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The Experience of Language Teaching

Rose M. Senior

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To language teachers everywhere

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Preface

Why I've written this book

I've written this book for a number of reasons. I've always wanted to share with others the wealth of insights that I've collected over the years through interviewing language teachers about their work. As my database has grown, so the pressure to share its contents with others has also built. Writing this book has given me the opportunity to synthesise and present the insights of language teachers in what I hope is an interesting and readable format.

Writing this book is also a way of expressing my sincere gratitude to all those teachers who have been so generous with their time, allowing me to interview them in depth. I feel I owe it to them to bring into the public domain their thoughts, feelings, practices and concerns – even though their identities remain hidden. I've found language teachers to be a dedicated, principled and articulate group of people – and I believe that their voices need to be more strongly heard.

I've enjoyed writing this book. Although the process of writing and rewriting text is enormously laborious and time-consuming, it can also be intensely satisfying and rewarding. This is particularly true when words can be found to express new concepts, when chapters begin to take shape, when sections fall into place – and when a coherent picture eventually starts to emerge.

I hope this book will make a useful contribution to the associated fields of classroom language teaching and classroom-based research. Living in the most isolated city in the world has, in a strange kind of way, been something of an advantage. Although in this electronic age physical distance is illusory rather than real, my physical isolation has enabled me to observe and to reflect upon current trends and debates in language teaching from a distance. This book marks the end of that isolation. I hope that the teacher insights presented here will contribute to current discussion and debate, and perhaps increase our understanding of what it means to be a language teacher.

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