

Introduction

English language teaching (ELT)

For various historical and economic reasons there is a huge demand for English language teaching in many parts of the world and consequently a huge demand for teachers. The needs and circumstances of those wanting instruction vary enormously and such diversity means there can be no single 'right' way to teach because the methods that are most appropriate will depend on who is learning, in what environment and for what reasons.

However, the methods and techniques described in this book give new teachers a solid base from which to start, allowing them to modify and adapt their practice to suit the needs of the particular groups and individuals they teach as they gain experience. It is certainly true that simply being an expert user of English, whether as a native or non-native speaker, does not guarantee that someone will make a good teacher. The skills of teaching still have to be learned and the purpose of this book is to support the development of these skills.

Who this book is for

This book is designed to help people who want to become teachers of English and also those who want to review, and build on, their existing knowledge. Many people embark on what they hope will be a rewarding ELT career by enrolling on initial training courses such as the Cambridge English Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (more usually known as CELTA) or the Trinity College London Certificate in TESOL. This book provides ideal preparation for these and other similar courses, as well as for the Cambridge English Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT).

Any initial training course will usually present a lot of new material and ideas in a short space of time, which can be very daunting. However, a book is a reassuring, permanent reference which can be gone back to during a course, or when you start work as a teacher, for as long as necessary.

Some people are not sure if a career in ELT would be right for them. This book will help to convey the nature of what teaching involves on a day-to-day basis and can therefore help to inform your decision on whether to pursue ELT as a career.

Some people may know that a long term career in teaching is not for them but may be planning to travel and would like to supplement their funds with some informal teaching as the opportunities present themselves. This book is an efficient way of picking up basic teaching techniques without spending a lot of time and money following a course.

If you are starting out, or thinking of starting out, on a career in ELT, this book will be useful to you. It is written to be easily understood by those with no previous experience of teaching. The book takes a very practical approach, suggesting things that teachers can actually do in their classrooms.

How to use this book

Reading is a very active skill. It is rare that we read about a subject of which we have absolutely no knowledge or opinion and certainly we all have opinions about what makes a good teacher. As we read, new information will be interpreted in the light of what we already know and believe. Active reading is supported throughout this book. The *What do you think?* task (page 6) will help you to consider what you currently think about some of the big issues in language learning and teaching. Research suggests that thinking through these issues is a very important first step in learning to teach.

The rest of the book also aims to support the active reading process by asking you to think about questions and complete tasks as you go through the book. These tasks will help you to review what you already instinctively feel about teaching and integrate the new information you learn into your existing knowledge. There are commentaries after each chapter that discuss the activities and provide additional information.

Those completely new to ELT may feel most comfortable working through each chapter in the order in which they are presented. However, the chapters are written to stand alone as much as possible, allowing you to use the book as a reference to learn about areas of particular interest.

Professionals in any field use a particular set of language to describe what they do and one of the challenges of entering a new profession is learning this new discourse. To help with this, the book includes a glossary of key terms used in ELT.

Learning to teach is a very practical activity – to a great extent we learn to teach by teaching. To support this practical development, there are activities to use directly with learners throughout the book. Practising teachers testify to the fact that much of what they learn is through reflection on their practice when they start teaching. To support this there are *Try it out!* sections in every chapter (except the first). These are specifically designed

to support your ongoing development when you start teaching.

The DVD that accompanies the book gives you the chance to see into a real classroom and learn from watching various lesson types as you observe experienced teachers working with real learners of English. There are also worksheets that accompany the DVD. These will guide you in identifying important teaching techniques and key elements in the lessons.

It is important to remember that this book is an introduction and teachers will have much to learn in the early stages of their careers, and indeed throughout their careers. However, the techniques and activities described in this book will give a firm foundation on which to base that development.

I hope this book will help you to develop the necessary skills and confidence to become a successful, independent and reflective teacher.