

A message from the President

**Dear Chilean TESOLers (or better),
Dear TESOLers in Chile**

This has been a good year and many interesting things have happened. To name but a few:

The field of TESOL is recognized as a unique academic and professional discipline that is distinct from, but on par with, other academic subjects.

<http://www.tesolchile.net/documents/july2008/StatusPr ofEquity.pdf>

A Facebook Group has been set up for all Facebookers. Just find TESOLCHILE at www.facebook.com

Each Region in Chile now has a school and a university delegate.

We have received full and substantial support from the **Embassy of the United States**, the **English Open Doors Program** at Mineduc, **Universidad Alberto Hurtado** and **Universidad Católica Silva Henríquez**.

We are very grateful because it means many more teachers from Santiago and the regions will be able to take advantage of our academic events to improve their teaching and language skills. There will be special offers of free membership and free fees to conferences, more invitations to foreign experts, more possibilities for the regions, etc.



In this Issue

- My English Summer Town Experience by *Claudia Moraga and Christian Faúndes*
- Virtual Tribes in Second Life by *Juan Cuevas*
- Teaching to Make a Difference by *Bernardita Bettancourt M.*
- Do Native Speakers Make the Best Teachers? by *Thomas Baker*
- English Also Opens Windows: What kind of cultural contents can motivate our students? by *Katharina Glas*
- **TESOL CHILE MISSION STATEMENT**

In the past year we opened a huge door for interested teachers and students to work with us. Your suggestions, ideas, questions and contributions in terms of articles, projects, presentations and research have gone into the development of this conference. We thank you for your many valuable contributions.

With your conference folder you will receive TESOL Chile Newsletter No. 5. We hope you will find this issue useful for discussion and reflection on your teaching.

And finally, I hope you enjoy this conference at Universidad Católica Silva Henríquez. It has taken a bunch of very dedicated people working extremely hard to put this event together. The present members of the board extend a warm invitation to the TESOL Chile community to offer your help and work with us during this coming year. You will be rewarded with thanks from many grateful teachers.

Mary Jane Abrahams
President

My English Summer Town Experience

by Claudia Moraga, *participant teacher,*
EST 2008, first week.

My story began in September when I applied for English Summer Town. I was very happy to be accepted and I agreed to participate in a cultural presentation contest while I was there. The presentations would be on Thursday during English Summer Town.

After I arrived, I felt very nervous because I saw my colleagues preparing their presentations and they all looked very sure of themselves. So at first I decided not to present it, and I let the people know that I wouldn't present. However, inside of me something told me "*coward... so much effort... you have to present it...go*" but outside of me I was afraid and had no friends.

But something strange happened to me, something that it is not usual for me. An older teacher asked me if I would present. I told him that I had a presentation but I wasn't very prepared for talking in front of all the teachers. He encouraged me to make my presentation in spite of my fears. He was like a friend or father supporting me and telling me that I had to assume this like a learning situation, and just like I asked my students to talk in front of all their classmates, I now had to be a positive example for them.

These words gave me strength for continuing and lowered my fears. So we were preparing my presentation of Scotland and while I was talking an English teacher sat down behind us. It was Tom Baker, one of our instructors at English Summer Town. He corrected my pronunciation and helped to fix the Power Point slides. I couldn't believe it, (more help), so I felt that this was from God, because how else could I receive so much help when I had been so afraid? I laughed a lot, and I had a good time.

The next day, when my presentation started I forgot about 50% of what I wanted to say because I was very

nervous. However, the meaning of the presentation was given, and it seemed the audience understood. There were seven competitors, and thank God that all of us talked about different countries. When the judges gave the results of the presentations none of us could believe what they said. All of us were winners, so all of us had a ticket to go to the U.S.A!

Finally, I take away a lesson from this experience, and also a learning point for my life. There is no worse errand than the one that is not done. God puts people and tools together for achieving goals.

Christian Faúndes, *participant teacher,*
EST 2008, first week.

I had always wanted to participate in an English Summer Town version, but, for many different reasons, I had had to postpone my application... Last year was different... There was nothing that could stop me for applying... So I did... And so I got into it... I was really delighted when I received the e-mail telling me I had been selected to participate...

That first Sunday in January we, all selected teachers to participate in the first week of the 2008 version of it, were supposed to meet, close to La Moneda, I was feeling quite anxious in fact... I almost even couldn't eat much... There were a lot of promising experiences ahead me and I was eager to have them... The most exciting thing was to immerse ourselves in a complete English atmosphere... The perfect set to practice our English skills... Everything was going to be in English during the whole week...

I had seen the list of participants on the official website and I didn't really know any of the English teachers in it, which was really interesting, because I was going to share a week with unknown teachers from all over Chile and that would obviously mean varied experiences and lives to meet... Most of us were there, at the spot we were told to be... Some of them already knew each other... I knew nobody...

We had to wait for the bus to arrive and then for it to depart... We waited for more than an hour... Never mind... We had plenty of time... The journey just took around 25 minutes...

Once we arrived to the CPEIP premises, we registered and were assigned a shared room... I got room 216, which I was supposed to share with Roberto Cisternas, a teacher from Talca, who turned out to be a really nice person to meet and share with... The rest of the day was devoted to making ourselves comfortable at the residence and begin meeting other teachers... The CPEIP premises were nothing but relaxing... There were no city noises and it was the perfect atmosphere for us to enjoy the week in every way...

Next morning, the adventure began... After an interesting welcome plenary, we were divided into groups and had our first class... Each classroom was named after an English speaking country... UK Room, USA Room, and so on... All the classes were taught by American teachers, most of them as part of the Fullbright teacher exchange program... I knew classes would be good, but never THAT GOOD!!!... I had almost forgotten how nice and funny to have classes with a native speaker of English was...

The teachers, or lecturers, as they were properly called, were amazing... You could see in their faces and in their bodies, not only in their words, their passion for teaching... They prepared their lectures in a very professional way and you could really see that they were enjoying everything... They were quite aware of the fact that all of us were English teachers working in 5° and 6° Básico, with the most varied range of levels of knowledge, resources and experience...

The rest of the week was devoted to meeting other participant teachers, having interesting classes about the most varied topics related to English teaching and sharing as much of you as you liked with other people... We didn't

only have to attend classes... We also had some cultural activities specially prepared to have fun and there were a lot of presents as well... Embassies had an important role doing this... They prepared excellent cultural activities to make us have fun... We can't forget to mention the food they also had for us... It was a great way to get to know the culture they are representing in our country...

Classes were quite overwhelming... We sang, we danced, we played games, we paid attention, we asked, we learnt... We were students again!!!... I personally felt at university again... We learnt a lot and that was the best experience out of all it... What we learnt is really meaningful and I want to practice everything I learnt there with my students... I am a continuous learner, as any person in general... I enjoy learning almost as much as I enjoy English...

The week passed quite fast... Too fast in fact... We didn't even have time to realize that it was Friday... Yeah, Friday we had to finish our EST¹ adventure and we were supposed to go back home... Honestly, I didn't feel like returning home... I personally felt I hadn't had enough time to meet all the other participant teachers and that there were still lots of things to learn, in and out of the classrooms... And I also felt I hadn't had enough time to share with my teachers and my group of friends I met there...

I had to face the unpleasant truth... We were on our way back to our homes, no matter where in Chile we came from... We were already in the buses, the buses which were going to take us back to Santiago city centre, at the spot we were picked up. Some of the lecturers were in the buses with us too...

When we arrived in Santiago, I felt sad... It had been one of the best weeks in my life ever, not only due to all I learnt, because I just didn't learn ideas or techniques to practice in my classes,

¹ EST: Short form for English Summer Town.

but also because I shared my life with a lot of marvelous people who, in a way, inspired me and motivated me to pursue my goals in teaching...To pursue them, no matter how difficult it might look...

Nothing gives me more satisfaction than having applied for this 2008 EST version... It will always remain in my heart and mind; everything I experienced in this wonderful week of my life... The pictures we took are just a second in a whole week of continuous process of learning and having fun...



Front: Left: Christian Faúndes and Claudia Moraga.

Virtual Tribes in *Second Life* by Juan Cuevas,

Academic Coordinator, CALL Department,
Instituto Chileno Norteamericano, Santiago

Can you imagine a world in which people don't need to move out of their homes to buy groceries, run errands or study? This is already a reality for some people. Internet-based applications have emerged and evolved to meet these requirements. You just need to pick a nickname and a cartoon-like virtual image called avatar.

With this idea in mind and letting creativity and technological expertise go a bit beyond, some companies have designed 3D virtual worlds which provide their customers with a realistic experience. Some of these worlds were initially conceived as platforms designed mainly for enthusiastic gamers who wanted to experience a

parallel life in a virtual environment. As time went by, the potentialities and the elaborated graphic quality of these environments encouraged creators to explore other fields like the arts, business and, of course, education. In virtual worlds people can:

- Meet people from different cultures.
- Share experiences.
- Exchange visual, audio and social input.
- Travel around the virtual world.
- Share interests and knowledge.
- Engage in real-time collaboration.
- Have fun.

In this article we will focus principally on *Second Life*, a virtual world similar to the already popular *Habbo* or Google's latest creation *Lively*, but much more powerful and equipped with an incredible variety of objects, gadgets and tools. Besides, *Second Life* (SL) residents can build their own spaces customizing the background according to their own interests and goals.



SL is far from being a platform just for gamers, though it is obviously possible to do so; it's a world where users can fly or breathe under water, never aging or dying. Important companies like IBM and CNN have their islands in-world where they give information, contact people and do business. Going a bit farther, the advent of virtual worlds has set a precedent that establishes the feasibility of leading parallel lives. But whether this can only be a game for adults or an option we have to take more seriously is still debatable.

SL as an Educational Tool

The key question is *Can we use SL as an educational tool?* Maybe for more traditional and less digitally literate people the answer would be *no*, whereas for more technology oriented and challenge loving teachers the answer would be *of course*.

Virtual worlds, and particularly SL, can be used for a variety of educational activities due to the richness of scenarios called landmarks. Parks, zoos, museums and universities are just some places we can visit in SL, and if we are lucky we can even find other people (represented by avatars) to interact with. Each place is a whole new world to be discovered and SL teachers are able to develop and implement different instances for language practice and acquisition.

a. Informal chat

There are hundreds of beautifully created landmarks where you can meet with your students to discuss a topic or just have a chat around a campfire.

b. Interviews

If your students can not attend the regular classes you can arrange to meet in a certain place to interview them or even have an oral exam.

c. Field trips

Sessions can be well complemented by inviting your students to a zoo, restaurant, library, museum or a park. It is the opportunity to travel virtually and get to places where, perhaps in RL (Real Life), it would be impossible to get to.

d. Seminars and lectures

We can conduct complete seminars, workshops or conferences in-world. We can rent a place or create our own.

e. Role-plays

The variety of scenarios that SL offers allows teachers or training professionals to conduct all kinds of role-plays to focus on certain topics.

f. Thematic classes

If we are teaching the theme vacation, we can teleport our students to a beach or a peaceful lake to motivate our students.

g. SL quests

We can send our students to landmarks previously visited by us to do some kind of research like describing the décor in a pizza place and suggesting

something more sophisticated, visiting a science museum to get information about some natural processes or visiting a freebies place to bring animals whose habitat is in Africa.

It is of the utmost importance to emphasize the cooperative value of the activities we can create for SL. Due to this positive analysis, Web 2.0 tools have been integrated into the SL world; Moodle, Facebook and Flickr are some of the tools that have teamed up with SL to offer a more elaborated and interrelated teaching learning context. Moodle and SL have made the most attractive combination of resources through what is called Sloodle. Students and teacher, through Moodle, have access to all the tools and resources present in SL.

Some of the positive aspects of including this tool in the curriculum are:

- We can implement synchronous instances of communication.
- Some activities can foster cooperation, team work and social skills.
- We can encourage shy students to participate more actively.
- SL motivates students to make use of technology as a tool for learning and interacting.
- IT includes variety and bridges the time and space gap.

Educational Gadgets in SL

In SL there are landmarks called *freebies* where you can get free tools and objects to use in your in-world classes; furniture, clothes, food, toys, animals and even prefabricated houses can be obtained for free. All these elements can be rezzed (put) in-world as a source of motivation or realia to teach or beautify the setting of some thematic units.

Some landmarks like *Edunation* (owned by Gavin Dudeney, author of *The Internet and the Language Classroom*) or *Free Gadgets* provide a range of educational tools to spice up the experience of teaching and learning in SL. Some of these tools are:

- Picture boards: These tools allow us to display jpg files under the name of textures in our SL inventory. We can also display ppt slides. To do this we need to upload each slide as a jpg file.
- Text boards: We can also display text in the form of notecards in SL or just copy and paste from a text processor application.
- Landmark givers: These are prims (objects in-world) that, when clicking on them, give us a landmark to teleport to.
- Notecard givers: These are prims that provide text files when clicking on them.
- URL givers: These are prims that open websites when you click on them.

Developing Skills

Becoming a resident in SL implies not only the relatively easy choice of an avatar but also the development of a brand new repertoire of skills to have a successful experience in this different environment. In other words since the moment we are born in SL we need to learn how to walk, talk, eat, work and so on and so forth.

a. Personal skills

Every resident has the possibility to work on their appearance to make it look closer to the RL person or simply closer to their alter egos. We can also change clothes everyday if we want to. In other words we might say that we can become our own hairdressers, clothes designers and even cosmetic surgeons.

b. Communication skills

There are a several ways to communicate in-world. Besides the traditional public text chat, users can also resort to IM (instant messages) which allows the resident to hold private chats and even send messages to contacts in other places in SL. Maybe the best tool is voice chat which allows for the

residents to interact using headphones and a microphone. Text chat is characterized by a series of communication shortcuts as shown below.

Tp = To teleport	LOL = laughing out loud
Ty = Thank you	Alt = A person's alternative
Wb = Welcome back	avatar
Bfn = Bye for now	Brb = Be right back
Ly = Love you	Btw = by the way
Omg = Oh my God	Kiss = keep it simple stupid
Yw = You're welcome	Np = No problem
	Tia = Thanks in advance

c. Movement skills

Apart from walking, residents can run, fly, ride vehicles (obtained for free in freebie stores) and swim. But maybe what makes SL more engaging and futuristic looking is the fact that we can teleport to distant sims (geographic regions) just by clicking on a button. This time and space flexibility makes a huge difference among all the Virtual Worlds available at the moment.

d. Building skills

Although there is a vast space already populated with houses, buildings, parks, etc., residents can develop some building skills making use of a variety of forms they can manipulate and reshape. Construction lovers usually gather in sandboxes (public construction sites) where they can enlarge, rotate and change textures of prims to build their own objects and places.

Since this new scenario revolutionizes the present teaching paradigm and it implies more than teaching and learning English. It is highly recommendable to go through a couple of skill development sessions with your students before any language teaching takes place. Some students will need just a couple of hours whereas others

will require much more time and patience to be efficient residents.

Money in SL

The currency used in SL is Linden Dollars (L\$). There are different ways to get money; you can buy L\$ from Linden Labs (owners of SL) or you can get them for free performing different tasks in some landmarks. For example some landmark owner will give you L\$ if you dance, serve coffee, attend a party or just hang around some place.

The importance of making virtual money is that you can upload material for your classes such as textures (ppt slides), audio and video files. Every time you upload a resource you have to pay L\$10.

Although the currency exchange might fluctuate, over the last few years L\$ have remained fairly stable at approximately 250 Linden Dollars to the US Dollar.

Technical Glitches and Ghost Towns

Even though SL has many advantages and potentialities to give an interesting twist to the traditional way of delivering content, we can not close our eyes to the fact that keeping this platform running requires some minimum requirements that are essential to have an unforgettable experience and not to end up in a frustrating nightmare. SL experts suggest having at least a 2-Meg Internet connection and 2 Gigs in RAM. Besides as this environment is graphically sophisticated, a good video card is needed. If these requirements are not met, SL will crash or suffer from lag (delay in SL) and most probably voice communication will also fail.

Unfortunately the increasing interest in SL has led residents to build so much that most landmarks have become ghost towns. Land owners have forgotten the most important component, people (avatars), relying completely on the sporadic visits of curious residents that might drop by. My students and I have experienced the frustration of visiting several interesting and beautifully designed landmarks, but with no chances to meet

people who share the same interests. As a result, we have ended up visiting public landing areas or non-educational places which might not be the most appropriate scenario for our SL sessions to take place.

This sign of deserted growth needs to take a different direction, otherwise SL will eventually turn into a set of pictures no one will want to see.

Conclusion

As a final reflection we can say that SL is an incredible tool to challenge our students and ourselves, focus on our students' creativity, implement cooperative tasks, encourage the idea of community and collaboration, learn and teach, and even do business. But no doubt, all these aspects will mean nothing if we don't value and prioritize our RL (Real Life) because in the end that is *the* one that really counts.

Bibliography

- <http://www.secondlife.com>
- <http://stellacostello.net/2007/12/21/second-life-vocabulary/>
- <http://tesl-ej.org/ej39/int.html>
- <http://sleducation.wikispaces.com/educationaluses>
- <http://www.acm.org/crossroads/xrds14-1/secondlife.html>

PRISCILLA ECHEVERRÍA: TEACHING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

by Bernardita Bettancourt M.

Teachers can choose where to work, but this decision is definitely not easy to make. What do teachers focus on? Accommodations? Distance from home? Or do you think about where you can teach to make a difference in students' lives? Some teachers have chosen this last option. Priscilla Echeverría is one of them.

She works in a school in La Florida, a community located in the southeast part of Santiago. It is attended by students from a low socioeconomic background. Talking with her about her experience as a teacher, we can see what she has done and what we can do to plant the

seed that can positively change our students and later, ***change our world.***

There are many factors to think about in relation to teaching in schools. First of all, we have to reflect on *who our students are*. Priscilla, for instance, says that we have to think of our students as “subjects, not objects of our society. For her, students are people who want to be happy, they are not machines.” “Thinking about students requires critical thinking,” she adds.

Apart from what we might think of them, it is important that we communicate these feelings to them. Priscilla accomplishes this by talking to her students and always trying to discover who they really are. Priscilla believes that critical thinking is essential for this task. Thinking critically gives us the possibility to show our students not only who they really are but also who they can become.

Another important factor to have in mind is student motivation. Priscilla feels that motivation is essential for change. How does she motivate her students?

“I like being with my students... I have to be very enthusiastic all the time and ask them constantly what they want to do and learn. The other important thing to do is to teach with a wide variety of activities, and of course, include their reality in these activities so that they feel involved in the class”.

Motivation has been widely discussed in the field of education. As stated by Jeremy Harmer, the teacher’s rapport with the students is critical to creating the right conditions for motivated learning (Harmer 2001: 53). Harmer continues with, if students are to continue to be motivated they clearly need to be interested both in the subject they are studying and in the activities and topics they are presented with.

But what can a teacher do when students misbehave? “Being clever is the key”, says Priscilla. “Try to neutralize bad behavior with a sense of

humor. We have to ask ourselves why students are misbehaving; maybe the class is boring...” she adds.

Contrary to the popular belief, Priscilla thinks that it is important to give students the opportunity to express their opinion about the class. Moreover, students need to be shown that teachers are human beings, “they must acknowledge that we – teachers – have emotions and limits.”

Apart from this, she feels it is essential to teach students to have self-control. A useful way of doing this is to have trouble-making students think about their classmates. “We have to show our students how their classmates are affected by their misbehavior and teach them to put themselves in their shoes,” she comments.

Priscilla strongly believes that communication and democracy are the best ways of dealing with problems inside the classroom. Talking to students and sharing opinions and beliefs are good ways for solving behavior problems. “Students have to understand I am not wrestling with them,” says Priscilla. “When my students will not be quiet and listen in the class, I ask them what they would rather do. If their idea is good I follow it.”

Naturally, many of these conflicts are caused because students in their adolescent stage go through various difficulties. Teachers’ support and help is very important. “When I see a student going through a problem I offer him/her my help. I talk to them and give them my guidance, but most of the time they just want to be heard,” she comments.

Another aspect to consider when teaching to make a difference is teachers’ inspiration and commitment to teaching. Priscilla thinks that teaching is intellectual work – but at the same time “it has to do more with emotions than with lecturing.” “Teachers have to understand and be clear about their social role as teachers to change students’ reality”, she affirms.

When asked about how to stay inspired through the years, she says that an important aspect to consider is “not to be alone and to work with others. Most times teachers work alone, with no communication with their peers. It is necessary to talk about education with the people around you.”

One of the most common criticisms made to teachers is that they leave university and stop studying. It is important and necessary to read and stay informed about the latest studies on education. “We have to read about the problems present in our classrooms in order to solve them,” she says.

Thinking about students’ reality, knowing what to do at the right time, keeping students motivated and staying inspired are some of the things teachers can do to make a change. Priscilla is only one of the many teachers that make an effort to give students a different perspective on life. Hopefully, more and more teachers will find this inspiration and help change students’ future positively. We have the power to make a difference. However, it is up to us whether we do something to change realities or not.

References

Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. Longman: UK.

Do Native Speakers Make The Best Teachers? by Thomas Baker, Colegio del Verbo Divino

A world-wide, online British Council survey showed results of 44% agreement with the statement, “Native speakers make the best teachers”. However, what do ELT teachers in Chile think about this perception, known as the “Native Speaker Fallacy” (Braine, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999)? This is an area where little research has been done in Chile. This article reports the replication survey results of a group of Chilean teachers who attended the TESOL Chile 2007 annual conference.

An online survey conducted by the British Council submitted the statement, “Native speakers make the best teachers”, to a global, online vote. Here are the results of that vote as reported at

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/talk/vote/native.shtml> :



What are some of the strengths and shortcomings of this survey? One strength is its ease of applicability due to its digital format. Thus, a large sample size was generated. This gives its results credibility and makes a strong case for generalizability. Another strength is that the survey allowed participants to respond along a continuum and didn't constrain respondents to a restrictive, “Yes / No” response. Also, respondents could make comments explaining why they responded as they did.

On the other hand, one shortcoming in this design is its lack of random selection. Incidental bias, or contamination, on the part of either the participants or investigator(s) then, can't be ruled out. Another weakness is that it doesn't report whether the respondents are native speakers or nonnative speakers. This begs the question: Whose opinions are we entertaining?

Turning to the results reported, it seems surprisingly high that 15% of the respondents, (81 people), *totally agreed* that native speakers make the best teachers. Overall, 44% of respondents (237 people) indicated some degree of agreement with the

statement as opposed to only 52% (280 people) indicating some degree of disagreement. Furthermore, 4% of respondents (21 people) responded, "I don't know". Considering the voluntary nature of this survey, the comments of this group of respondents would have been illuminating as to their actual tendencies. However, it wasn't reported.

In interpreting this survey one must keep in mind that it was open to a global audience who voluntarily participated. Notwithstanding its weaknesses, its service to the ELT profession must be recognized. It allows ELT professionals an opportunity to examine the current perceptions about the profession through the eyes of its practitioners. Therefore, it was decided to replicate this survey / vote in the Chilean context, where a majority of teachers are non-native speakers. It was anticipated that in Chile the results would be the *inverse* of those reported by the British Council.

Chilean Survey

A paper was prepared and submitted by this author to TESOL Chile which was accepted. The paper took a balanced, rational stance from a PRO VS CON perspective and a historical development of ELT perspective. The paper concluded by introducing the International TESOL Non Native English Speaking Teacher (NNEST) Caucus. It was hoped that an informed respondent would most likely give a credible and qualitative picture of how teachers in Chile think about this issue. Consequently, it was resolved to replicate the British Council survey *after* the paper's presentation, rather than before it. The aim was to obtain a rational, logical response from all respondents rather than an emotional one. This survey diverges from the original in this respect.

Furthermore, the survey was to be applied *only* to those teachers who actually attended the presentation. The resulting smaller sample size (21) when compared with the survey it replicates (540) severely limits the generalizability of the results obtained. The value of

this survey, however, lies in its being, to the best of this author's knowledge, one of the first of its kind in Chile. It is hoped the results of this survey will serve as a point of departure for future research and discussion.

Results & Discussion

This study set out with the aim of "bringing to light" the thinking of ELT teachers in Chile on who the best teacher is considered to be. As mentioned previously, the small sample size limits its generalizability. Although the survey form did not restrict the respondents to a Yes / No answer, we saw three respondents who would have benefitted from a choice such as "None of the above" and "explain your answer". Nevertheless, the fact that it was limited to teachers who voluntarily attended the presentation suggests that the results obtained are the opinions of teachers with an intrinsic desire to know more about this topic as well as express their opinions. This served to increase the quality of the results obtained in this study.

The lack of random selection, as discussed earlier, is a limitation. In a future study, an equal and larger number of native (NEST) and non-native (NNEST) speakers could be randomly selected from among volunteers in order to increase the reliability and generalizability of the results. In this study, the small sample size (21 participants) precluded further elimination, however.

Table 2 shows the results obtained from the teachers in attendance while Table 3 shows a contrastive view of the British Council survey / vote VS the Chilean survey / vote. As was anticipated, the percentage of votes for total agreement was lower, 2 votes which represented 9 %. More surprisingly, however, was the fact that both respondents who elected the "total agreement" option, **self-identified** as NNESTs. This result would have been logically expected to have come from NESTs. One could speculate here about an inferiority complex. Suarez (2000) labelled it as the, "I-am-not-a-native-speaker-syndrome". This is an

area where further research in the Chilean context is indicated.

The votes for “agree somewhat” are lower for Chile, at 19% VS 29%. The vote for “disagree somewhat” is at 14% for Chile, twice as low as its counterpart. Both results could likely be attributed to Chile’s university-educated, majority NNEST population’s positive feelings of being competent ELT teachers.

Suarez (2000) advanced an estimate that as many as 90% of ELT teachers worldwide are most likely NNEST. Canagarajah (1999), more conservatively puts this number at 80%. The results obtained in this study were to be expected from a majority NNEST population and given its self-perception as being competent teachers of English.

Finally, there were five votes representing 24% of the total vote for the option, “I don’t know”. This remarkable result *contradicts* a description of the participant population as being highly motivated and intrinsically interested in the topic. It is felt that there had been ample information in the presentation preceding the survey / vote (122 Power Point slides) (Baker, 2007) to have moved all participants to take a definite stand somewhere along the agreement / disagreement continuum. What happened?

The response sheets of these five respondents were checked for any written comments in order to explain this apparent contradiction. Four of the five respondents had indeed made clarifying remarks. Here are their comments:

- (1) *“I’m a student. I don’t know.”*
- (2) *“I think all of us can be good English teachers, not only natives.”*
- (3 & 4) *“We both think that it doesn’t matter if you’re native or not. We try every day to be the best teachers for our students and we love to teach.”*

These three respondents’ innermost thoughts and feelings are in agreement

with Medgyes’ (1992, 1994) findings which show that NEST and NNEST teachers have both strengths and weaknesses and can be equally effective teachers.

Thus, it can be argued that only two of the five “I don’t know” votes are truly representative of this point along the continuum devised for this survey. With one of the two “I don’t know” votes coming from a NNEST *student* teacher, the overall perception of a highly motivated respondent population is restored.

Table 2: TESOL Chile 2007 results

1 I totally agree	2 I agree somewhat	3 I disagree somewhat	4 I totally disagree	5 I don't know
2 votes 9%	4 votes 19%	3 votes 14%	7 votes 33%	5 votes 24%

Table 3: Contrastive view

Vote	British Council 540 votes	Chile 21 votes
1: I totally agree	15%	9%
2: I agree somewhat	29%	19%
3: I disagree somewhat	28%	14%
4: I totally disagree	24%	33%
5 I don't know	4 %	24%

Conclusions & Further Work

The aim of this study was to “bring light where there had been darkness”. What do ELT teachers in Chile think about the statement, “Native teachers make the best teachers”? The answer was unknown prior to this study. It is one of the first attempts to, transparently and publically, answer this question in Chile, if not *the* first. Thus, it has implications for researchers. It can serve as a base from which future studies can build on and scientifically impact public dialogue.

However, those future studies will have to overcome the limitations of the small sample size of the present study in order to be generalizable for Chile. Also, random assignment in a future study which includes an equal number of NESTs and NNESTs would yield greater reliability. Therefore, it must be said that the results of this study must be taken cautiously.

One topic which emerged in this study as warranting further research was the factors which cause NNESTs in Chile to perceive NESTs as being the best teachers. Speculatively, is it simply an inferiority complex in favor of the NEST or are there more factors that are converging? Considerably more work will need to be done to determine what those factors, if any, may be in the Chilean context, as no literature could be located that answers this question.

In a periphery country such as Chile, where the majority of ELT teachers are university-educated NNESTs, it was expected *not* to find much sympathy for the view of the native speaker as making the best teacher. The survey results, not surprisingly, supported this hypothesis.

In closing, the comments made by three respondents show us all what the future of ELT worldwide can be. "*We can all be good teachers, NEST and NNEST alike, if we love to teach and try every day to be the best teacher for our students*".

Baker, T. (2007). *Do native speakers make the best teachers?* Paper presented at the TESOL Chile 3rd International Conference, La Serena, Chile.

Braine, G. (1999). *Non-Native educators in English language teaching*. Mahwah, NJ: LEA Publishers.

British Council on-line survey "Native speakers make the best teachers." Retrieved October 18, 2007, from <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/talk/vote/native.shtml>

Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). Interrogating the "native speaker fallacy": Nonlinguistic roots, non-pedagogical results. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Nonnative educators in English language teaching* (pp. 77-92). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Medgyes, P. (1992). Native or nonnative: Who's worth more? *ELT Journal*, 46 (4), pp. 340-349.

Medgyes, P. (1994). *The non-native teacher*. London: Macmillan Publishers.

Suarez, J. (2000). 'Native' and 'non-Native': Not only a question of terminology. *Humanizing Language Teaching*, 2(6). Retrieved October 18, 2007, from <http://www.hlomag.co.uk/nov00/mart.htm>

English Also Opens Windows: What kind of cultural contents can motivate our students?

by Katharina Glas, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso

Our students' lack of motivation for learning English is a constant reason for complaining in staff rooms. This article explores some of the possibilities that the inclusion of cultural contents offers for motivating our students more effectively. Thus, I will first look at some motivation theories for language teaching. Then, I shall present some of the current approaches for teaching cultural contents in English Language Teaching, including an example from my own teaching experience.

Gardner's distinction between the *integrative and the instrumental orientation* as part of motivation in language learning is very well-known. As teachers, we often try to motivate the demotivated by referring to the *instrumental orientation*: Students should learn English because it will offer them better job opportunities or a higher salary in the future: "look how English will open doors for you..."

However, it is unquestioned that affective factors, such as “positive feelings towards the target language community”, which *integrative orientation* refers to, play a very important role to support motivation, leading to successful language learning.

Dörnyei’s process model of motivation emphasises the fluctuating, non-static nature of motivation. Many teachers have observed how a rather sleepy student suddenly “wakes up” just because we have brought some interesting topic to class. Thus, Dörnyei distinguishes between initial motivation, executive motivation and motivational retrospection. Here, I am especially interested in *initial motivation*, which means that a learner who has to study English at school decides to dedicate some time and effort to actually learning the language. This often depends on the relevance that the students see in the learning contents, whether they are meaningful to them or not, although it is of course influenced by other factors, too, such as expectancy of success.

Without trying to diminish the importance of other motivational factors, such as the relationship with the teacher, the effects of school assessment etc., my experience is that some of my students don’t really know at all why they are supposed to learn English – *initial motivation*! Possibly this has to do with the fact that some students lack a positive attitude towards the language and the cultures that are associated with it – *integrative motivation*! And the teaching materials are not powerful enough to change anything about that. So my question is: What kind of materials could help us to motivate our students?

If teaching culture in practice means to read texts about “Highland games in Scotland” or “Floral dances in Cornwall”, this will not really motivate our students. On the contrary, this essentialist way of showing foreign cultures, which focuses on particular customs that are practised by a few people on special occasions in English-

speaking countries, is more likely to alienate our students because the distance between our students’ own experience and the cultural contents that we present to them is too great.

There are many valuable theories about the kind of culture teaching in foreign language learning that is desirable in an increasingly globalized world, and I would like to present some of the main ideas that are particularly helpful when we think about initial integrative motivation in EFL.

First of all, *Cultural Studies* as a school of thought has introduced a reflection on cultural issues with a clear political and social aim: to develop a counter-hegemonic perspective in order to build a more equitable society. This includes, for example, a rejection of the elitist “Culture with a capital C” in favour of a positive evaluation of popular and everyday cultural practices “culture with a small c”. It also views national culture in its *heterogeneity*. This is especially helpful when stereotypes about a foreign culture are to be discussed in the classroom.

Intercultural competence has become a real buzzword, especially in societies that through immigration have become increasingly “multicultural” in the past decades. It often also refers to the “do’s and don’ts” in intercultural communication, from global business to tourism and the treatment of migrants... here, I mention it as another approach that aims to create a heightened awareness and sensitivity towards varying cultural practices and thus a greater understanding between people from different backgrounds. I think all of these approaches, if dealt with sensitively in class, have the potential to add an affective component to our teaching, which can not only develop desirable attitudes in our students, such as empathy with people from other cultures, but also contribute to a more integrative orientation in our students towards the acquisition of English.

Certainly, as English has become the global language, the exclusive study of Anglo-Saxon cultures is no longer

relevant. There are some scholars and text-book writers who clearly favour "Teaching English without culture", at least without a foreign culture, and argue that nowadays in intercultural communication the main issue is the ability to explain one's own culture to somebody from another culture. There is some sort of fallacy in this assumption, as nobody can start explaining one's own culture before having at least a slight idea about what aspects of this culture need to be explained: some sort of contrast needs to precede this explanation. Some textbooks try to tackle this by including some general intercultural issues, for example, the way body language can vary from culture to culture, "greetings from around the world" or varying food and eating habits. I am sure that teaching some of these aspects can be fun and thus, they might well motivate the students. My concern is that they are often dealt with in a very superficial way, contrasting some customs from a few countries without differentiating, for example, between middle-class and working-class cultures, gender- or situation-specific differences.

This approach could also leave the impression that intercultural communication is completely free of tensions and that all members of any nation in the world treat all members of any other nation in the world in exactly the same way. In contrast, *the post-colonial perspective*, which is, in my opinion, the most interesting development within the treatment of English as an international language, often exposes unequal power relations, the unfair distribution of resources or access to opportunities in a globalized world. Here, the cultural focus tends to be on countries whose colonial legacy includes a special status for the English language, such as the Caribbean, India or South Africa, even though this could certainly be expanded to other countries of the Third World in which English has only recently achieved a more prominent position.

Within the postcolonial paradigm we often come across the topic of *migration*. By definition, it includes

transcultural experiences of people who live between two or more different cultures, and who consciously (or unconsciously) live this mix of traditions, customs, viewpoints in a way that potentially subverts political ideologies like nationalism or cultural chauvinism. Transcultural texts could serve as a model for developing a new consciousness towards a more peaceful and tolerant world. Texts about migrants have found entrance into many textbooks for language teaching. It is certainly a very sensitive issue, especially in a country like Chile that is marked by a curious combination of emigration and immigration – emigration mainly to Canada, the United States and Europe, and immigration from neighbouring countries, especially Bolivia and Peru. Many teachers also use migration as a reference for motivating students: "one day you might be invited by your relatives in Canada to go and live there, and if you want a job..." and so on. However, without trying to disillusion our students, migration should also be treated in class in all its complexity.

Another possible perspective is the idea that English as an international language is used to bring together people from different countries but with common interests and thus form *international discourse communities* on a certain topic, which can range from a fan club of a famous singer to scientific discussions in academic contexts. This is an area in which some students are already involved: they chat on the internet and exchange ideas in online forums etc. If they do most of this in Spanish, we as teachers should make students aware of the power of English in these contexts, and whether they are fans of a handsome actor or activists for some social cause, there will be opportunities for each of our students. Having learner autonomy in mind, one topic could be used in class for demonstration, after careful consideration what most students in a class are interested in, and students can continue on their own with periodical sessions in class to discuss their progress and experiences. Culture in this context has the special (and very

topical) connotation of the global connection. I think making the latter more explicit in our teaching could have a beneficial impact on students' integrative motivation, and the common interest and the use of the computer can give students a sense of belonging.

The teaching approach for all of these contents ideally considers the students' affective domain before the cognitive: students are confronted with texts (stories, poems, songs or movies) that talk about complex personal experiences. This might raise their interest more effectively than simply reading about "facts and figures" about some other country or an aspect of it. On the other hand, these facts and figures, if brought into the game at a later stage, might become more relevant in that context and be studied with more concentration, which then can lead to better vocabulary retention, higher achievement in English and more successful learning generally.

In one of my classes I used a Chicana poem called "La loca de la raza cósmica". Written in Spanglish, it explores the varying experiences of female Mexican immigrants in the USA. The students acted the poem out, assigning the different voices of these women to different students in the group, in the style of the "reader's theatre" described in Kramersch (1993). This helped them to discover the heterogeneity of the Chicano community, including complete marginality ("soy glue sniffer"), social activism ("soy la Chicana en los picket lines") and an adapted US-American lifestyle. There are some parts that refer to general human experience ("soy dreamer") and others that have a great potential for identification with students who have only recently experienced upward social mobility in their own families ("Soy the first in my family to graduate from high school"). Afterwards, a written response by the students included poems written about their experience of becoming a cultural "hybrid" by studying English. Some also wrote about the possibilities to identify with parts of the text. One student wrote: "[La loca]" represents the voice

of many Latin women who fight against [male] chauvinism every day, and of course Chile is not the exception." Some students researched some of the aspects of Chicano life mentioned in the poem.

To conclude, teaching culture is not always easy, as we have to be aware of stereotypes that should be avoided as much as possible. Sometimes we think that talking about cultural differences is going to alienate our students even further. However, we can also deal with them as aspects that are there to make our lives richer and more interesting. Motivation is the key! Let's open the window to the world to our students!

Bibliography:

Delanoy, W. & L. Volkmann (2006) *Cultural Studies in the EFL Classroom*. Heidelberg: Winter.

Dörnyei, Z. (2001) *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Harlow: Pearson.

Kramersch, C. (1993) *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

La ChrisX (1993) "La Loca de la Raza Cósmica", in: Rebolledo, T.D. & E.S. Rivero: *Infinite Divisions. An Anthology of Chicana Literature*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 84-88. (A fairly inaccurate transcription of the poem is available on http://www.geocities.com/college_chicano_warrior/poems4/laloca.htm).

McKay, S.L. (2002) *Teaching English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

TESOL Chile's Mission Statement

The mission of TESOL Chile is to strengthen the effective teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language in the nation of Chile while respecting individuals language and cultural backgrounds.

To this end, TESOL Chile, as a national professional association,

- supports and seeks to inspire those involved in English Language teaching; teacher education; administration and management; curricula and materials design; research.
- provides leadership and direction through the dissemination and exchange of information and resources.
- encourages access to and standards for English language instruction, professional preparation, and employment.
- supports the initiatives of its international parent organization, TESOL, Inc.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the **contributors** for making TESOL Chile's 4th edition of "**In A Word**" a diverse and interesting publication.

We also extend our thanks to all the **TESOL Community, the members and those who keep in touch**, for continued interest, participation, supportive feedback as well as patience.

Finally, we thank the TESOL Chile Committee and its extended team that works on a voluntary basis to keep in touch with members, organise events and the ongoing development of activities, website and for the publication of the newsletter.