

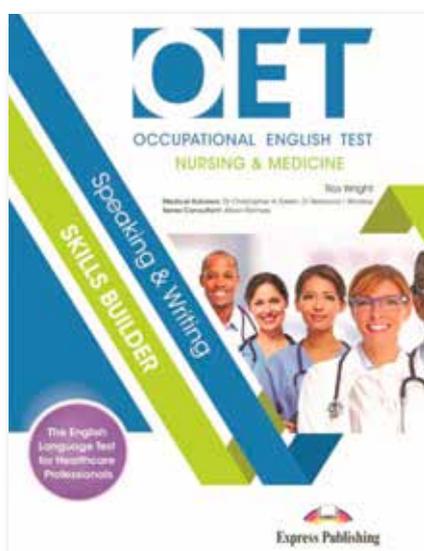
Reviews

OET Speaking & Writing Skills Builder: Nursing & Medicine

Ros Wright

Express Publishing (2020)

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OET Speaking & Writing Skills Builder: Nursing & Medicine is Express Publishing's new title for candidates preparing for the Occupational English Test (OET) in nursing and medicine. In accordance with the requirements of OET grade B, which is equivalent to CEFR C1, the course is intended for learners who have reached at least a CEFR level B2 of English. Although the book is primarily designed to help candidates prepare for the OET, it is also a valuable resource for both prospective and practising healthcare professionals seeking to embark on and further careers in English-speaking environments.

The course is organised into eight units which gradually familiarise candidates with the format and criteria of the OET speaking and writing sub-tests, beginning with general tasks and moving on to more specific exam tasks

and techniques as the book progresses. Although primarily aimed at helping learners to develop OET speaking and writing skills, the book is also a great resource for improving the skills and language required in work-related situations. All thematic units of *OET Speaking & Writing Skills Builder: Nursing & Medicine* focus on a relevant area of professional knowledge and practice, as they are built around topics related to different medical specialities, e.g. cardiology, neurology, endocrinology, and paediatrics. Moreover, all of the units provide learners with plenty of opportunity to practise a range of medical communication scenarios that they are likely to encounter in their professional environments. To this end, a number of communicative tasks, including role-plays which replicate real-life medical interactions, are exploited.

Each unit of *OET Speaking & Writing Skills Builder: Nursing & Medicine* follows a relatively linear sequence and contains two OET Speaking sections which introduce activities for oral interaction and the development of communicative strategies. They also provide useful exam tips and increase learners' awareness of the relevant principles of oral communication in medicine, such as employing a patient-centred approach, demonstrating empathy and understanding the patient's perspective. This is followed by Medical Focus, in which learners are encouraged to both share and expand their knowledge of the content area, as they are introduced to specific medical topics, e.g. cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and depression. Additionally, the Medical Focus component offers vocabulary work in which new items are presented in a meaningful context.

Not only does it introduce professional terminology, which is essential within the context of communicating with other healthcare professionals, but it also focuses on patient-oriented language. Thanks to the latter, candidates become familiar with the lexis commonly used by healthcare consumers and are thus prepared to bridge the terminology gap between healthcare professionals and patients. Following the Grammatical Expression and Lexis sections, which draw learners' attention to grammatical structures and vocabulary specific to OET, each unit concludes with OET Writing. In the writing sections learners are introduced to the most common types of medical writing, including case notes, discharge letters and letters of referral and they are offered practice in OET writing tasks. Similar to OET Speaking, the writing sections also provide useful test tips. The units are followed by additional resources, sample role plays and letters, grammar reference, audioscripts, an answer key and a medical acronyms and abbreviations list. The course also includes audio recordings and a digibook access code.

OET Speaking & Writing Skills Builder: Nursing & Medicine is not only a great resource for preparing for the Occupational English Test, but it also provides learners with the vocabulary, language and skills that are required when working in a medical environment. The course prepares students for different types of interactions in healthcare settings both by introducing them to a range of examples of spoken and written English and by providing them with opportunities to practise a number of medical communication scenarios that they are likely to encounter in the workplace. Its careful selection of content and a wealth of speaking and writing activities, which

replicate those in OET as well prepare learners to perform effectively in a variety of healthcare scenarios, make this course a truly valuable title on the medical English landscape. The book can be used either on its own or with the companion volume *OET Reading & Listening Skills Builder*.

Agnieszka Dudzik

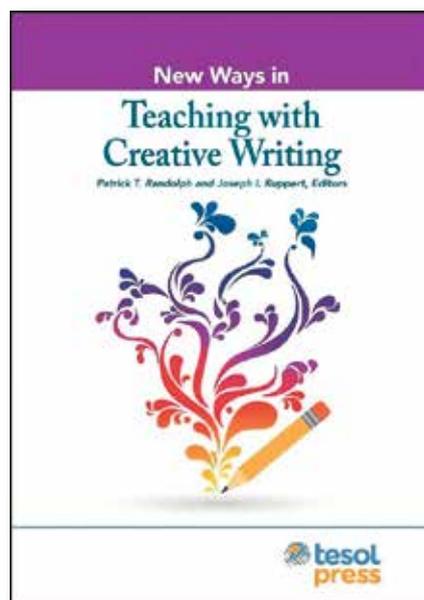
Agnieszka Dudzik, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages at the Medical University of Białystok, Poland.

New Ways in Teaching with Creative Writing

Edited by Patrick T. Randolph and Joseph I. Ruppert

TESOL Press (2020)

See page 88 for details



Most English learners don't have many opportunities to write creatively in class. Furthermore, students often view writing as a boring task – something to fulfill a teacher's requirements and be done with. But Patrick T. Randolph and Joseph I. Ruppert, co-editors of the book *New Ways in Teaching with Creative Writing*, published by TESOL Press, want to change that.

The book opens with an introduction that explains the importance of using creative writing in the English language classroom. Many teachers focus on teaching academic writing but neglect

creative writing. Randolph and Ruppert argue that creative writing should have a prominent place in the curriculum, too. Academic writing can often feel forced and formulaic, whereas creative writing requires students to imagine, to reflect on their own personal experiences, and to experiment with new writing techniques. Through creative writing, students can have fun in class, improve their writing abilities, and increase their motivation to learn and write more.

The book contains over 95 different ideas for how to engage students in writing creatively. At the beginning of each activity description, the editors helpfully list the student level appropriate for the activity and the approximate amount of time the activity will take, which make it easy to quickly find appropriate activities for class.

The creative writing activity ideas are divided into four sections: poetry activities, prose activities, dialogue activities, and creative writing projects. I was happy to see the large number of poetry activities because poetry writing is often neglected in classes. Many students rarely write poetry and usually think of it as something difficult, often assuming that poetry needs to rhyme or be written in esoteric language on a deeply profound topic. But the book offers many different activity ideas to get students writing poetry. Several of the ideas can even be used with lower-level students. For example, in the 'Visual Verse' poems, students simply use adjectives to describe a season of the year. The writing is simple, but it's an opportunity for students to think creatively and express their own unique ideas.

One of my favorite prose activities in the book is 'Emoji Stories'. Students are presented with several emojis and must create a story that matches them. When I tried it with my students, they enjoyed interpreting the emojis and imagining the story they represented. It was fun for us to hear the varied stories that students came up with, all using the same emojis as a prompt.

A few of the activities in the book are well-known creative writing exercises,

but many are new, which means the book can be appreciated by both new and seasoned teachers.

And although the book focuses on creative writing, some of the activities can help prepare students for academic writing, too. The 'Paraphrase Telephone Game' is a fun way to have students practice paraphrasing their classmates' ideas, which can help them understand how to paraphrase in academic writing, too.

The activities can act as a supplement to any curriculum. With so many activity ideas, teachers can easily pick and choose what to use, deciding whether to make creative writing a major component of their class or just something to sprinkle in occasionally.

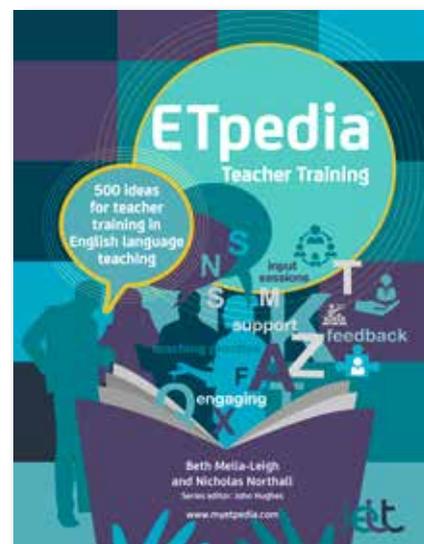
Randolph and Ruppert make a convincing argument about the importance of creative writing, and then they give us the tools to use it in class. With the long, varied list of activities, I won't run out of ideas anytime soon.

Allison Lewis

Allison Lewis is an adult ESL instructor in Chicago, Illinois, USA. She also has experience in curriculum design and materials writing. She is the author of *My Fake Boyfriend*, a graded reader for English learners.

ETpedia Teacher Training: 500 Ideas for Teacher Training in English

Beth Mella-Leigh and Nicholas Northall
Pavilion Publishing and Media Ltd (2020)
See page 88 for details



I don't often fall in love with books at first glance, but I have to admit I was pretty close to it when I opened my kindle version of *ETpedia Teacher Training: 500 ideas for Teacher Training in English*. The book is comprised of 8 sections and a total of 50 units. Each 'unit' contains 10 ideas – ways of doing things, tips, questions to ask yourself, considerations, benefit, tasks or concerns, hence the title. The book is organized in such a way that you can go directly to the 'unit' you need inspiration from, whether you are a teacher looking for guidance on how to become a teacher trainer or an experienced trainer looking for a new idea for today's feedback session, or you need a reminder of activities you have lost along the way, though I felt it was predominantly meant for new trainers.

Each of the 8 sections are practical. Section one, 'Getting started', touches on how to move from teaching to training to how to get your first training course started. This is followed by sections on 'Input sessions', 'Teaching practice and lesson planning', 'Lesson observation', 'The feedback stage' and 'Assignments and written tasks'. As a CELTA Tutor and Assessor, I found each of these sections practical and full of golden nuggets for the novice trainer. But there were also many useful tidbits for more experienced teachers and trainers.

In *Unit 14: 10 activities for input sessions on teaching language*, there are a variety of means for introducing and conveying meaning in teaching target language. Everything from ranking to noticing the features of language to providing learners with jumbled texts – all very useful.

Unit 17: 10 tasks for reflection and consolidation, I liked the variety of task types that were suggested: everything from ranking your top three ideas you gleaned from an input session to trainees creating their own action points to work on. The eighth tip was about giving the trainees on

a course a short quiz based on the input session's content. – another nice touch.

In *Unit 39: 10 ways to mark written tasks*, for example, the authors remind us to norm and double mark assignments, especially those that are marked and carry marks towards a pass or fail grade. This is something we do in the department where I work for every written assignment and exam. While time consuming, it does ensure a standardized marking system which ensures some level of objectivity.

Unit 42: 10 ideas for working with varied cohorts was one of the units which held the most interest for me since I've recently volunteered to do workshops for different departments in our college. This week coming will be about how different ways of learning can also affect how we interact with colleagues. While I had planned on sending out a quick questionnaire to everyone the day before the session, it was also good to be reminded to provide some post-session tasks for the participants as a reflection tool.

As our EFL Program is also doing blended learning at the moment and I am doing CELTA input sessions and assessments online, *Unit 43: 10 considerations for online and blended teacher training* was the second most relevant unit for my context. The third point in this unit was to provide students with a checklist of what equipment etc. they will need for the course. Providing this in advance of the course ensures everyone comes prepared, so time is not wasted. It would further serve you to provide the trainees with a basic 'how to' sheet to be able to manoeuvre around whatever platform you have opted to use for your course. Probably the most important tip of all was about time management. Most of us have likely experienced onscreen fatigue in the last 12 months since Covid-19 took our planet by storm, so being able to manage your time, organize times to collaborate with colleague on other

continents, and work both synchronously and asynchronously are crucial for online courses to be effective.

Finally, as the coordinator of a busy program, *Unit 45: 10 ideas for mentoring*, was also of interest to me. We always assign a mentor to new teachers to provide them with support and we attempt to put new instructors with a member of the same teaching team to ensure their questions can be answered, not only about what platform we are using and how our grading works, but also about how that particular course and teaching team is organized. I liked how this unit focused on being open and empathetic, and not just on the tasks one might carry out as a mentor.

The final unit was all those pesky 'What if?' questions that you worry about when you are first becoming a trainer *What if they don't like me? ... What if I don't mark them accurately and they complain? ... What if someone asks me for a reference letter that I don't want to provide them with?* The authors offer practical advice that would be comforting on a first course.

Finally, in the appendices, the authors provided photocopiable samples of weekly plans, plagiarism declarations and agreement forms and activities like the infamous 'Find someone who ...'. They have also included ready-made checklists for trainers and participants. I thought the one on page 278, 'Reading Subskills', was particularly useful.

Truly, for a new CELTA tutor or teacher trainer in a different context, this book will be a 'go-to' resource for many years to come. I'm delighted to have had the opportunity to review it and look forward to adding it to my resource list for new trainers!

Sandee Thompson

Sandee is currently the EFL Coordinator at CNAQ in Qatar as well as a CELTA tutor and assessor for Cambridge.

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