

Non-Native English Speaker Teacher Identity in English and Communication Classrooms

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While Non-Native English Speaker Teachers (NNESTs) are a well-established group of professionals in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL), not much attention is given to NNESTs in English and communication classrooms. As a visible minority whose first language is not English, I want to share my experiences as an NNEST teaching English and communication classes in North America. I particularly want to trace how I evolved from an NNEST who desperately wanted her students to look past her skin colour, accent, and dress up and accept her as just as effective as a Native English Speaker Teacher (NEST) to a teacher who no longer feels self-conscious because of her “differences”. Rather, she now views her “differences” as enriching the learning experiences of the students as she is using her “otherness” in discussing topics like intercultural communication and Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF). I would then invite the audience to share how their teaching is influenced by their identities and whether they could potentially see any benefit in bringing forth elements of their identities in their teaching.

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