

# What impact does CELTA have on experienced teachers' classroom practices?

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# Changing CELTA

‘The *Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA)* is an introductory course for candidates who have **little or no previous English language teaching experience.**’ (Celta Syllabus, 2015)

What % of CELTA trainees today have prior teaching experience?

**53%** have >1 year’s experience (Anderson, 2016)

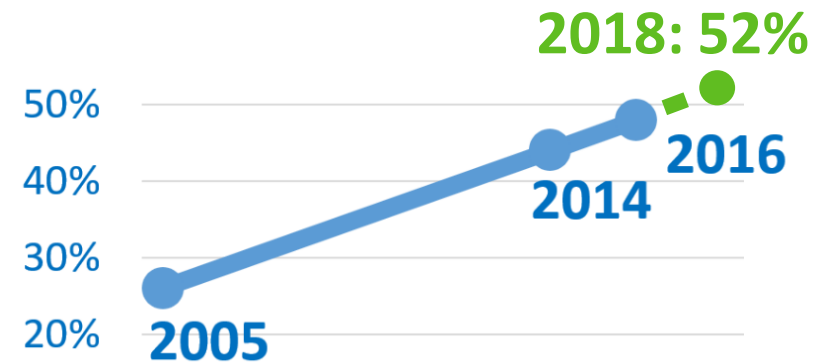
What % self-identify as non-native speakers of English?

**48%** in 2016 (Charnaud, 2017)

How much more likely is a NNS on a CELTA to have prior experience than an NS on a CELTA?

c. **8 times**

(n=79, Odds ratio: 8.33; 95% CI= 2.85-24.40; p<.000).



# But so what? Let's just keep going...

'I asked: "Who's still using the CELTA timetable that they were trained up on?" Almost everyone raised their hands.'



Experienced trainer:  
Workshop at CELTA  
Conference 2017.

# 71%

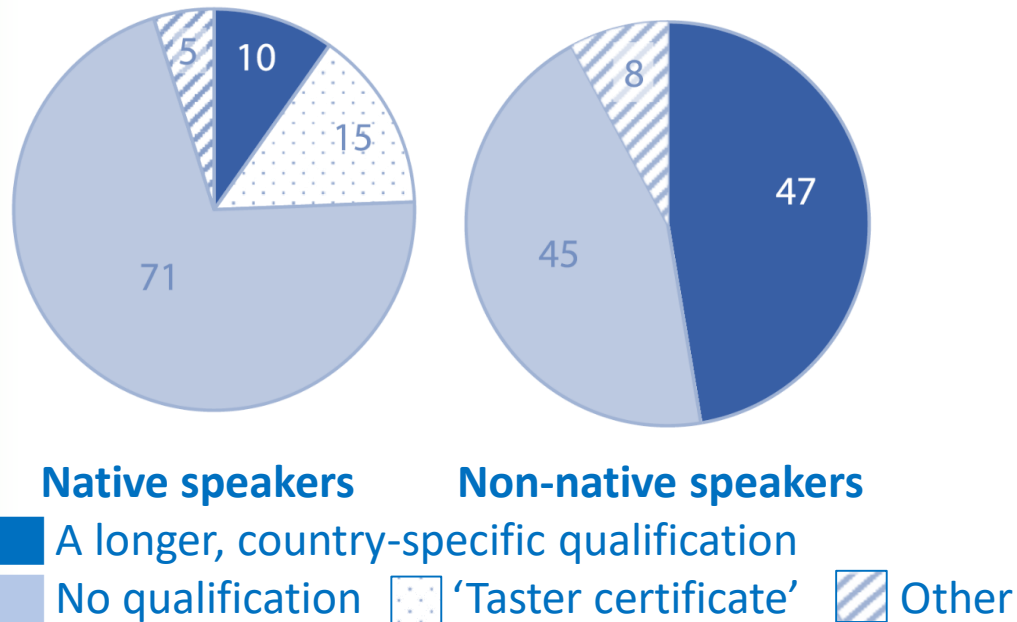
The number of  
candidates taking  
their CELTA outside  
of the UK.  
(Charnaud, 2017)



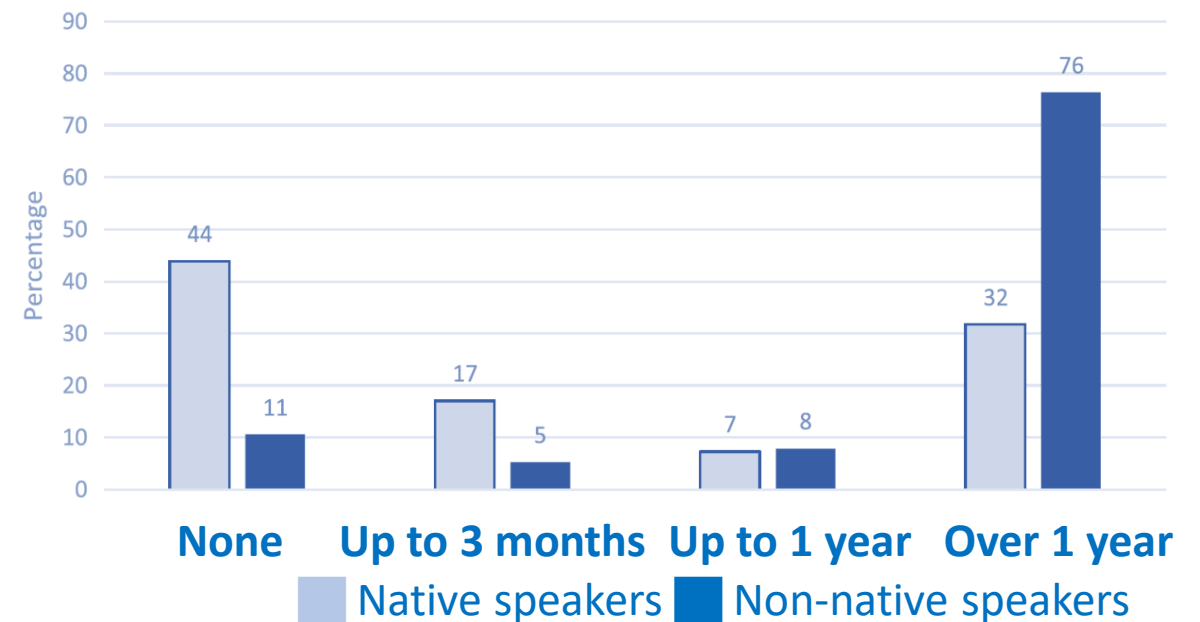
# My prior research on NNESTs on CELTAs/CertTESOLs

- Anderson (2016, QUAN): significant differences between **profiles** and **needs** of NS and NNS participants on CELTAs and CertTESOLs.

## Prior qualifications



## Prior experience



Anderson, J. (2016) Initial teacher training courses and non-native speaker teachers. *ELT Journal* 70/3: 261-274.



# My prior research on NNESTs on CELTAs/CertTESOLs

Anderson (2018, QUAL):

- NNESTs take courses both for career opportunities and to develop classroom practice – relationship is complex;
- iterative cycle of TP & feedback most useful, planning also useful;
- language awareness inputs not useful; no discussion of L1 use;
- some reported life-changing stories, finding ‘my dream job’;
- others reported disappointment and rampant discrimination towards NNESTs in the private ELT industry.

Anderson, J. (2018) The role of initial teacher training courses in the professional development of experienced non-native-speaker English language teachers. ELTED 21 (forthcoming).



# The context and course participants

- Egypt: 2 CELTAs delivered in 2016, 36 participants.
- Almost all experienced. All but 1 self-identified as non-native speakers of English.
- Working mainly in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, at secondary (19), tertiary and primary levels, almost all in private schools.
- Almost all self-funded: **Course fees = approx. 1 year's salary.**
- Very experienced co-tutors, both courses tailored to needs of experienced, NNS participants, esp. for secondary.
- Grades: 4 As, 17 Bs, 15 Cs.



# My research questions

1. How much change was reported by participants in their teaching 6 months after the course?
2. To what extent did participants report implementing what they had learnt on the CELTA?
3. What other areas of change were discussed?
4. Do the changes reported indicate a move towards more communicative practices in line with the objectives of the CELTA?



# Method: Questionnaire > Interview

- 6 months after the courses, I sent out questionnaires (QUAN/QUAL), got 29 back, incl. primary, secondary and tertiary contexts mainly in Egypt (16) and Saudi Arabia (12).
- Used maximum variation sampling to select interview participants.
- 8 semi-structured Skype interviews, 45-90 mins each.
- Data codified and categorised inductively.
- No direct observation, **self-reported data only**, thus I focused on narratives, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs.





# Key findings... in a



- A commitment from most to implement much of what they had learnt on their CELTA;
- A shift in beliefs on the part of most participants towards more learner-centred, communicative principles;
- Increases in self-confidence from several participants;

But...

- CELTA practices and conventions need significant adaptation and critical appropriation in order to work in secondary, tertiary and primary classes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.



# Positive changes and areas of challenge reported 6 months after course



# Most commonly discussed areas of success

- the importance of allowing **freer practice opportunities**: ‘providing an environment for them to practise the language that they’ve learnt’
- a stronger focus on the **needs and interests of their learners**: ‘I can vary my teaching techniques to suit the learners I have in my class’; ‘I started thinking from the point of view of my learners’
- many feel better **able to structure lessons more effectively**: ‘getting the CELTA was like the first step in organising everything’
- **increased self-confidence**: ‘it has a tremendous impact on enhancing my self-confidence’
- some success with **pair and groupwork**: ‘the good thing about pairwork is I could put students together who... could help each other’



# Most commonly discussed areas of challenge

- **collaborative learning**: ‘I tried to focus on group and pairwork yet I suffered from students’ lack of interest, especially in teen classes’
- **freer practice**: ‘sometimes students turned the freer activity into chaos and start resorting to Arabic or they start going off track’
- **motivational issues**, esp. in exam-focused classes: ‘they’re so worried about the exam, so... when it comes to reading, it has to be reading texts similar to the exam... for them to really engage’
- **learning culture**: ‘They like to present the speaking in front of everybody. They were not satisfied with just speaking together and I monitor them and give them feedback.’



# Summary recommendations (from 4 years of research)

1. Adopt more **developmental approaches to teaching practice** when working with experienced teachers (see, e.g. Freeman's *Alternatives Approach*, 1982).
2. Provide opportunities for **critical discussion** of how experienced teachers will **appropriate** from what they've learnt, rather than simply implement it, incl. an input session on this, and adapting the '**Lessons from the classroom**' assignment.
3. Engage trainees in discussion of issues of models and norms (re: pron., grammar, etc.), esp. **English as a Lingua Franca**, which can empower NNS teachers.
4. Include an input session on **using L1 effectively**, esp. when working in 'monolingual' contexts, and encourage those trainees who can to experiment with it on the course (see forthcoming change to CELTA syllabus; Charnaud, 2017).
5. Use **experienced NNESTs as resources** (e.g. in grammar inputs and young learner sessions, as well as in lesson planning), and empower them in so doing.
6. Raise awareness of **all** course participants of **discrimination** towards NNESTs in the industry, and encourage them to actively oppose it (Kiczkowiak et al., 2016).

And finally...



# 1 piece of advice to help experienced teachers to do well on a CELTA (and to make your life easier as a trainer):

- Remember that when you are working with experienced teachers, your job is not to show or tell them how to teach. Your mandate is **ONLY** to help them get the qualification.
- Explain this at the start of the course:

Our aim as your tutors is never to criticise you or your practice, it's to help you meet the criteria to get this qualification.



# Find out more...

- Paper to be published: Anderson, J. (forthcoming) **'Buying into' communicative language teaching: The impact of 'initial' certification courses on the classroom practices of experienced teachers of English**. Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching.
- Slides and references from this talk (and direct access to my prior research on NNESTs on CELTAs & CertTESOLs):  
[www.jasonanderson.org.uk/talks.htm](http://www.jasonanderson.org.uk/talks.htm)
- Summary of this talk on my blog:  
<https://speakinggames.wordpress.com>
- Try something similar with your own trainees: we need evidence from direct observation!
- Email: [jasonanderson1@gmail.com](mailto:jasonanderson1@gmail.com) Twitter: [@jasonelt](https://twitter.com/jasonelt)



# References

- Anderson, J. (2016) Initial teacher training courses and non-native speaker teachers. *ELT Journal* 70 (3): 261-274.
- Anderson, J. (2018) The role of initial teacher training courses in the professional development of experienced non-native-speaker English language teachers. *ELTED* 21 (forthcoming).
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- Charnaud, D. (2017) Latest Developments and Future Plans: Cambridge English Teaching Qualifications. Paper presented at 3rd *Cambridge English Teaching Awards Symposium*, Sheffield, UK, Sep. 9-10.
- Freeman, D. (1982). Observing teachers: Three approaches to in-service training and development. *TESOL Quarterly* 16 (1): 21–28.
- Kiczkowiak, M., Baines, D. & Kruppenacher, K. (2016). Using awareness raising activities on initial teacher training courses to tackle 'nativespeakerism'. *ELTED* 19: 45-53.

