



HAWAI'I TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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Hawaii'i TESOL, the local affiliate of TESOL, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building a community of professionals teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in the state of Hawaii'i.

For the latest information about HITESOL events throughout the year, please check our website:

**www.hawaii
tesol.org**

Practical Workshops By: Masaki Seo

On November 8, 2007, Hawaii'i TESOL held its annual *Practical Workshops for ESL Professionals* at Kapi'olani Community College and the University of Hawaii'i at Hilo. This was the first-time in the history of our organization to offer a teleconference event to connect ESL professions across the neighbor islands. At the beginning of this school year, we set our goal as working hard to create a better organization than ever as we address our mission: to serve the ESL community in Hawaii'i. One issue we are looking at is the fact that although we are a statewide organization, all of our events are held on O'ahu, which means our neighbor island members have great difficulty attending Hawaii'i TESOL events. This year, we have been making a concerted effort to connect Hawaii'i TESOL members across the state and to build a membership base in the neighbor islands. The teleconferenced event has been an activity that has been discussed among the board members for many years but was never pursued for various reasons. This year, with the support of Mr. Shawn Ford, Ms. Laura Kimoto, the faculty of Kapi'olani Com-

munity College, and the University of Hawaii'i at Hilo, we finally could host a teleconference event.

The evening's two excellent presentations focused on practical and effective ESL/EFL classroom methods led by Mr. Murad Khaliev, a curriculum coordinator and instructor at Hawaii'i English Language Program. His two outstanding workshops: "Material Development for Content-Based Instruction" and "Giving Effective Written Teacher Feedback," helped participants understand the importance of authentic material, use of content, and effective ways



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Hawaii-TESOL 2007-2008 Opening Social By: Mark Wolfersberger

For many people, the Hawaii TESOL opening social is perhaps the favorite event of the year, and this year's opening social certainly set the tone for another wonderful year with Hawaii TESOL. Eighty-seven people attended this year's event at the pavilion inside Ala Moana Beach Park, where they were treated to dinner, poster sessions, Hawaii-TESOL bingo, networking, and a grand time with colleagues within the TESOL profession.

The evening began with pupus and networking. Attendees were able to catch up with old friends, make new friends, and peruse the posters displaying information about local language programs. Soon after, we sat down to a delectable dinner of spam musubi, Thai noodles and BBQ chicken, papaya salad, tofu mushroom stir-fry, and lemongrass beef. Having 87 people attend meant that the pavilion was full and there were few empty seats, but, on a personal note, I particularly enjoyed my conversations with colleagues, whom I had not previously met, from the DOE and UH. These conversations gave me insights into the challenges that teachers in other programs face and renewed my respect for the dedication TESOL teachers display to their students and their profession.

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Cultural Levels of TEFL

By: Pavlo Shopin

Teaching English as a foreign language is intertwined with teaching culture and this relation is better understood when we scrutinize the notion of culture. In the current paper I am going to define the cultural levels of TEFL and reveal the basic relations behind some types of communication by means of a foreign language.

Despite the modern visions of culture as being fragmented and discursive, I believe that national traits are an important component of culture and evidence of its potential even in the globalized world. Complete elimination and reduction of the fragments of culture will not lead to

mechanistically unified human culture, but rather trigger denigration of thoughts and feelings, "and therefore never send to know, for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee" (Donne). Therefore, it should be evident that English as an international language still represents its cultural background and cannot be taught without introducing the culture which is behind it. However, McKay argues that "English no longer needs to



be linked to the culture of those who speak it as a first language" (McKay, 2004, p. 14). She points out that teaching Western culture and values may offend learners and cause an inferiority complex. The way out is to learn English using it to understand your own culture better. I cannot fully support this viewpoint because learning English does not mean learning a universal code that is culturally neutral. English is a powerful language that is culturally conditioned. Its learning necessarily presupposes learning cultural peculiarities and nuances that enable us

to communicate effectively. At the same time, EFL is not a one-dimensional cultural process. Acculturation is multifaceted and complex because of a number of cultural levels of EFL.

First of all, the teacher has to choose what language and culture will be the target medium of communication for students. There are different standards of English and various cultures that can be taught. American English and British English are the most popular standards that are presented in authentic textbooks. Understanding their variations and differences is quintessential at the advanced level. In Ukraine there are more textbooks with the stress upon

British English such as Oxford, Cambridge and Express Publishers. Ukrainian textbooks also choose to teach British English. On the whole, it is not fully justified that British English, whose spread is not so wide internationally, should prevail at school.

Secondly, English language and culture serve the purpose of better understanding home culture, and contrasts between the two are vital for any EFL learner. At this level students participate in cross-cultural communication between English and home culture. In this regard, Ukrainian textbooks seem to have an advantage over authentic ones where Ukrainian culture is not manifested or directly compared. Nonetheless, I assume that explicit presentation of home culture in English is no more motivating than presenting English culture in Russian or Ukrainian. Contrasts should be drawn implicitly through comparison and discussion. The more immersed we are in the British and American cultures, the more interesting and permeating differences and similarities that we can find between our home culture and the foreign one, which creates the sphere of interculturality.

Thirdly, we have a chance to let our students see other cultures through the English "public language sphere" (Velychenko, 2006, p. 1).

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Lightning Strikes (Cont.)

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Unfortunately, the picture is not as rosy or as clear for everyone else who has a stake in the EFP. For one, EFP faculty who are involved solely in EFP and its affiliate programs, like the short-term PEP (Proficiency in English Program), are simply out of luck. Those programs will be cut completely. On the bright side, faculty involved in non-EFP programs, particularly the BA/MA TESL programs, will continue to provide their high quality instruction while furthering their commitment to the innovation and development of the TESL program.

Traditionally, the EFP was a place where TESL students could fulfill their observation and teaching practicum requirements. As the discussion is on-going concerning the likely possibility of TESL students observing ELS courses at HPU, the teaching practicum, regrettably, is not feasible under ELS' 4-week intensive schedule, and thus, has been ruled out. Therefore, the devoted TESL professors are working tirelessly to renew old connections and make new connections with language programs, community colleges and the DOE across the state to find appropriate and accessible practicum settings for their students.

When asked about the ramifications of the discontinuation of the EFP on HPU's TESL program, Barbara Hannum the Program Chair of EFP and Assistant Professor of English, assured me that they are "committed to maintaining the integrity of the TESL program." Thus, as of right now, because of the efforts of the TESL professors, the TESL program will persist.

The question now is, where does that leave the rest of us Hawaii TESOL professionals? As I alluded to earlier, ELS will look locally to hire teachers for their classes. However, the number of full and part-time positions ELS is hoping to fill is unclear at this point. Be warned that ELS salaries are not as competitive as other language schools in Hawaii.

Cultural Levels of TEFL (Cont.)

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At this level students observe cross-cultural interaction between English and other cultures and the attitude of the English speaking nations to other cultures. Authentic textbooks pay special attention to the world culture represented in the English language. In Ukraine Western values should not be feared but soberly interpreted and internalized if we recognize their positive influence. I feel strongly that Western values are not damaging for Ukraine because our aim is integration into the European culture and economy. To sum up them we should also be summed up. And these conclusions on both sides will certainly be influenced by the code. Consequently, it is important that English be learnt as a second or third language at Ukrainian schools. According to S. Velychenko, democratic changes in Ukraine are closely connected with its moving to the English public language sphere (Velychenko, 2006). Different cultures represented in English help us make the next step.

Cross-cultural communication between two or more non-native speakers is the final and most compelling level of EFL. It is a fact acknowledged by many scholars that establishing interculturality requires two essential elements: "First, learners need to acquire knowledge about target culture and then they need to reflect on

how their own culture contrasts it" (Stepykina, 2007, p. 94). Both processes are not linear and may influence each other. Moreover, English will always influence cross-cultural communication. When two cultures interact with the help of English, a third culture is there to help and impede communication whether we like it or not. It becomes clear that any type of foreign language communication involves three basic components which are home culture, foreign culture and the English language and culture. English is first of all a national language and only then a medium for cross-cultural communication. It is culturally conditioned in every sense and at every level outlined above. In my opinion, no rationalization can make it neutral and universal and nothing will enable it to embrace all cultures and their merits.

I absolutely agree with S. Hoverla who states that "world culture is composed of thousands of national cultures, and the richer these are, and the more original they are, then the richer and more original world culture becomes. For this reason, the troubadours of international culture, in their attempt to obliterate and merge national culture, are the gravediggers of world culture" (Hoverla, 1988, p. 31). Consequently, the aim of teaching EFL comprises all four levels but some of them are surely not given sufficient attention in Ukraine.

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About the Author

Education: Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National Pedagogical University
Currently studying Masters course in English and Literature, expect to graduate in June, 2008

Hobbies: reading English books, science, management, philosophy, spectator sports, politics, classical music, visual arts

Lightning Strikes (Cont.)

(Continued from page 4)

Here, it should be made clear that I am not writing this article to vilify anyone or any program. My intention is not only to report on the ripple effects of the closing of HPU's EFP, but also to bring to the fore, and hopefully, start a dialogue about the dire situation Hawaii TESOL professionals, which mostly part-timers like myself, face.

Without many available full-time positions, part timers must rely on multiple places of employment and sources of income to sustain their lives. With the impending cessation of HPU's EFP, one, once reliable, avenue has been closed. Moreover, the EFP is not the only program affected by the dark cloud of decreasing numbers of international students; it is simply the most recent and visible victim.

Finally, I offer a challenge to TESOL programs and professionals in Hawaii. In light of the darkening skies of declining enrollments, perhaps, now is the time to re-examine and readjust recruitment efforts, instructional approaches and our long-standing grammatical goals. We must explore new ways of satisfying all stakeholders from students to teachers to administrators to the community without compromising the integrity of our profession. In the end, we must remember that this is Hawaii, so the clouds can't cover the sun for long.

About the Author:

Adam Pang is the socio-political chair of HITESOL. He is a part-time ESL instructor at HPU, McKinley Community School for Adults and the Office of Multicultural Student Services at UHM. His instruction centers on learner empowerment and agency.