

Teaching English

# A Practical Introduction to Teacher Training in ELT

John Hughes

Packed with practical advice, training tips, and workshop ideas



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© John Hughes

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# About the author

John Hughes is a teacher trainer and author. He has also managed a teacher training department and now works as a freelance teacher trainer, running courses for teachers from all over the world. He is a former committee member of the IATEFL Teacher Training and Education Special Interest Group.

As an author, he has worked on many ELT titles including the course series *Life* (National Geographic Learning) and *Business Result* (Oxford). He also writes on ELT methodology and has published numerous articles for the journals *English Teaching Professional* and *Modern English Teacher* (both published by Pavilion). He also has a resource book with Pavilion called *ETpedia*. His blog can be found at [www.elteachertrainer.com](http://www.elteachertrainer.com).

# Introduction

When I first moved from teaching into teacher training, I received little formal training on how to train but instead, like many teacher trainers before me, I picked it up on the job. When preparing a training session, one of my first starting points was to recall how I'd been trained by others. I remembered the methods of trainers and senior teachers whose input and feedback I had valued and benefited from. When observing teachers in the classroom, it was important to visualise myself teaching at the same stage as the teachers I was working with. For example, when about to give feedback to pre-service teachers, I would quickly picture how I had felt as a novice teacher before, during and after my very first teaching practice.

Another part of my development as a teacher trainer was to search for information and advice in journals and books. After all, there are so many of these types of resources for language teachers, so why not for teacher trainers? And yet, somewhat surprisingly, it is difficult to find a single book that provides a general introduction to teacher training. Having now managed, trained and developed teacher trainers for over 20 years, I am convinced that other people who are moving from teaching into teacher training have the same need. I hope that this book will help to fulfil that need.

## How the book is organised

Chapter 1 looks at the typical routes into teacher training. It is aimed at the new trainer, and discusses how the skills we use as teachers are transferable into training. Chapter 2 looks at the techniques we use in input sessions and ways of structuring our sessions. These techniques range from ways of introducing basic teaching skills to inexperienced teachers, to working with qualified teachers employed in a language school. Chapter 3 considers ways of helping teachers to plan lessons. This will be especially useful for training new teachers through lesson planning to the point of teaching for the first time; however, it also includes advice for contexts where a school or institution needs experienced teachers to reflect on the ways in which they plan. Chapters 4 and 5 consider different approaches to observing lessons and giving feedback. The final chapter is aimed at anyone responsible for

planning, managing or co-ordinating a training course. This could be a training manager, a head of department or a trainer in charge of setting up a new programme.

Throughout the book, both face to face and online training contexts are taken into consideration. They are dealt with side by side, reflecting the increasing tendency of training programmes to blend course content so that it is delivered both face to face and online. Trainers might give a short presentation in a room with a group of trainees, but they could equally be talking to trainees spread across the world via a webcam. Even classroom observation of teaching practice (which has, until recently, required the trainer, the teacher and the students to be in the same room at the same time) can involve trainees sending video extracts of their teaching to their trainer via the internet. The trainer can then deliver feedback notes in the form of an email or even record their comments in a podcast or via video link.


## 'Ask yourself' questions

Within each chapter you will find a feature called 'Ask yourself'. This is a prompt for you to stop and reflect on what you have just read and ask yourself certain questions about how it relates to you. If you are using this book in combination with a course in training to be a teacher trainer, you could discuss these questions in groups.

## A note on the terminology used in this book

People often distinguish between *training* and *development*. The term *teacher development* is sometimes used with reference to the way more experienced teachers might wish to develop their craft. However, this book uses the word *training* in its broadest sense, to cover both pre-service and in-service courses. Note also that the people undergoing the training are referred to as *trainees*, *course participants* or *teachers*, depending on the context.

## Photocopiable pages

As well as providing a background to teacher training, the book includes photocopiable pages indicated by this symbol . These pages include ideas for training sessions and teaching practice observation forms. They are also available as full-size A4 pdf pages, which can be downloaded from <https://www.pavpub.com/practical-introduction-to-teacher-training-downloads/>.

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# 1. Teacher training for the first time

This chapter looks at:

- routes to becoming a teacher trainer
- ways of working towards being a trainer
- key considerations when moving into training
- different training contexts
- the skills required.

## Routes to becoming a teacher trainer

### A different kind of classroom

Unlike other career paths for experienced ELT teachers, such as management or materials writing, teacher training appeals to those who want to stay in the classroom, but who are, as a senior trainer once said to me, ‘looking for a different kind of classroom’.

This book is for those intending to work, or who are already working, in that ‘different kind of classroom’. As well as being aimed at teacher trainers, it is also for those people who define themselves as managers or directors of studies, who, as part of their job, are involved in training their staff. Finally, the book aims to help teachers who are interested in self development or in the development of their peers. For expediency, the book refers to all these people as *teacher trainers*, or simply *trainers*.

### What is the typical profile of a teacher trainer?

Many teacher trainers are people with extensive knowledge and experience of teaching. They have probably taught many different levels of student,