develop their foreign language discourse competence and become competent language users. It also aims at supporting students as future teachers of English in observing and analyzing lessons and reflecting on these observations against their theoretical and methodological background knowledge. Two classroom corpora, *FLECC* and *PECC*, document English language teaching in a variety of primary and secondary schools; both are products of the TEFL staff's practice-based research orientation. Authentic lesson documents are employed early on in seminars and project work to sensitize students to TEFL topics and to guide them in their studies when exploring English language teaching theoretically and methodologically.

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