

TEFLies

This is
what the ~~education~~
TEFL course industry is
like: lies, half-truths and
other tactics to get you to
buy and not really teach
you much of anything
useful at all



Hey, I am [lan](#).

And I am going to tell you a bit about my story before I get into the knitty gritty.

Because I remember KRS-ONE saying something like *“if you don’t know who wrote it then you don’t know what you’ve read.”*

And well, you’re going to read a lot of things about TEFL (often contradictory) and my suggestion is to seek transparency. I think that is pretty rare in TEFL course land.

There’s lots of fakery out there that you will see later.

And because you don’t know me perhaps later you may question if I am telling the truth or not. If you do a search for *eslinsider reviews* then you will find a few reviews written by “competitors”, but neither one actually reveals who they are.

And I think that is a key difference when it comes to trust.

This is just for show, but here is the most popular video I made.



You can see that it has over 300,000 views and that channel has over 7,900 people who subscribed.

Why am I telling you this?

So you get some idea of who I am.

And I am not bragging^^ I also probably have 150+ videos with less than a 1,000 views.

Anyways...

My experience with TEFL started in 2004.

I had been doing a lot of traveling prior to that and I wanted to find a way to live abroad. Teaching English didn't actually appeal to me at first, however it seemed like the only way I could do that.

So I was living with my parents at the time in New Hampshire (Live Free or Die) and I started researching teaching in Asia. I sort of whittled it down to [Taiwan](#) and I decided that I would go there and look for a job, but my parents were a bit concerned, especially my mom.

My dad encouraged me to take a course. So I went up to Montreal for a few days to take a TESOL course that was like 2 days in a classroom and then the rest take home study.

There was a lot of talk about stuff I can't remember like some facts such as, "English is the most spoken second language in the world". And then I remember doing a few games which were fun, but the ones they taught weren't that usable for teaching as I later found out.

Most of your teaching is going to be either vocabulary, phrases, sentences or Q&A and the best games can be used with those and integrated into the lesson.

Anyways...

At the end of those two days they gave us what they called a "60 hour" certificate which was the first lie since you can't squeeze 60 hours into two 8 hour days. But it was also weird because it didn't say 60 hours on the certificate. And they said you can get a "120 hour" certificate if you complete the rest of the course as a take home.

So I got this big stack of boring black and white books and I went home and started to work on it, but...

IT WAS INCREDIBLY BORING!

It was all studying English grammar (more on that later) and teaching theory and stuff I do not remember. So I tried to keep working on it so I could get the 120 hour certificate (the bait), but it just hurt my head and decided f*#! it, I am going to Taiwan.

So I got my backpack, a ticket to Taiwan and I threw some of those big books into my backpack and I took off for Taiwan.

Oh.

And I should say there was a lot of anxiety pre-take off like, “Am I really going to do this? Is this what I should do? and I am not a teacher!”

Doubts, fears, etc.

The ones that always come up when you move, change or start something new.

But I was on my way. On the plane I learned how to say thank you (xie xie) in Mandarin, but actually said something that sounds more like “pee-pee” (xuxu) to the stewardess.

When I got to Taiwan I chose Taichung as a place to live even though I had an old college friend in Koahsiung. I stayed in old hotels and found a room to rent while looking for work and I started off as a [substitute](#) English teacher.

It was not easy and I kept thinking “they didn’t teach me this in the course”.

The kids were speaking Chinese and Taiwanese and I didn't know what they were saying or more importantly know what I was doing. Eventually, like 3 months later I found a job that gave me an ARC to live and work in Taiwan and I started my new career - if you want to call it that as an ESL teacher.

When I interviewed with my boss there I tried to point out the fact that I had a TESOL certificate and tried to negotiate a higher wage, but he didn't care about the certificate and in the back of my mind even though I was saying I have this certificate I was thinking I don't know sh*t about teaching and I felt like a bit of a fraud.

So months passed and remember those big books I threw in my bag?

I never used them and ended up just throwing them out. What I learned was that I learned the best by watching other teachers. I learned a few activities and teaching tactics by watching the teachers at the school where I worked.

But it wasn't enough.

Teaching was difficult and a good year and a half would pass before I started feeling a little bit confident in the classroom.

So did that course prepare me to do my job?

No.

In fact I was angry about it because my job was hard and that course cost \$1000. I had kids and classes that I couldn't manage and teaching wasn't fun. I would spend a lot of time preparing

lessons in the beginning, but it didn't really help because I didn't know what I was doing.

That course I took didn't prepare me for a few reasons.

1. It wasn't focused on teaching who I taught - kids
2. No real concrete system for classroom management
3. No simple system for lesson planning
4. Not enough emphasis on using activities
5. Too much theory, grammar study and useless facts
6. The timing was wrong

The problem with taking a course before you teach is that you have NO CONTEXT. It's just an idea. You can't relate to the things you are being taught because it isn't the here and now. So if you take a course one time my advice is to take it while you are teaching.

Now back to the emphasis of this guide.

You may think or assume that TEFL course providers are the authority on teaching abroad. But you'd be naive to think that. Honestly, they are more like a middle man - sort of like a recruiter or a traveling salesman.

So who is the authority?

There isn't one.

There isn't any one accreditation for all of TEFL. If you want to, you can call the schools (employers) abroad the authorities, but they are all different and can vary in terms of quality just like

restaurants, TEFL courses, etc. Or perhaps the teachers are the authorities, but they also can range in terms of quality.

Anyways...

Many TEFL courses try to look like and sound like they are universities, but they are not.

To me it looks like they all pretty much copy the CELTA model - at least on the surface.

They just try to look and sound like CELTA, but most don't come close.

[COPYCATS.](#)

And there is a bit there on which course is best.

I don't want to imply that colleges and universities are so great. I mean I had a good time in college, but I went into huge debt and did college really prepare me for the real world?

I don't think so.

I was doing a lot of the things that I wanted to do when I left like: traveling, snowboarding, and making art, but I was working part-time jobs that anyone without a degree could have done like waiting on tables, doing social work, working at ski areas, etc.

And I think it's the same with TEFL.

It's not really about the real world. It's about getting a qualification, "a certificate" to get a job. That's what college was about right? Or was it?

Go to college, so you can get a diploma to get a job.

But then you get out of college and you realize you have no job. So you have to get a job and chances are it's not related to what you studied and here you are thinking about teaching English abroad.

- 40%+ of college grads from the USA work in jobs that don't require a degree.
- 40%+ of college grads from the USA work in jobs unrelated to their degree.

“Accredited” degrees too.

So why did I write this?

Am I here to make other people look bad and make myself look good? Some people such as the TEFL course providers mentioned here think that but no, I am just here telling you my experience and how I see it.

I am putting myself out there a little by writing this, but I decided it's better to not turn my cheek.

My experience with the TESOL/TEFL course industry started long before I ever made a course when I wrote posts like, [TEFL/TESOL courses are a waste of money](#) (originally published on another site in 2011) which I wrote because I didn't think that course was worth \$1000.

I also wrote another one back then on lies that you'll soon see.

And I was never one who tried hard to fit in or keep up with the joneses.

Much of what you are going to read here was originally written on my blog.

Now...

Let's take a look.

Ohh.

Before I forget are all TEFL/TESOL/CELTA courses like this?

I hope not, but a lot of them are or at least use some of these tactics.



COMMON LIES MANY TEFL COURSES TELL

Some **TEFL/TESOL** course providers use certain tactics to deceive and manipulate the consumer to buy.

Many prey on uninformed and naive newcomers, like possibly yourself, to make money. For them it's a one time deal, *cha-ching!*

As you won't be coming back for more.

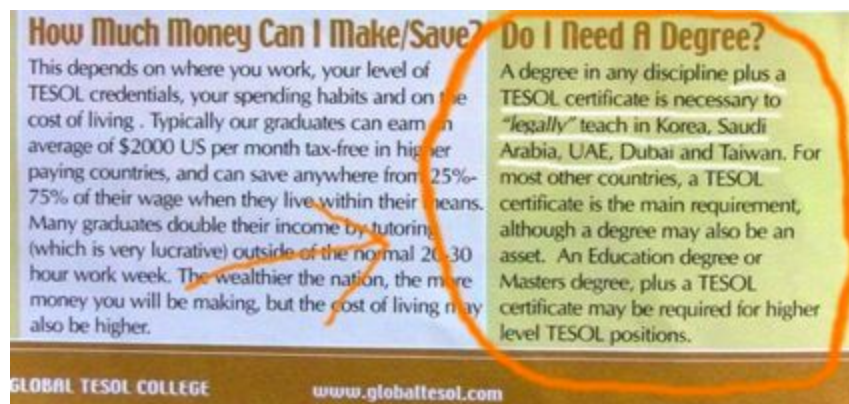
Certificates may be required in some places/schools, however, they are not required in many and for me it [wasn't worth it](#). Your experience will probably be different, but before you proceed, read.

Here I'll show you some examples (including screenshots/pics) of lies and deceit being told by TEFL/TESOL providers. Some of these relate to what the [requirements are for teaching English](#) in Asia.



Lie #1 - TEFL Certificates Are "Legally" Required

That's rarely the case.



This photo was taken from an old brochure that I found lying around from the company where I took my first course. It states that a TESOL certificate is required to "legally" teach in UAE, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Taiwan and [Korea](#).

I can't speak for all of those places, but I have taught in [China](#), Taiwan and Korea for 6+ years and I can tell you that it is **not** a "legal" requirement.

"Global TESOL College" later found this article and ironically said, *"You should be prudent in your research and not misguide people in terms of international requirements."* And, *"This is what gets you the work visa that is issued by the government."*

That is not true at least in Eastern Asia where the basic [requirements to teach English](#) are to be a native speaker and to hold a bachelor's degree in any subject. Those requirements are for the work visa. Without those you can't legally teach English most of the time.

And then they said, *"Hence, it being listed as a requirement on every single job posting."* I suppose it depends on which site you look at. If you look at advertising based sites for TEFL/TESOL courses like TEFL (dot) com - like they pointed out, then you might see that, but you'll find something different if you look at other sites for teachers.

And I recommend you to see the data in [what employers in Asia actually want](#) vs. what some middleman says.

And finally...

"...Please remove "GTC" from your article or we will take further action."

Here's another one by i-to-i.

Secure | <https://www.i-to-i.com/teach-english-abroad/taiwan.html>

Courses ▾ Internships ▾ Jobs ▾ Blog ▾ FAQ ▾ About ▾

minimum hour contract usually at around 25 hours per week, although overtime will almost always be available.

This is a lie. You don't need a TEFL cert. to teach in Taiwan.

All you need to teach in Taiwan is...

To teach English in Taiwan, you will need a University or College degree, and a minimum of a 120 Hour Online TEFL Course; although the practical element of the i-to-i 140 Hour Combined TEFL Course is preferred if you have no experience of teaching.

Average Monthly Teaching Salary

89,500 TWD	£1,835	\$3,000
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← **This is far from average.**


They say an online TEFL course is [required to teach in Taiwan](#).

That's not true.

They also say the "average" [salary to teach in Taiwan](#) is NT\$89,500 which is high and far from average.

[Buxiban](#) teachers will make about NT\$48-60,000. And "licensed teachers" in public schools will make closer to NT\$60-70,000.

Lie #2 - You "Need" A Certificate If You Want A "Decent" Job



Ok, I can help with some of your questions.

If you want to teach at a state or private school in Korea you'll need both a degree and a TEFL certificate. Now since you'd be studying at university there this means you won't have your degree and so that's not possible. The degree is needed for your visa but if you have a visa through your fiancé then it could make a difference so you'll have to ask at the embassy.

Despite what the other comments here say, TEFL certificates are required if you want anything like a decent job and whether you take it with us or anyone else, don't turn up without one asking for a job or you will just be shown either the door or a school no other teacher wants! And online ones are fine (we run an online course and we have loads of graduates teaching in Korea - see <http://icalweb.com>). There's no need to get one there.

If you have a visa and a TEFL cert then there's a possibility a school will hire you without a degree. You may well get lucky here. And of course, you can always try private lessons (and these often pay more than schools).

Good luck!

Sometimes I hang out on *Yahoo Answers* and answer peoples' questions about teaching abroad. And I can tell you that there are a lot of lies being told over there by TEFL providers on a regular basis.

This one again relates to what the [requirements are for teaching in Korea](#). Since I have taught in both public and private schools I can assure you that a TEFL certificate is not a requirement in a "state or private school".

You can read the one above ICAL TEFL for yourself here:
http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index;_ylt=Ao5m1M622Ju41.J0bn9O5GHty6IX;_ylv=3?qid=20120203204219AA7yXxp

Another similar response:
http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index;_ylt=AjvfDm7ZPNmnQxsF0Bmfml_ty6IX;_ylv=3?qid=20120211215934AAAnWywO

You'll get a more "reputable" job

Unless you're getting a very high level certificate, such as a CELTA, DELTA or Trinity TESOL, and teaching experience **this is not likely to happen.**

And even then...

Having a CELTA, DELTA or other advanced TEFL certificate doesn't guarantee anything. For example, you could still have a [CELTA and have a pretty mediocre job.](#)

A lot of people have TEFL certificates and even **more importantly teaching experience.** In my first experience in Taiwan I had a TESOL certificate and I wasn't granted better jobs than my non-TEFL touting friends.

I have heard some TEFL course providers say that if you only have a degree you'll only qualify for an entry level job and that a TEFL/TESOL course will enable you to get a "reputable" job.

Nonsense!

A whole lot of people are competing for relatively similar jobs. The [qualifications](#) that typically make a difference are certified (licensed) teachers, teachers who have master's degrees and years of experience.

Here is a "exploitative" quote from a TEFL provider's website:

"In addition, those lacking certification are often at a disadvantage since the jobs they are likely to find will be lower paying positions with schools at the low end of the market; these schools are more likely to offer exploitative working conditions."

All things being equal between you and the other competing job applicant then yes, a TEFL certificate could give you an edge, but so could good looks, the fact that you are already there or charm.

TEFL certificates can be preferred, but there are also other [preferences](#).

It's really "competitive" nowadays

Is it really?

Some providers use the line that it's not like it used to be when you could just show up and get a job. They say that nowadays it's more competitive therefore you will need training and a certificate to get a job. I suppose it depends on the place and the school. But I see this as mostly hype.

Here is another quote from a popular TEFL course providers website:

"As the competition for desirable ESL teaching jobs has increased, language schools around the world are becoming more selective when hiring new teachers."

That's true, but...


Let's say you have a TEFL, TESOL or CELTA certificate and the other guy has a year of experience teaching in the country you are applying to. That school is most likely going to pick the teacher with experience.

Again this is fear based marketing.

Lie #3 You Need "Our Companies" Certificate

Teaching English in China: At a Glance

This massive country has a great deal to be famous for: its five millennia of history, the volcanic dishes of Sichuan, and dazzling cities like Beijing and Shanghai. But finding positions quickly after certification, and the ability to teach and travel with

Monthly Salary*:	4,500 - 16,000 CNY  750 - 2,670 USD (Jul 27, 2015) [†]
Private Tutoring per Hour:	100 - 300 CNY 16.75 - 50.00 USD (Jul 27, 2015) [†]
Income Tax^{††}:	3 - 25%
Ability to Save per year:	500 - 21,000 USD
Airfare:	Reimbursement (full or partial) usually given
Accommodations:	Usually included or allowance given
Health Care:	Usually included
Holidays:	Usually paid
Teaching Hours per Week:	20 - 25
Typical Contract Length:	One year preferred; short-term may be available
Typical Start Month(s):	Year round
Application Timeline:	1 - 6 months
Work Visa:	Employer sponsors
Minimum Requirements:	High School Diploma or Bachelor's Degree and <u>Oxford Seminars TESOL/TESL/TEFL Certificate</u>
Additional Notes:	Certain regions/schools require Bachelor's Degree; ESL teachers are in great demand

Here's one I found on their site. It states that an "Oxford Seminars" certificate is required to teach in China. Some schools may prefer teachers with TEFL certification, but to legally teach English in China you need a degree and to be a native speaker to get a Z visa.

Learn more about the [requirements to teach English in China](#).



This one I found on *Youtube*. Someone asks here what the basic requirements are to teach abroad. This time the TEFL provider didn't simply say a "TESOL certificate" they said "many employers require an "OS" TEFL/TESOL/TESL Certificate". You can read it here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyKFr8PDIMU>

And these companies have been around for years...

The funny thing is that all of these companies are large and have been around for quite some time, so they say:

- "Global TESOL College" since 1994
- "Ical" TEFL since 1998
- "Oxford Seminars" since 1992

Lie #4 - They'll Only Take "CELTA" Qualified Teachers

Geez...

I was kind of surprised to have found this one. Isn't CELTA supposed to be the best in terms of TEFL courses? I mean CELTA has such a good reputation???

Or is that reputation partly built on marketing hype from CELTA course providers?

As you will soon see it's still not free from the lies and hype some TEFL providers tell. This provider said the following on their site that I found linked to on [Wikipedia](#).

"The CELTA is a foot in the door at the world's most reputable academies, known for their high-pay, security and benefits.

Take the Disney English School in China, for example, which is now offering several \$2,500USD-a-month positions across the country, with airfares, rent, dental and health care all paid for. And, they'll only take CELTA-qualified students."

That sounded like b.s. to me, so I went and looked at [Disney English's page](#) and found the following:

What actually are the basic requirements to work for Disney English?

Answer from their website:

Foreign Trainer (Teacher):

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
- 2 years post graduate teaching experience, preferably teaching young learners
- Energy, enthusiasm & passion to inspire children in the classroom

- Demonstration of a neutral accent, clear pronunciation, good intonation and English language rhythm
- Ability to commit to 12-15 month contract

As you can see for yourself **it doesn't say anything about a CELTA certificate**. I would also add that Disney English is not an extraordinary school. No offense to Disney, but it is not an "elite" school. It's a chain school with more than 40 branches across China.

Conclusion

Perhaps the moral of this story is don't believe everything you read or are told by TEFL/TESOL providers. Some [companies lie](#) and misinform naive newcomers.

Do your research and don't take advertisements at face value.

Learn more about [TEFL course scams](#).

“Guaranteed” jobs

You can watch the video [here](#).



"TEFL guaranteed job placement" is a common one. Some TEFL/TESOL courses offer this. They say if you complete their course then you're guaranteed a job - through them.

They may offer this and it may help you. But, the course I took offered some "guaranteed jobs" through their website, but in reality they had very few jobs where I wanted to teach.

A course can only offer you a small share of all the jobs that are out there. You'll find far more variety on other sites than you will on theirs. It could be a helpful service, but I wouldn't choose a course because of it. The course I took had very few jobs especially in places where I wanted to teach. In my opinion it's not worth it and I wouldn't choose a course because of this.

This is like nailing yourself to one recruiter.

A recruiter has self-interests and one recruiter has a limited number of options in any one place. Most people will agree that it is better to diversify your options.

I believe this is a tactic that's used to prey on your fear of teaching abroad. You're looking for security and guarantees, but they don't really exist in this world.

Comments from Reddit

"I did a TEFL course with them a few years ago, the person I talked to told me that if I did an intensive classroom course with them they could set me up with an EFL job in Thailand through one of their contacts.

I did the course, got in touch with them and this time they told me that I didn't have the necessary qualifications and I had to do another online course.

I did that course, got in touch with them and they then told me they didn't have any positions in Thailand, but could get me a job in China if I did another course, or they could send me their list of contact schools in Thailand, which turned out to just be a directory of public schools in the country." - AtomicMonkeyTheFirst

"I've finished my 120-hour UK TEFL course I've been absolutely lost with regards to finding work. The jobs board provided by TEFL has little work on offer in Korea, and the few jobs it does have don't seem to be quality..." - harryrobertparker

"I'm just disappointed because when I talked with the counselor he made it seem like they were going to help me step by step the whole time which is partly why I got it. But besides the actual class they've been no help at all. - pepper1717

WHY TEFL ACCREDITATION DOESN'T MATTER

Accreditation is a way to make schools or programs fit within a certain mold - based on someone else's ideas of how they should be or operate.

Which might sound good, but who are "they"?

They are middlemen that nobody knows anything about.

They charge money.

They are often made up of people from the same companies that they accredit.

Chances are "they" are not up to date. Chances are they are the old paradigm. If you are an innovator or a school with a unique approach then maybe they won't accredit you.

There is no one governing accreditation for TEFL courses in fact I counted at least [23 different TEFL accreditation bodies](#) and some of those are **fake**. Many of these accreditors are not directly related to TEFL.

There is no one industry standard.

These organizations aren't going around from course to course accrediting or denying TEFL accreditation.

There is an application process and fees to pay.

"What's Accreditation Again?"

Like many of the government's tentacles, accreditation is simply a process of colonization and control." - [source](#)

BUT in TEFL...

99% of the accrediting bodies are not governmental.

And aside from CELTA and Trinity TESOL most TEFL courses have no affiliation with universities or colleges. In TEFL most of the accreditors are often private businesses associated with education, but not strictly TEFL.

Are all TEFL courses accredited? No.

Do they have to be? No, there is no law for that. It's not standardized or regulated.

Does accreditation even work?

I found an interesting PDF called [Why Accreditation Doesn't Work](#) by [ACTA](#). Here are a few points that it makes.

Accreditation:

1. does not guarantee educational quality.
2. undermines institutional autonomy.
3. contributes to overpriced education.
4. is mostly a secret process.
5. involves an exchange of money.

The article above refers to accreditation and higher education, yet I can see how these apply to TEFL accreditation as well.

1. Accreditation does not guarantee educational quality.

The thinking goes something like "Oh, it's accredited then it must be fine". Or maybe like this, "Nestle is a big company and this breast milk replacement looks good... I trust them..." Later on her baby dies.

Too often we assume, place too much trust based on outward appearances and actually know little of what is inside.

On the "rare occasion" that a course provider's accreditation is suspended it's usually because the institution failed to pay it's bill rather than any educational flaw.

2. Accreditation undermines institutional autonomy.

As I was looking through the ACCET accreditation process I started to get the feeling why would I want someone like this to inspect my course and deem it worthy or not. I don't think we share the same values, so why should I succumb to their values. Or try to fit into their mold *and then pay them for it?*

One size doesn't fit all.

3. Accreditation contributes to overpriced education.

In-class TEFL/TESOL/CELTA courses can range anywhere from around \$500 to over \$3000 depending on the course. That's a lot of money considering the fact that most people only teach English abroad for a year or two and have college debt to begin with.

I definitely thought that the course that I first took was way too expensive considering what I learned. Accreditation comes with a fee and that fee is only going to increase the cost of the course.

4. Accreditation is mostly a secret process.

These so-called inspections of courses are done so privately.

5. Accreditation involves an exchange of money.

Accrediting programs need courses to continue. The TEFL/TESOL course providers are their customers.

"Keep in mind that "accreditation mills" also exist..." -
parchment.com

My experience

I've spent around 8 years looking for jobs on ESL Cafe and other sites primarily in Eastern Asia. And I'll tell you what. The majority of employers just take TEFL and TESOL certification *at face value*.

If it's important to them they'll only check your resume to see if you have it. And it usually doesn't go any further than that.

I personally never had an employer ask me whether the TESOL course on my resume was accredited or not. Aside from images of the certificate sent in an email I also never had an employer ask to see my actual certificate. The only question that I did get about my course (in 6 years of teaching) was about *how many [hours](#)* the course was (1 time).

If you look at the [job ads](#) what will you see? The main [qualifications](#) to teach in Eastern Asia are to be a native speaker and to have a degree. TEFL/TESOL certificates - if mentioned in the job ad are usually noted as [preferences](#). I can't recall a mention of *accreditation* or an accredited TEFL course.

If you want more than just a certificate

If you want more than a certificate and you want to learn what to do and how to teach when you step in the classroom then you need more than just a certificate. You might assume that any TEFL course online or not might teach you those basics, but that is not true.

Another "accredited" course...

"Just finished a 120 hour course from Groupon, found it completely worthless even for the price and full of grammatical and spelling errors. It appears to me, despite claiming to be accredited..."

Why don't some TEFL courses have accreditation?

There can be different reasons why they don't have it. Some of them may be:

1. They may not be able to afford it or have financial problems.
2. They can be a new provider and may not have attained it.
3. They may choose not to seek accreditation because they view it as a violation of their religious or academic beliefs.

1. Money

As mentioned above accreditation involves an exchange of money. They may not be able to afford it or they may not want to pay for it. Some accreditation bodies (companies, lol) can charge \$1-2000+ a year for accreditation.

2. They might be new

The whole process of accreditation can take a good deal of time depending on the organization.

3. They may choose NOT to seek accreditation

They could be a religious based TEFL course accredited by god himself, LOL or they may see it as a violation of their academic freedom. As mentioned above accreditation undermines institutional authority.

So they may not believe in the system or have other religious/academic reasons. I have seen ads out there for "Christian" TEFL courses.

Maybe if they are like me they don't believe in the system, trust it or want anything to do with it.

Accreditation can be used to scam you

Since people assume that the word "accredited" equals quality or a good reputation then know that it can also be used to scam you for money.

The term "accredited TEFL courses" is frequently used by TEFL course providers. While many of them may have it others may lie about their accreditation or be both the TEFL course provider and the accreditation bureau themselves.

The blanket statement "[*internationally recognised TEFL courses*](#)" is similar.

Here's something similar to that note about colleges.

"For example 83% of the board for Middle States Commission on Higher Education is comprised of people that work for institutions that they then accredit." - [The College Accreditation Scam](#)

The term "accreditation" can also be used as well to market online universities. Here is an example:

"With our high quality, self-paced degree programs you can get an accredited degree for around \$6,000 #EndStudentDebt"

Maybe it is true and not a "scam". I guess in the USA we assume that higher education comes with a price. We assume the more you pay the better the degree and education that you'll get. But in many other developed countries students spend less than that for a degree that's not taken online.

Or in the TEFL world it may be:

"Accredited TEFL courses offering internationally recognized certification for just \$49 on Groupon."

They get even cheaper than that.

How can you trust a company?

This is a tough one because as you just saw many companies tell lies and that includes some of the biggest and most popular.

Basically you can suss out their website, their "About" page, reviews (more on those later), etc.

Typically crooks or frauds - whether they are a TEFL course provider or just a troll, do not offer any personal information and try to remain anonymous. They'll wear the veil that makes them

look reputable, official, etc. but it will be very impersonal and vague.

"I can promise you no hagwon will bother to check up on the accreditation and quality of the course you took. They will just see that you have the certificate and maybe then place your resume at the top of the pile." - [Guyforbes](#)

Conclusion

TEFL accreditation isn't all that it seems and **it doesn't guarantee quality** for the different reasons mentioned above.

There is more to it than that.

A TEFL course is not required to be accredited and just because it isn't doesn't necessarily mean that it is a low quality course and just because it is doesn't mean it's high quality.

I've taken one TESOL and one online TEFL course, both were accredited and both were not very practical or useful.

I wouldn't merely rely on TEFL accreditation as a marker of a good TEFL course or not. I would try to test it out, see what they offer, research the company or perhaps see what people are saying about it.

"...For EFL in Asia, those accreditations don't matter at all, but they are necessary in some Western countries..."

If you want to teach in Korea/Japan/China/Thailand, etc. it really doesn't matter. Busan through EPIK requires some in-class hours, but otherwise all certificates are pretty much equivalent in the school's eyes." - [Tomli](#)

Related:

- [Why accreditation is such a mess](#)
- [The ugly truth about college accreditation](#)
- [We're Not Accredited and We're Proud of It](#)
- [Unaccredited Institutions Of Higher Education In The USA](#)

TEFL COURSE AFFILIATE\$ - YOUR PEERS ARE TELLING LIES TOO

TEFL course affiliates make money from TEFL course providers by referring people to buy courses on the providers site. Lots of TEFL course providers do this.

Here's an example of the [search results page for TEFL affiliates](#).

I see them from time to time when I am searching the web. I am familiar with this, but are you? You may simply be out looking for a review of a certain course stumble upon a blog and then see that they are recommending that course.

But did you know that they were making money by recommending you to that course. Does that change anything for you? It does for me.

How it works

1. Bloggers reach out to TEFL course providers to get their affiliate links.

2. TEFL course providers reach out to "popular" bloggers and offer an affiliate link.

It's a win-win for both parties, but is it for you?

What really pisses me off

It's [lies](#).

I have seen them before, but just the other day I was on Youtube and I saw a suggested video titled, "5 Reasons You Need A TEFL Certificate To Teach In Korea".

I taught in Korea for 3.5 years, so I think I know a bit about it. At first I thought this was a recruiter or a TEFL course provider because I have seen them tell lies before. But no this was "Fancy Nancy."

I started to watch her video as I was curious as to why she was saying this. Then I looked down in the description and then went, ohhh!!

TEFL affiliate links and LIES

YouTube

peter line rodeo

1:45 / 6:02

5 Reasons You Need a TEFL Certificate to Teach in Korea

Fancy Nancy TV

Subscribe 33K

You don't need a TEFL certificate to teach in a hagwon in Korea. You may only need it if you don't have experience or a related degree in a public school.

3,692 views

+ Add to → Share ... More

This is an affiliate link.

Published on Jul 11, 2017

Do you really need a TEFL Certificate? Yes you do! and 5 reasons why

If you have any more questions about teaching leave them below :)

► Want to Teach in Korea?! Get a 120 Hr TEFL Certificate! Use Code FANCYN35 for 35% Off
<http://bit.ly/2qmkER7>

Support me on Patreon: <https://patreon.com/user?u=2909856>

Get \$25 Off Airbnb! <https://www.airbnb.com/c/nshao20>

That's why she is telling you that "YOU NEED" a certificate to teach in Korea. She's telling you that because she'll make money anytime that you follow one of those links and end up buying. That link will take you to "MyTEFL.com".

Lots of TEFL course providers use affiliate marketing.

- [myTEFL](#)
- [i-to-i](#)
- [iTTT](#)
- PremierTEFL
- iCalTEFL
- UniTEFL

And many more...

myTEFL didn't like my review linked to above pointing out his affiliate marketing so he created a troll site called *Eslinsiderreviews.com* and I later figured out he wrote it.

I wrote about it in this [review on myTEFL](#) and also made this [video](#).

So...

What you really need to teach in Korea

To legally teach in Korea you need a degree and to be a native speaker. Those are the basic [requirements to teach in Korea](#).



Now there are some programs (like EPIK) or schools that may prefer certification especially if you don't have experience, but to say that you need one to teach in Korea is selfish on her part.


She's lying to you so that she can make more money.

I am surprised that she has as many followers as she does.
Lame.

Doesn't it look beautiful?

Secure <https://www.coffeewithasliceoflife.com/2014/03/03/how-to-get-a-tefl-qualification-on-the-cheap/>

30% off online courses here:



Have you done your TEFL? Did you find it as hard as me to get any sense online? Comment below....

Yes, it looks beautiful, but you are not buying a vacation.

Did you forget about the "teaching" part in teaching abroad?

Or maybe that's what they are trying to do to you.

Despite what they are showing you [teaching abroad is NOT a vacation](#). Perhaps you were just focused on the "abroad" part.

It's not vacation.

Chances are you are not going to be near a beach like that or even have much of a vacation. If you teach in a private institute in Asia then you'll probably only have like 10 days of vacation a year.

You might have more if you teach in a public school or a university (if you have experience and good qualifications), but most of the time you will be working.

It's possible that you could find a job near a [beach](#) somewhere, but the vast majority of you will end up teaching in some big city somewhere, because that's where the jobs are.

I have seen quite a few companies use advertising like this. MyTEFL, i-to-i, and others like above do this.

Lots of people are chasing the carrot and the carrot now is that beach. Now it's possible that you may go to a place like that, but the vast majority of you will not be near one and the majority of your time abroad will be spent someplace else.

Anyways...

The pic above is an affiliate link. You can find it by searching for: "Cheap TEFL"

Again there are more lies...

The [same lines](#) that I have seen other providers use. She says "... *their course is so well-known amongst employers.*"

It's "[accredited](#)" blah, blah, blah. That's probably the same line that they used to sell to her.

Polly wanna cracker?

There are also some other affiliate links on that page in the comments to *es/starter*.

TEFL affiliate advice on how to choose a TEFL course

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.taylorstracks.com/how-to-choose-a-tefl-course/>. The page has a navigation bar with links: MEET TAYLOR, TOP TEN, DESTINATIONS, TRAVEL, and TEACH ENGLISH. Below the navigation bar, there is a paragraph of text: "research) plus you can get your TEFL certification online! Plus getting your TEFL certificate online is easy and can t at your own pace."

A red arrow points from the text "This is an affiliate link." to a promotional banner for Taylor's Tracks. The banner features a Pinterest logo and the text: "EXCLUSIVE OFFER For TAYLOR'S TRACKS Readers! 35% OFF myTEFL's Accredited 120 Hour Online TEFL Course! Use Promo Code TRACK535 upon checkout to save big and start living your dream!". Below the banner is a green button that says "Find a TEFL Course!".

At the bottom of the page, there is a URL: r.shareasale.com/u.cfm?d=292506&m=58539&u=1281018.

Of course she has advice as she has a course to sell.

This one is very similar to the one above. Another beautiful pic somewhere not close to where you'll be teaching. Considering the fact that you're probably like other teachers who have done this

before you'll likely end up somewhere that is [crowded](#) and [polluted](#).

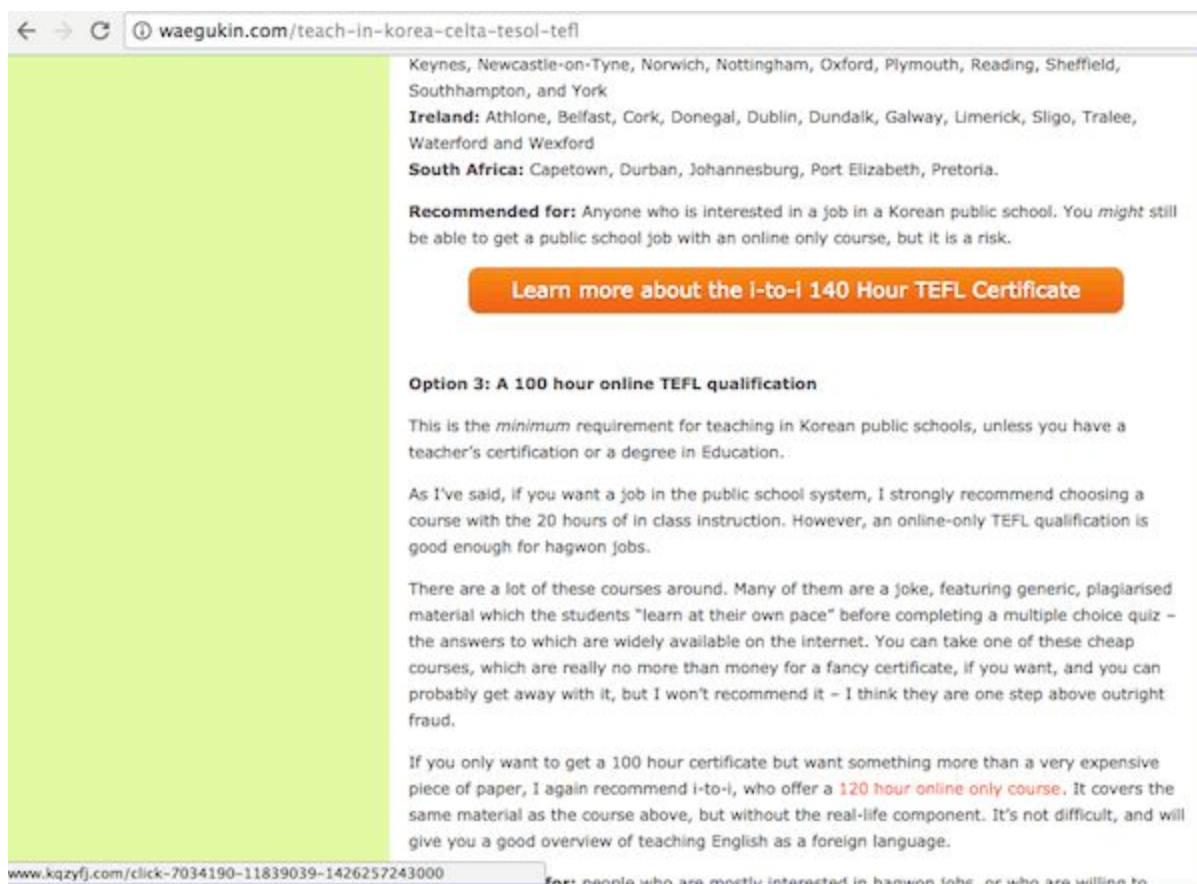
I mean you have a choice, but like I said before most teachers end up in big cities.

Here's another example from Quora.

You can see the affiliate link when you hover over it. It says, *www.teflcourse.net/?cu=lindagoesesl*.

Affiliate advice for teaching in Korea

Affiliates always have advice and self-interests. Here's an anonymous blogger in Korea who offers affiliate advice for choosing a TEFL course in Korea.



The **orange link** in the above photo is an affiliate link. Of course he recommends i-to-i because he is getting paid by them for doing so. And just so you know you can get into a public school in Korea with an online course see [here](#) or on [Reddit](#).

Those were examples of TEFL course affiliate links

I just showed you a few examples of affiliate links and also the different ways that [TEFL courses can market to you](#).

They may tell lies like you NEED it, show some beach, say they are what employers want and yadda, yadda, yadda. Maybe you don't mind, but I do.

I personally wouldn't trust an affiliates opinion on what product to buy.

HOW MANY HOURS DOES A TEFL COURSE NEED TO BE? How long do they take?

I saw this post and I thought it's the perfect example of the kind of BS you will find.

How to get started

- You will need a 120-hour TEFL qualification from a known and [accredited course provider](#) – shorter courses will just not have the currency to land you the best jobs
- A good and reliable internet connection – there is nothing students hate more than a tutorial which keeps dropping out and they simply won't stick

<https://www.theteflacademy.com/tefl-courses>

I left a comment on it [here](#).

How many hours does a TEFL course need to be? What do these hours mean? Or maybe you're wondering how long does it take to complete a 120, 140 hour online TEFL course?

You may be pulling your hair out thinking...

"Should I go with the 60 hour course? That's cheaper and shorter, but then again maybe I should go with the [120 hour course](#) as I heard that was more reputable...

But wait I see there is even a 150 hour course. Holy cow! If I had that then I would top the other applicants with a 120 hour course...

Or would I?"

In my experience teaching in Asia the amount of hours in a TEFL course doesn't matter most of the time. It actually matters far less in the real world (to employers) than some TEFL providers say it does.

And since I mentioned the "real world" let's consider online courses for a moment.

How can you measure "hours" online? And are these hour claims even accurate?

Most online TEFL courses are "asynchronous". What that means is that there are no set class times or hours. There are also "synchronous" online courses out there, but I have never heard of this with TEFL.

So in TEFL these hour claims are not accurate.

I am not dissing on online courses because you can learn a lot online with the right materials. I learned mostly by watching other teachers, but also online and from books.

The problem is with the [lies and misinformation](#).

How long does a 120 or 140 hour online TEFL course take?

The fact is that many TEFL courses out there won't take nearly as long as they say. That is especially true of online courses.

"I finished a 150 hour course in about 20ish hours. And I actually read/did most of the stuff. If you just rushed through one it might take you 10 hours, maybe less." - [Zoidburg747](#)

"That's exactly why I doubt it has any relevance... it took me, maybe, 10 hours! I got in on a wowchr deal as well. Almost not even worth mentioning here I would imagine..." -

[atmospheric_slug](#)

So then an in-class course would be more accurate, eh?

Well, it wasn't for me.

I took a TESOL course before I started teaching English in [Taiwan](#). It was also called a 120 course. I spent \$1000 on it which was like 2 days in a classroom and the rest of the course for take home. At the end of the 2 days they gave me what they called a 60 hour certificate, but it didn't even say anything about the hours on it.

That was my first experience with TEFL.

But it turns out that it is pretty common at least in the online course world. And it was an “[accredited](#)” [course](#) too which is funny because a lot of people are searching Google for "reputable" and accredited courses like it really means something.

But it doesn't for like 90% of TEFL courses out there. To me it looks like most courses just copy CELTA or try to sound like it. Perhaps this is part of the reason why some say [online courses aren't worth it](#).

CELTA is standardized and as far as I know provides 120 actual contact hours, however they do also have a hybrid course that is partially online.

Anyways it turns out I am not the only one who had that experience. I did some Googling and this is what I found.

In regards to the claimed hours in online TEFL/TESOL courses

Here are some more quotes that I found on the web about [TEFL courses on Groupon](#).

"I did an online Groupon tefl course for a teaching job in China. Was mad easy. Gave me a 120 hour certificate for **maybe 5 hours of work.**" - [Fuckjer](#)

"Even though it said it was a 120 hour certification I managed to finish it in **less than 25 hours**. Now of course that is a testament to the poor quality of the course that I could fly through it that quickly but thing is, it didn't matter.

I can promise you no [hagwon](#) will bother to check up on the [accreditation](#) and quality of the course you took. They will just see that you have the certificate and maybe then place your resume at the top of the pile." - [Guyforbes](#)

"I believe the course I'm taking is considered a 120 hour course, but I feel like I'm FLYING through it. I've been at it for 3 days in my free time, maybe for a maximum of **7 or 8 hours**, and I'm supposedly already 60% finished. Note that this course has no in-person classroom component." - [curryo](#)

"I took that same course back when I was going to need it (just for appearances, obviously), and I similarly finished it in a couple hours." - [Jeyoc](#)

"I can't recall the exact number of hours put in, but it was **far less than 160**. I put in a few 2-3 hour sessions over the span of **7-10 days**." - [wjfitzy](#)

"It said 150 hours, but it didn't take that long." - [2canucksabroad](#)

"All you needed was a degree and an online TEFL course that I had completed in 6 hours..." - [Alex McQuaid](#)

"Don't be intimidated by the amount of time that online TEFL courses claim you'll need. These courses can easily be breezed through and completed well below the hours they claim." - Adorabro

I was curious about those Groupon courses so I tried one. I completed it in **less than 8 hours**. I didn't read everything and I suspect if I did it would have taken maybe twice as long.

Is it just the courses on Groupon?

With a little more research I found these comments about course hours and non-Groupon providers. Both of these providers are fairly popular.

"Not quite that many. When they said 120 hours they actually mean 120 lessons some of which actually take an hour and some that take 10-15 minutes. I think it would depend on the person." - [throwaway10](#) (Referring to the university of Toronto's course)

"I did i-to-i 120 hour TEFL about 2 years ago. It was a while ago so I can't say exactly how long it took but it was definitely not 120hrs. I think most reasonably smart people could easily finish it in half that if you get stuck into it." - [victoriamagin](#)

"Sorry, I was talking about the time it took us to finish it, not the hours, obviously. There is no way it actually took a full 120 hours." - [Lao Why](#)

"While everybody certainly learns at a different pace, it didn't take me anywhere near 168h to complete the courses. Maybe 16.8 at best..." - [godless-life](#)

So what do these TEFL course hours mean?

I think they are supposed to refer to actual contact hours of training. However, as you can now see that's pretty hard to measure online.

How many hours does a TEFL course need to be?

"The number of hours in a course really doesn't matter." - [Chinadonkey](#)

In my experience teaching in Asia it also doesn't matter. Out of all the schools that I applied to in China, Korea, Taiwan and [Japan](#) I had only one employer ask me: "How many hours was the course?" I spent 6+ years in Asia and I applied to A LOT of schools.

You may be thinking...

But wait I searched Google and found that 120 hours is more reputable?

Well, maybe in the TEFL course industry. Amongst TEFL providers it is said that 100-120 hours or more is considered more "reputable". Yet, I think it is because of a few reasons.

1. They are marketing their own courses. More hours means more money for them and hopefully better training for you.
2. I think that is because of CELTA which actually provides courses with 120 contact hours. Many courses say they are

what they aren't as you can see from above perhaps to sound more like an official course like CELTA.

Previously I was trying to fit in with that mold, but it was one thing that didn't fit with my conscience so I changed the name of the course. Like I said I don't want to perpetuate that [lie](#) anymore.

So who is telling you that you need a 120+ hour course?

Marketing can be part of this too. Another reason why people, TEFL providers or recruiters may say that you need a 120 hour or more course is because they are making money from it. A longer more "intensive" course is going to cost more money. It might be better, but they'll still make more money from it.

So who is telling you that you need a 120+ hour course?

- *Are they a TEFL course provider?* Then consider the fact that they have something to sell.
- *Are they a recruiter?* Then consider the fact that they may be making a commission by selling a course for the provider.
- *Are they a blogger?* Then consider the fact that may also be making an [affiliate](#) commission by selling that course.

The bottom line

For most schools in Asia the amount of hours in a course is not going to matter as most certificates are taken at face value.

However, there is a small percentage of schools in Asia that might care about them like: some universities, international schools, some private & public schools like [EPIK in Korea](#).

Some schools have higher standards which means they're probably not going to hire a first time teacher with just a "120 hour" course whether it was online or not. They are going to prefer someone with [experience](#).

“INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED” TEFL CERTIFICATION MEANS NOTHING



What does **"Internationally recognized"** TEFL certification mean to you?

I am going to assume that you think it means the following...

It's a certification that will be accepted wherever you go.

Is that what you mean?

Well...

The term "internationally recognized" doesn't actually mean much. It's just **a vague term** that basically panders to your desires **for security**.

I mentioned this in a previous post about whether [online TEFL courses are recognized or not](#). In that post I not only talked about online courses, but TEFL courses in general.

And one of the things that I said was...

There is no course or certificate that guarantees you a job at every school. But it usually goes deeper than that.

Did you think...

Did you think you'd show up in _____ (insert country) and schools would be so impressed with that certificate that you earned in just 1-4 weeks that they would offer you pretty much any job that you wanted?

Employers in Asia aren't much different than employers in your country

[In Asia](#) employers have preferences or requirements like anywhere else. The basic qualifications are a degree and to be a native speaker and after that there are preferences that can vary from school to school for:

- [Experience](#). In-country experience is often preferred.
- Age. Many will prefer that you are young.
- Sex. Some schools prefer female teachers.

- TEFL certification. Some schools prefer it.
- Race. Some schools prefer caucasian teachers.
- Likeability. They want to like you.
- Master's degrees, teaching licenses, etc. (see below)

Some of those are [discriminatory](#), but that's the way it is in Asia. I think the same preferences can exist in the USA too, but they are not as openly advertised as there are laws against some of those.

Did your degree guarantee you a job wherever you wanted?

Probably not. It didn't for me.

TEFL certificates aren't that different. In fact TEFL certificates are often far less official or [required](#) compared to degrees.

Many schools in Asia don't know anything about TEFL courses

Chances are that the employer you will apply to won't know the name of your course or any other course. Most bosses out there (abroad) can't actually speak English.

Sure a relative few may be somewhat familiar with some courses, but these are a really small percentage of schools. These are often foreign owned private institutes, international schools or maybe more "**reputable**" schools.

So then maybe you can get a job at a more "reputable" school if you have an "internationally recognized" certificate?

Probably not.

If you are a first time teacher you aren't going to be working in a "high end" school regardless of whatever TEFL, TESOL or CELTA course you took.

The bottom line...

There's too many brands and too many TEFL courses. Nobody knows them. It just doesn't matter most of the time if a course is highly [accredited](#), a [120 "so-called" hours](#) or claims to be "internationally recognized".

What really matters

You are probably in the introductory phase of teaching abroad. You are learning about different options and you are probably most concerned about getting a job. I understand, but getting a job is just the beginning.

Before you know it you will have a job and you will be teaching. So based on that I would look closer at who you are going to teach. If you are going to be teaching adults then take a course geared towards teaching them.

And if you are going to be teaching kids take a course focused on teaching kids.

More importantly...

There's no stamp for "internationally recognized" TEFL courses

Did you think there was? There's no one organization for [TEFL accreditation](#) that goes around and inspects courses and stamps them, "Internationally Recognized!" **There is no international accreditation for TEFL.**

Each country may have different [requirements](#) to teach English there. These requirements are usually for visa purposes.

More often the fact is that different schools can have their own preferences and requirements (listed above).

That's what it really comes down to, the school.

All TEFL certificates are "internationally recognized"

TEFL certification by its very nature is internationally recognized. Why is that? Well, the "F" in TEFL stands for "foreign". The word foreign relates to different countries.

Any TEFL certificate whether you got it from a university, or made it with photoshop looks the same on paper to most schools.

It doesn't mean you'll get the same out of it, but again it's like a degree. Schools don't know all the names of universities out there.

Are there more "reputable" courses out there?

"Reputable" is in the eye of the beholder. I could tell you that courses like CELTA or Trinity TESOL or maybe even a university based course are the most reputable or recognized, but I wouldn't want to mislead you.

What I mean to say is that to some schools those courses are, but to many others they don't look any different. See what this [girl who took a CELTA course](#) had to say about that.

Or check out this post on a [CELTA that wasn't "recognized"](#).

Oh and there are many TEFL courses out there with names like TEFL or TESOL “college” or “university” but they have no such affiliation with a real university or college.

It’s all about the look.

THE “120 HOUR TEFL COURSE” LIE

Why are you searching for a “120 hour” online TEFL course?

I'd guess it's because someone told you that you need it or maybe you heard that those courses were more "reputable".

But are they? What is so special about a 120 hour online TEFL course? What happens in those 120 hours?

"The accreditation of a TEFL certificate doesn't matter because no one cares about a 120 hour certificate. Governments and schools just want to see a minimal effort on your part to do something unrelated to your bachelor's degree." - [Timemachine2](#)

Well I'd say first that in the case of "online" TEFL/TESOL courses those hours aren't actually hours.

comment reply: Does 168 hour TEFL course actually take 168 hours?



from [/u/Elise_91](#) via [/r/SpainAuxiliares](#) sent 1 day ago [Show Parent](#)

thanks for linking that reddit thread. It's kind of wild how easy this course is... I've maybe spent 2 and a half hours total and I'm already halfway through the entire course. I can't believe they charge as much as they do too....smh. The only reason I'm doing it is because I will get paid a couple hundred Euros more each month w/ the TEFL certification.

[Context](#) [Full Comments \(6\)](#) [Report](#) [Block User](#) [Mark Unread](#) [Reply](#)



[/u/1rub](#) 1 point just now

I will get paid a couple hundred Euros more
Says who?

[Permalink](#) [Save](#) [Parent](#) [Edit](#) [Disable Inbox Replies](#) [Delete](#) [Reply](#)

What do you mean? I mean that just because it says it's a 120, 140 or even a 168 hours doesn't mean that it will take you that long.

There are 2 types of online courses

- Type 1 is **synchronous**.

This means that the online course takes place at a certain time. Like in-class courses classes tend to be scheduled. I have never heard of this kind of online course with TEFL.

- Type 2 is **asynchronous**.

That means that there are no such class times and schedules. If you see "learn at your own pace" courses online then that means

these courses are asynchronous. Most online TEFL courses will be this way.

I have never heard of an online TEFL course doing differently.

So why do they call it a 120 hour course?

The "original" 120 hour TEFL course

Why is everyone saying that 120 hours is more reputable?

This is because more "official" courses like CELTA take place in a classroom. These are typically full-time 4 week programs that run 8 hours a day.

They are actually close to 120 hours in length.

What about online? Do they schedule classes online where you meet for class? I am not sure about CELTA's online program, but not for all of the online TEFL courses that I have heard about.

All of the online TEFL courses that I am aware of are open courses. You can work on them when you want. This is one of the [benefits of online courses](#). There are no scheduled classes.

What's so special about a 120 hour course?

Nothing really. Online they typically don't take anywhere close to 120 [so called hours](#).

I completed a 120 hour course on [Groupon](#) in **less than 8 hours**. I didn't actually read everything and if I did it might have taken me double the time. I was curious about Groupon courses and wanted to see what I'd get for \$39.

But I am not alone. I found this [thread on Reddit](#) about how long online TESOL courses actually take. With a little more research I found out that many courses were like that.

What about reputable courses like the university of Toronto's online TEFL course? Wow, it's from a university so it must be different? That's what I thought too, but after reading a few reviews it doesn't sound that much different than other online TEFL courses.

"When they said 120 hours they actually mean 120 lessons some of which actually take an hour and some that take 10-15 minutes."

- [Throwaway10](#)

What they said on Quora, "Typically, one hour of course time is based on student averages, and does not solely equate with the time spent in front of the computer." - [Christie Vantol](#)

There are no actual meeting times.

It's just for show

Again there are no hours so why else would they be telling you that you need 120 hours. Well, I look at it like this... In-class courses like CELTA are more reputable and official, so I think the **online courses want to LOOK more official by saying their course is a 120 hours.**

And maybe it has something to do with money too since there are 20, 60, 80, 120, etc. hour courses. They can charge more money for 120 hour course than they can a 20 hour course.

From a TEFL provider's website

"If you're thinking, "But [can I get a job with an online TEFL course?](#)", the answer lies in the 120 hours. This is the all-important number you need to know. As long as you have a certificate of a TEFL course which is 120 hours, employers will not be worried about where you did those hours, as long as you've done them."

That wasn't my experience.

From my point of view it's the TEFL course providers that are telling you that you need a 120 hour course. But they are usually just middle men on your way to teaching abroad. They are trying to get you there so to speak, but they won't be there when you get there.

Remember there are no official rules for TEFL. There is no one [accreditation](#).

And many TEFL course providers tell [lies and half-truths to get you to buy](#).

So what about employers?

That's the reason why you're thinking of taking a course right?

It depends on the employer. Some employers don't care, don't know or maybe just believe the lie too. They might have heard that 120 hours is more reputable too, because of all the marketing TEFL courses do.

But speaking from my experience teaching in Asia... I can say that most employers don't actually care about "hours", the name brand or whether it's a TEFL, TESOL, or CELTA certificate.

But there are some places that actually require a "120 hour course" online and/or sometimes in-class.

- EPIK public school program in Korea
- Some schools in China

Learn more about the [requirements to teach in Asia](#).

The qualifications most employers really prefer

Sure there are ones out there that do, but they are in the minority. And remember to work in high-end schools you'll need [experience](#) - which aside from the basic [requirements](#) is really the best qualification to have most of the time.

- [Are online TEFL courses accepted in Asia?](#)

GAMED REVIEWS?



This was a video that was published on my Youtube channel and you can watch it [here](#). I've also been updating this post on [fake TEFL reviews](#).

It covers some of the things mentioned here like:

- affiliates
- advertising 3rd party based sites
- review sites like goabroad.com, gooverseas.com and teflcoursereview.com

And here is an update. There is another newer site out there called trustedteflreviews.com. And when I first saw it I started to have my doubts, so I did a little research on them.

They say on their site that "Each year, Trusted TEFL Reviews asks language schools, universities, current English teachers, a...

Each year?

Is that right?

The Who Is (public domain record) says their site is less than a year old. <http://whois.domaintools.com/trustedteflreviews.com>

They say they don't use advertising or affiliates, but I don't see why they would be doing this. What's their incentive? If they were really altruistic then I think they would be more public about who they actually are, but the site is totally anonymous like many other TEFL course sites.

Why don't they reveal who they are?

I actually suspect that it's run by someone who has a course in the industry. Someone else mentioned this on Reddit too.

UPDATE...

So it's like a year or so later and I can tell you more.

A man named Neville David Thomas owns a few sites and has had review scams before. He calls himself Mia Williams on Trusted TEFL reviews and Paul Murphy on TEFL online pro.

He is the same person who used to own ITTP and another defunct review site.

You can search:

- Neville David Thomas TEFL scam
- Trusted tefl reviews scam
- ITTP tefl review scam
- Tefl online pro scam

And see what you find, but keep in mind that he writes all kinds of stuff to cover it up.

More info on him (3 of these I didn't make):

- <https://medium.com/@ESLinsider/is-tefl-online-pro-legit-a-real-review-a759f469722c>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXxRmzEo2pE>
- <https://www.complaintsboard.com/tefl-online-pro-a-potential-fraudulent-company-backed-by-a-fake-tefl-review-site-c1212899>
- <https://www.tefl.net/forums/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=8558>
- <https://www.holysmoke.org/scam/neville-thomas-ittp-tefl-prague-review/>
- https://www.reddit.com/r/ESLinsider/comments/hwd7tv/the_person_behind_china_scam_patrol_cftu_trusted/
- <http://www.eslinsider.com/blog/is-trusted-tefl-reviews-tefl-online-pro-a-scam>

Oh yeah and he threatened me with defamation and cease and desist, but do you think I was scared?

No.

Why not?

Because he would have to reveal his true identity to do that. I am also not the only one in TEFL that he's attacked. That's what he does.

Fake reviews

- Yelp [estimates](#) 25% of it's reviews are fake.
- [This source](#) suggests Amazon has 200+ million fake reviews.
- Some companies may offer discounts or [pay customers who write reviews](#).
- Some companies hire PR firms or someone on [Fiverr](#) to write fake reviews that are either positive or negative.
- Sometimes people will try to make a company look bad by writing a fake negative review (w/ an anonymous troll account).
- There are even [FAKE VIDEO reviews](#).

TURN THE LIGHTS ON

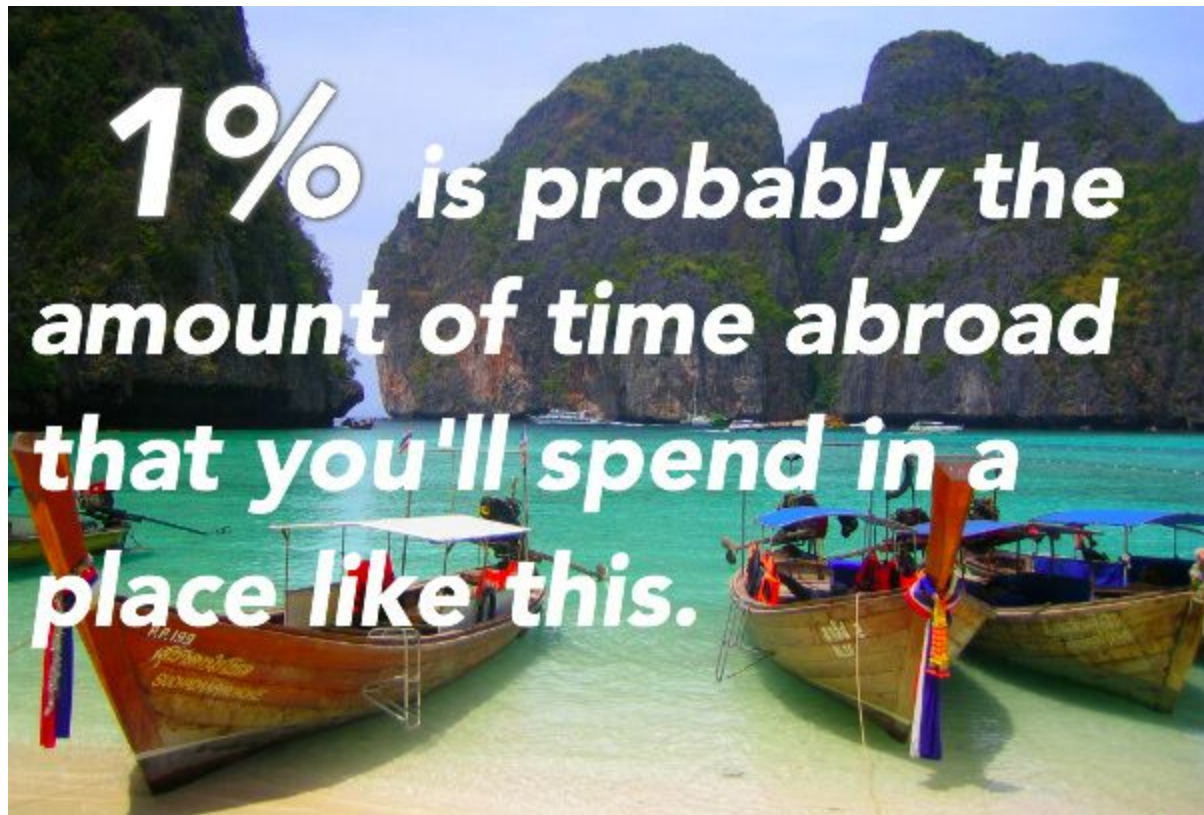


Nice isn't it?

Doesn't this make you want to teach abroad?

A common hook used by TEFL course providers is imagery from Thailand. If you are in the market for a TEFL course you should have seen an image like this by now.

If not you soon will. But before you get excited about this...



You'll probably only spend less than 1 or 2% of your time abroad in a place like this. Although this imagery is used to hook you it has little to do with where you'll actually be spending most of your time.

Most people don't teach on a beach.

Most people don't teach anywhere near a beach. In Asia most people live and teach in a fairly densely populated city. Eastern Asia is a very populated place. It's very urban and there are many problems including: urbanization, [pollution](#), and [overcrowding](#).

While there are beautiful places to see. The fact is **most people don't end up in those places**. Most people end up in urban areas.

There are 52 weeks in a year. So let's say you take a vacation for one week. That's less than 1% of your time.

There are jobs where you can get a couple months of vacation a year, however these jobs are often reserved for experienced teachers.



You are probably going to be spending a sizable amount of your time awake (hopefully) in a classroom.



There are jobs out there working less which I have done, but most teachers work anywhere from 6-8 hours a day 5 days a week. If that is you then you will be spending 25-33% of your time abroad at work...

And not on a beach in Thailand.



This is another hook that is commonly seen especially on sites like [Groupon](#). They want you to feel like you are getting a deal so they make big claims like above or offer "sales" that are almost always going on.

If a course is worth \$400 why would they realistically sell it for \$5?



Then there are the so-called limited time offers that seem to go on forever in actuality. In this [guy's review of i-to-i](#) he mentions that.

It reminds me of the stores in Chinatown that have 50% off sale signs on the store year round. Or the stores with the "Going out of business" sign.

BAIT AND SWITCH

Bait and switch is common in TEFL. It starts with TEFL courses selling you a certificate because you "need" it (so they say) or you

want a “reputable” job or you want an “accredited, internationally recognized” certificate.

And [recruiters](#) can do this too. They may advertise a job that sounds really good, but then say, sorry that job has been taken, but here’s another which will pale in comparison.

And schools could also advertise a job with certain conditions, but the reality will be different.

The bait in education is the degree and the promise that you will get a better job, make more money, etc.

The problems with many online courses

Many online courses are primarily text based. This means that much of what you "learn" will go in one ear and out the other.

- [Users likely only read 20% of the text on a page](#)
- [Why We Are More Likely To Remember Video Content](#)

There are also 2 other reasons [why most courses aren’t any good](#).

You are more likely to learn by being shown something versus by being told or reading about it. Learn more about the [power of visuals in TEFL](#).



There are 2 reasons why you might want to take a TEFL course.

1. To get a qualification (for a job).
2. To learn how to teach.

Many people are only focused on reason 1 - the short term, but if you want to actually enjoy teaching abroad then you need to focus on number 2.

Lastly...

Assuming that you're in your home country thinking about teaching abroad then you should know that what appeals to you now probably isn't going to be what you need when you actually get abroad and start teaching. If you really want to be prepared to teach abroad and have a better year then you have to put some effort in and focus on the learning.

Questions???

If you have more questions about TEFL courses (online or not) then you'll find more answers [here](#).



[Ian Leahy](#)

[My Youtube channel](#) (for ESLinsider)

[Google site](#)

ESLinsider.com

TEFLies

This is
what the ~~education~~
TEFL course industry is
like: lies, half-truths and
other tactics to get you to
buy and not really teach
you much of anything
useful at all