

Reviews

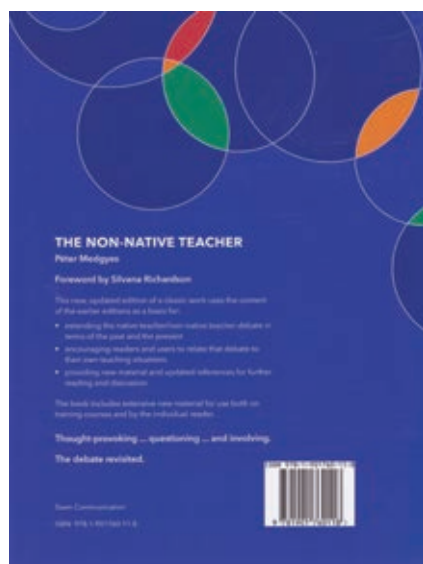
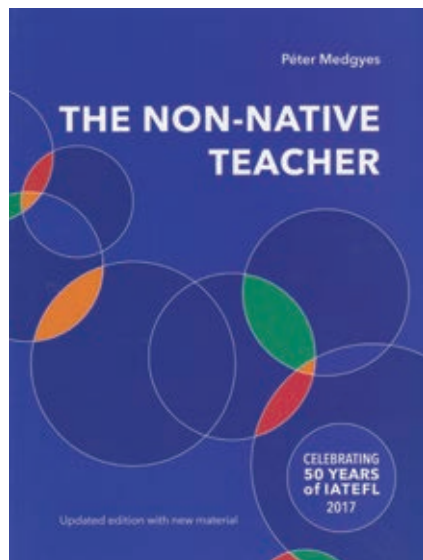
The Non-native Teacher

by Péter Medgyes

Swan Communication

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A digital edition of this book is also available at www.intrinsicbooks.co.uk/title_by_title/tnnt.html



The issue of being identified as either a native or non-native teacher of English has always been a very controversial and, to some extent, painful one for many professionals. Some native speaker teachers of English (NESTs), for example, feel that they somehow lack

knowledge of grammar or sufficient understanding of how languages are learnt. On the other hand, non-native speaker teachers of English (non-NESTs) are often aware of their own language gaps and the fact that they cannot possibly ‘compete’ with a native in terms of command of the language, with all its idiosyncrasies and subtleties.

Based on extensive research, the updated third edition of *The Non-native Teacher*, by Péter Medgyes, is a very insightful book, which deals with these and many of the other ‘nightmares’ that both NESTs and non-NESTs experience throughout their careers.

The book is divided into six parts, each subdivided into two chapters. To put it simply, and by no means trying to represent the entire contents, the material starts in Part I by discussing English as a *lingua franca* and standard Englishes, before moving on to the idea of being a native, a non-native and a ‘pseudo-native’ speaker of English. Part II talks about the status of NESTs and non-NESTs as if they were in ‘opposite trenches’. Chapters 5 and 6, in Part III, touch on very important points, such as the dark side of being a non-NEST and the ‘inferiority complex’ which often comes with it. However, these chapters also explore the many advantages of being one, such as the ability to anticipate language difficulties and finding ways to help learners overcome them. In Part IV, Medgyes discusses the relative worth of NESTs and non-NESTs, and the need for collaboration between them. Chapters 9 and 10, in Part V, are devoted to the teacher-learner, that is, when the teacher is learning and teaching at the same time, along with practical ideas on how non-NESTs can improve their language proficiency. The final part, Part VI, gives background information about the research on which the book is based and how it was undertaken. In the Appendices, the reader will find all the questionnaires used in the study and other data about the participants.

This revised edition of the book has the full text of the last edition (with

some updating) printed in black, and entirely new elements reflecting changes to the profession in the last 25 years printed in blue. It includes blue margin notes, which expand on and update points raised in the previous editions. These notes also suggest ways in which the reader can relate the text to their own circumstances, as well as posing thought-provoking questions to encourage reflection. At the end of each chapter there is a list of other sources for further reading. In the last section of the book there are some interesting and, again, insightful extracts from a conversation between Péter (a non-NEST) and Susan (a NEST).

I am a teacher trainer myself, and the topic of being a non-NEST always crops up in sessions; the psychological impact it has on many professionals is obvious. Some non-NEST trainees even mention that no matter how good they are, NESTs are always ‘five steps up the ladder’ just by being native. So, the need for more professional development sessions on this subject would be extremely beneficial. I would go even further and suggest that teacher training courses like CELTA and Trinity CertTESOL among others should include a session on native and non-native teachers. And what better starting point than this book?

Like Silvana Richardson, who wrote the Foreword to this latest edition, I also found myself nodding in agreement, but also frowning and shaking my head in disagreement at times while reading the book. In spite of my very few reservations, I would say that *The Non-native Teacher* is a must-read for both non-NESTs and native speaker teachers. Not only is it based on sound research, but it could also be potentially ‘healing’ for many teachers who feel in some way inferior. I thoroughly recommend it.

William Chaves Gomes
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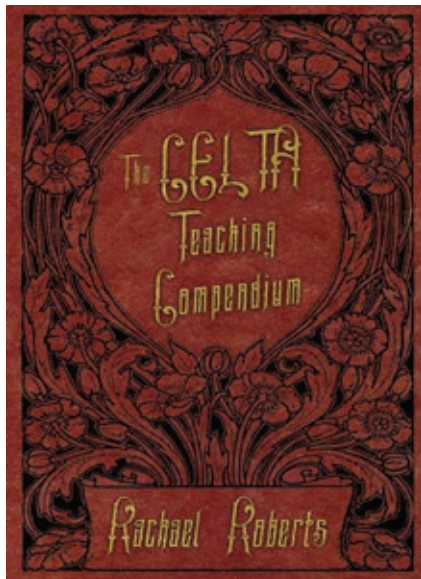
Reviews

The CELTA Teaching Compendium

by Rachael Roberts

978-1-370086-91-7

(Kindle edition ASIN B06XRGRMHB)



There are many books on the market aimed at helping CELTA candidates and English teachers who are new to the profession. Books like Jim Scrivener's *Learning Teaching*, Penny Ur's *A Course in Language Teaching* and Jeremy Harmer's *The Practice of English Language Teaching* are thorough explorations of the theory and practice of English language teaching, covering everything from the teaching of the language systems (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, discourse) and the language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) to the different teaching methodologies and the theories behind them.

These books are often prescribed as pre-course reading for the CELTA trainee but, in my experience, very few trainees actually come onto a course having read even part of them. When asked why this is, some trainees say that trying to read these books pre-CELTA is like trying to read Greek before learning it. Once the course begins, it's simply a question of time: particularly

in the case of the intensive one-month CELTA, there is hardly any time for any serious reading.

Yet, the pressures of the teaching practice element of the course often see CELTA trainees finding themselves on *Google* every evening, searching for tips on lesson planning, error correction, classroom management and the other practical aspects of teaching an observed lesson. (It is a well-known fact that blogposts on CELTA get more hits than many other ELT-related posts.)

The CELTA Teaching Compendium is an e-book which puts together all the practical advice that a novice English teacher would need in a straightforward and easily-understandable way, while providing clear examples of best practice and common pitfalls. The book is divided into 33 sections, organised in alphabetical order, and each section is only one to two pages long, ensuring that the reader gets what they need without too much theory or backstory.

Readers are meant to dip in and out of the sections needed, using the contents page as a map with links to their areas of interest. The 33 sections include the problematic areas of a lesson plan, eg *anticipated problems, learning objectives, stage aims, timing*; classroom management techniques, eg *building rapport, remembering names, instructions, fast finishers*; and teaching techniques, eg *drilling, checking understanding, eliciting and error correction*.

The author is established ELT materials writer Rachael Roberts, the SIG coordinator of IATEFL's MaWSIG (the group for materials writers) and an experienced teacher and teacher trainer with over 20 years' experience. And this experience is evident throughout the book, as the tips and advice are clear and useful, without overcomplicating matters for the novice teacher. Yet the book avoids oversimplification and manages to be quite thorough in the practical advice it gives. In the section on concept checking questions for vocabulary, for example, the reader is told also to look out for false friends, words with different semantic boundaries and the different

connotations of words; in the section exploring pace, Roberts warns the reader of the danger zones when dealing with pacing, eg warmers that go on for too long and teacher-centred whole-class feedback.

It would have been easy for a CELTA trainer to write a book solely based on *her* view of the CELTA and how *she* does things. But in the section on stage aims, Roberts recognises the fact that different CELTA tutors have different preferences and tendencies, and she acknowledges that some prefer the candidates to word their stage aims from the point of view of the learner, eg 'For students to review and revise vocabulary from the previous lesson', while others prefer the stage aims to be worded from the point of view of the teacher, eg 'To pre-teach words from a reading/listening text that might block comprehension'.

It was also reassuring to see a whole section dedicated to 'wait time', encouraging teachers to allow more thinking time before nominating a student to answer a question, and a section that provided a balanced view of the use of the mother tongue in the classroom, with the advice to use English when it is practical to do so but to recognise that there may be times when the use of mother tongue is more practical.

However, for me, the winning formula of this book lies in its tone. In some ways, *The CELTA Teaching Compendium* feels like a caring trainer's diary entry to their trainee. Never once preachy, overly academic or condescending, this teacher trainer offers you insights into the practical aspects of CELTA by sharing her experience and advice in a friendly and helpful fashion, and regardless of which of the 33 sections you decide to dip into, it always feels like you're speaking directly to a mentor who is letting you pick their brains about English language teaching. This is a worthwhile book for anyone undertaking the CELTA or Cert TESOL to have – or for anyone who is simply new to language teaching.

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better English teachers than non-native English speaking teachers (Non-NESTs), and this apparently frustrated me so much. I kept on thinking and wonder if, someday, I would become a good English teacher when, at the same time, the influx of foreign native teachers to my country was becoming a big issue. The purpose of this article is to see what can be done to counter this. stereotype. However, the problem is not that simple.Â provide further discussion to the question whether native speakers can be better. English teachers than nonnative speakers. In this paper, native English speaker. teachers will be called as NEST, while other group of teachers will be called non-. NESTs, to simplify. The advantages and disadvantages of NESTs versus non-NESTs will be.