

Book Review: The ELT Daily Journal: Learning to Teach ESL/EFL (Houston, 2013)

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The ELT Daily Journal: Learning to Teach ESL/EFL by Hall Houston, a university teacher at Kainan University, Taiwan; with an introduction by Dr. Rose Senior. Anthimeria Press ©2013 by Hall Houston. Pp. xiv + 136. ISBN-13: 978-1481957397. Available in paperback at www.amazon.com for \$11.91 (as of October 26, 2014).

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. With the enormous and sometimes overwhelming amount of information available to new ELT teachers to digest, *The ELT Daily Journal* by Hall Houston (2013) is a welcome resource that provides useful bite-sized advice at a reasonable price. This light paperback can be easily tucked away in your purse or carry-on luggage as you venture into your new profession.

Hall Houston has compiled a concise starter kit for those beginning their ELT (English Language Teaching) career. The book is a light read but chock-full of reliable practical advice at your fingertips. Even though experienced teachers may find the information familiar, it is always good to have a reminder. This was the case for me when I read the book. The resources at the back of the book are a nice reference of proven materials and a nice time-saver for any teacher, who otherwise could spend hours and hours creating a similar list.

Journal writing has long been regarded as an ongoing professional development tool. Writing a teacher's journal allows individual teachers to reflect on their personal and professional situation and experiences, in addition to brainstorming ideas for making their classes more effective and enjoyable. The space provided for this reflection is augmented by a number of themes such as an icebreaker, a warmer, a closer, a class activity, something to ponder, a *Stop it* (common mistakes to avoid), or a top tip. The reader will be tempted to read through them all, but can also randomly pick a page on any given day to spend a few minutes to think critically about their teaching or to get a quick idea.

At first glance, the book looks like an empty loose-leaf notebook. However, don't let that fool you into thinking that it is without merit. It is essentially a teacher's journal, but with nuggets of gold on each page. The book is organized into basically four parts. The first section is an encouraging introduction by Dr. Rose Senior, a former classroom teacher, researcher, and author in Perth, Australia. This is followed by the journal pages with one simple, yet useful, tip at the bottom. Thirdly, distinguished ELT professionals such as Lindsay Clandfield and Scott Thornbury give three tips that they would give a new ELT teacher. And finally, at the end is a resource section which provides a list of ELT books, blogs, websites, periodicals, webinars, and organizations.

In conclusion, it is an easy-to-understand and practical ELT teachers' guide. It provides some words of wisdom from note-worthy English teachers and authors, along with space for you, the classroom teacher, to write in your own thoughts, ideas and activities. Even after the journal pages have been filled up, *The ELT Daily Journal* would be one of the

quick resource books a teacher would want to keep on their bookshelf throughout their ELT professional life.