

Always look on the bright side – Being a nonnative teacher

Péter Medgyes

First set of hypotheses

- NESTs and non-NESTs differ in terms of their language proficiency.
- NESTs and non-NESTs differ in terms of their teaching behaviour.
- The discrepancy in language proficiency accounts for most of the differences found in their teaching behaviour.
- NESTs and non-NESTs can be equally good teachers – but each on their own terms.

Second set of hypotheses

Non-NESTs:

- can provide a better learner model than NESTs
- can teach language learning strategies more effectively than NESTs
- can supply more information about the English language than NESTs
- can anticipate and prevent difficulties more effectively than NESTs
- show more empathy to the needs and problems of students than NESTs
- benefit from the students' native language

Action plan

- *An adequate teacher supply* to satisfy the exponential growth of demand for English should be ensured.
- Work on establishing norms of *English as a lingua franca* use should be intensified.
- More heed should be paid to the special needs of *young learners*.
- The scope for *content and language integrated learning* in schools should be broadened.
- *Information and communication technology* should be factored into the curriculum of teacher education.
- The integration of *classroom and out-of-school* learning opportunities should be reinforced.
- *Language improvement courses* for non-NESTs should constitute a fundamental component of teacher education curricula.
- NEST job applicants prepared to *stay for an extended period of time* in the foreign country should be prioritised.
- Enhanced opportunities for *NEST/non-NEST cooperation* should be created.

NESTs

non-NESTs

own use of English

speak better English
use real language
use English more confidently

speak poorer English
use 'bookish' language
use English less confidently

general attitude

adopt a more flexible approach
are more innovative
are less empathetic
attend to perceived needs
have far-fetched expectations
are more casual
are less committed

adopt a more cautious approach
are more cautious
are more empathetic
attend to real needs
have realistic expectations
are more strict
are more committed

attitude to teaching the language

are less insightful
focus on:
- fluency
- meaning
- language in use
- oral skills
- colloquial registers
teach items in context
prefer free activities
favour group/pairwork
use a variety of materials
tolerate errors
set fewer tests
use no/less L1
resort to no/less translation
assign less homework

are more insightful
focus on:
- accuracy
- form
- grammar rules
- printed word
- formal registers
teach items in isolation
prefer controlled activities
favour frontal work
use a single coursebook
correct/punish for errors
set more tests
use more L1
resort to more translation
assign more homework

attitude to teaching culture

supply more cultural info

supply less cultural info