

# ELT Weekly

INDIA'S FIRST WEEKLY ELT eNEWSLETTER

April 20, Issue#16

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## Quote of the week

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“Those that know, do. Those that understand, teach.”

- Aristotle

## Video of the week

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### Successful Pronunciation 1 (Macmillan)

Adrian Underhill takes a practical approach to teaching pronunciation in this video from Macmillan ELT. You will learn new ways to help your students work on English sounds, words and connected speech.

Video 1 of 4. See more at [www.macmillanenglish.com/methodology](http://www.macmillanenglish.com/methodology)

Watch the video by clicking this link: <http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/04/17/eltweekly-issue16-video-of-the-week-successful-pronunciation-1-macmillan/>

## Expert article

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### What can your Business English students teach you?

By Karenne Sylvester

*This article first appeared on Kalinago English (<http://kalinago.blogspot.com>)*

I have another great secret.

My students are incredible people.

They are bankers, managers, managing bankers; they are CEOs and CFOs, web programmers and designers; they are parents, they are wives and husbands, they belong to groups and associations - they work in the Energy sector, the Automobile industry, in Finance and Marketing.

They're champions.

They have hobbies. They have dreams, ambitions. They've failed at stuff, won awards and prizes, done a lot with their lives. They certainly know a heck of a lot more about business plans and web design than I ever will.

So you know what I do?

I listen and learn.

Sometimes they're so passionate about all the things they can teach me how to do, that while they're sharing their immeasurable knowledge, they completely forget they're speaking in English. Sometimes, I feel like I'm floundering in a sea of vocabulary that I'm sort of, kind of aware of but don't really know what it really means (the investment bankers).

I get them to teach the stuff they do in their normal lives as if I were one of their pupils.

I concentrate on the structure of the sentences while they do this, correcting their mistakes subtly, simply as a part of the conversation and encourage them to pay attention, to self-correct and auto-correct each other.

And all the while they are becoming completely themselves in my language.

Are your students special people too?

Who are they? What knowledge have they got, what do they really know heaps about that they 'd enjoy teaching you? Are you willing to let them be the bosses?

What is something you're interested in learning about? Or better yet, what is something you never ever thought you'd be interested in knowing more about? Are you sure? You've got some free schooling up ahead of you if you want it.

I must warn you, though, this exercise comes with a warning: your life, hobbies and interests could seriously change beyond repair.

\*\*Reprinted with kind permission, Karenne Sylvester of Kalinago English (<http://kalinago.blogspot.com>).

## Expert article

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### Coping with Conflict – In the Classroom or Out of it

By Michael Berman

In every community, every family, every classroom, and every staffroom, there are relationship problems, most of which are swept under the carpet, and most of which inevitably resurface again, often when we are least expecting them to, to cause even greater problems than they did initially.

This article presents one way of dealing with such problems that was used to good effect by the International Shamanic Community that I am a member of at one of our periodic weekend gatherings. It has been found to be most effective when carried out in a circle.

First of all, being as honest as you can be, write down all the complaints you have about anyone in the group in question. Next to each complaint write down the name of the person or persons you blame. In each case, whose fault does it feel like it is? If you were to take full responsibility for each of your complaints, consider what you would need to do about each one.

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Have you been holding some negative energy towards someone in this group? Do you need to apologise? Or do you need to just let it go and forgive? Are you simply being right about things and not being open to the validity of others' experience/ideas/needs? Does everything have to be your way? Is your way the right way?

Are you afraid to speak up and offer your experience/ideas/needs? If so, what would it take to be responsible and do it anyway, without blame, and with respect and openness?

After looking within for the answers to all these questions, if you have a complaint you need to express, do so to the person concerned within the group, with a recommendation and with respect.

To bring the session to a close, the facilitator could invite everyone present to stand and hold hands, to feel the power of the circle flow through them. Alternatively, the facilitator could lead the group through a Circle of Compliments, in which each member of the circle is required to compliment the person sitting next to them for something positive they have brought to the process. This can be done by providing the group with possible sentence starters, and here are some examples:

I really like / love the way you ... / I'd like to thank you for the way you ... / What I really appreciate / enjoy is ...  
/ I think you've got a really good / great ... / You're really good at ... / You've got a great way of ....

The process described in this article enables the potential conflict situation the group was initially faced with to be transformed instead into a rich, real, responsible experience that will inform and benefit the community. And the way to achieve this is by not holding on to things we need to say and instead to speak them in an appropriate way to the person or persons that we need to say them to.

There follows a story about a conflict situation that was resolved in a very different way. However, before you read it, you might like to consider these three questions:

How do you tend to get on with the people you work with? Do you work together well as a team or does there tend to be a lot of in-fighting? What can be done to solve problems such as this?

**Now for the story:**

In the Greenhouse

Gilbert Greensleeves was very proud of his tomato collection and his succulent, perfectly formed specimens regularly won him prizes in horticultural competitions all over the land. He tended his plants as if they were his babies and, in a way, they were as Gilbert and his wife had never been blessed with any children of their own. So

he was most upset when he woke up one fine summer morning to find a terrible commotion going on in the greenhouse.

He rushed outside, still in his pyjamas, to see what the problem was and he found all the tomatoes having a heated argument. In fact, the dispute had got so out of hand that the tomatoes were almost coming to blows. He tried to calm them all down and to make them see sense but without success and was at a total loss as to what to do.

Fortunately, he knew a bit about relaxation techniques, which he'd learnt to help him cope with his pre-competition nerves, and in desperation he decided to try them out on his beauties. After all, he didn't want them to get themselves into a state, especially just before the annual finals. It wasn't easy but he eventually managed to attract their attention and to persuade them all to follow his instructions.

“Good. Now I'd like you make yourselves comfortable and close your eyes,” he began. “Feel the tension gradually fade away from the tops of your juicy heads to the tips of your little green toes.” Here he paused for a moment to give his words a chance to take effect and to produce the desired results. “Now focus on your heads,” he continued “and become aware of the fibre that extends from your crown chakra and what it's connected to.”

After a couple of minutes, one of the more forthcoming tomatoes, generally regarded as the leader of the pack, broke the silence. “But we're all connected to each other and we all come from the same source,” he observed.

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“That’s it exactly,” Gilbert Greensleeves replied. “So now you’ve solved one of the mysteries of life. When you fight against each other, you’re only fighting against yourselves. And perhaps now you can be more understanding and tolerant towards one another in future.” A hush descended over the greenhouse as all the tomatoes bowed their heads in shame. It was clear that they had all learnt their lesson and Gilbert returned to the house with his head held high, his mission having been accomplished.

And from that moment onwards, Gilbert Greensleeves never had another problem. His tomatoes lived in perfect harmony and won him even more prizes than before!

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Choose three of the following questions to ask the person sitting next to you. Then report back what you found out to the rest of the group:

- a. What feelings did you have during the telling of the story?
- b. Have you ever been in a similar situation to any of the characters in the tale?

- c. Did any of the characters remind you of people you know?
- d. What do you think the “message” of the story is?
- e. Did it remind you of any other stories you know?
- f. Which was the most moving or memorable bit of the story for you?
- g. Which bit of the story sent you off to sleep?

The questions presented above are multi-purpose in that they can be used for a post-listening activity with any story you choose to tell. And they are learner-centred, rather than teacher-centred, in that the students select the questions that interest them and then question each other. (This activity has been adapted from one suggested in an article by Mario Rinvolucri in the IATEFL Newsletter Voices, August 2008).

As a follow-up activity, when telling the story in class, you could find out what relaxation techniques the learners are familiar with, and then invite them up to the front to teach them to you and their classmates.

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In the Greenhouse, and the activities that accompany it, were taken from “In a Faraway Land”, a resource book on storytelling by Michael Berman that will be published by O Books in 2010.

Michael Berman BA, MPhil, PhD, works as a teacher and a writer. Publications include A Multiple Intelligences Road to an ELT Classroom and The Power of Metaphor for Crown House, and The Nature of Shamanism and the Shamanic Story for Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Shamanic Journeys through Daghestan and Shamanic Journeys through the Caucasus are both due to be published in paperback by O-Books in 2009. Michael has been involved in teaching and teacher training for over thirty years, has given presentations at Conferences in more than twenty countries, and hopes to have the opportunity to visit many more yet. For more information please visit [www.Thestoryteller.org.uk](http://www.Thestoryteller.org.uk)

\***ELTWeekly** would like to thank **Michael Berman** for granting permission to reprint this article.

## Worldwide ELT news

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### [The place of English language in India today](#)

In the mid-1980s, when I was studying journalism in the US, a question I was often asked was: “How do you speak English so well?” My reply was simple and honest. I would start by patiently explaining how I had studied English not just as a language but as the medium of instruction for all other subjects and then I would add: “English is not a foreign language to me. It is my language. It is as much of an Indian language to me as, say, Hindi or Tamil or Urdu.”

Over the years, my view of English hasn't changed. I remain unapologetic of my ability to speak, write, read and dream in English. And I remain more convinced than ever that English is my language. As an Indian, I have happily embraced it and I believe that it has inherently joined the pantheon of languages—official and otherwise—that are spoken in this country.

Read the complete news item here: <http://www.livemint.com/2009/04/13223244/The-place-of-English-language.html?h=B>

### [Giving English language learners the classroom support they need](#)

In the 1990s, I was a science teacher at Central East Middle School, now the Feltonville School of Arts & Science. I usually taught five sections of students – more than 150 young adults per week. My classes were built around weekly lab experiments, and I worked hard to make concepts about science concrete through these hands-on and minds-on activities.

On any given Saturday, I could be found with other teachers taking classes or workshops in search of ways to improve my teaching. But I never took a class to help me teach students for whom English was a second language, even though half my students came from homes where English was not spoken by all the adults.

Read the complete news item here: <http://www.thenotebook.org/fall-2008/0887/essay-giving-english-language-learners-classroom-support-they-need>

### [A Half-Century Of “Stupid Grammar Advice”](#)

Linguist Geoffrey Pullum won't be celebrating the 50th anniversary of Stunk and White's *The Elements of Style*.

In his recent article for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, he writes that the guide has “significantly degraded” American students' grasp of grammar.

Read the complete news item here: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103171738>

### Pearson buys English training business in China

LONDON (SHARECAST) - Publishing group Pearson has bought Wall Street English, a Chinese provider of English language training to adults, for \$145m in cash.

Pearson acquired the company from Wall Street Institute, which is majority-owned by global private equity firm The Carlyle Group. The group expects the acquisition to enhance adjusted earnings per share in 2010, its first full year, and to enhance adjusted EPS and generate a return above its cost of capital from 2011.

Read the complete news item here: [http://www.sharecast.com/cgi-bin/sharecast/story.cgi?story\\_id=2715574](http://www.sharecast.com/cgi-bin/sharecast/story.cgi?story_id=2715574)

### Teaching pronunciation to ESL learners

To be able to teach accurate English pronunciation to learners for whom English is their second language, teachers and tutors require a detailed knowledge of how sounds are made so they can demonstrate and explain the various vowel and consonant sounds.

- (a) Breath Flow
- (b) Organs of Speech
- (c) Voiced or Voiceless

Learners need to know that consonant sounds are made when the breath, coming from the mouth or throat, is either partially or completely obstructed by the tongue, the teeth or the lips.

Read the complete news item here: <http://mb.com.ph/articles/202437/teaching-pronunciation-esl-learners>

### **TEFL: a world of teaching opportunities**

Teaching English as a foreign language has never been more popular. One TEFL advice website reports a 30 per cent increase in people downloading course applications in the last two months alone. Traditionally, TEFL was a popular path for graduates wanting to travel before knuckling down to a “proper job”. Now, it also holds appeal for those pondering – or pushed by redundancy – into a midlife career change. Or those simply disenchanted with life in gloomy Britain.

“The type of person doing TEFL courses has changed. It used to be people wanting to live abroad post university, now it’s become much more of a career,” says Mary O’Leary, who has taught in Argentina, Egypt and Spain and is now senior lecturer in English language teaching at Anglia Ruskin University. “But the main appeal is that teaching abroad gives you the opportunity to live in a country, not as a visitor, but as part of the community, meeting people and learning all about a new culture.”

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Read the complete news item here: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/5148753/TEFL-a-world-of-teaching-opportunities.html>

### [Revealed: new teaching methods that are producing dramatic results](#)

Innovative headteachers at schools around the country are abandoning traditional chalk and talk teaching methods in favour of widely differing visions of an educational future. Judith Woods enters a world of spaced learning, praise pods, flexible Fridays and sixth-formers in business suits.

Lucy Barratt is weaving around the gym with her 16-year-old classmates, all dribbling basketballs. First they walk, then they jog. There's laughter and chatter, when a whistle suddenly blows. The youngsters quickly place the balls on the floor and file back to the tables and chairs set out at the far end of the hall, because the pupils of Year 11 aren't doing PE; they are halfway through a science lesson.

Read the complete news item here: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/5166111/Revealed-new-teaching-methods-that-are-producing-dramatic-results.html>

## Worldwide ELT events

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### [IATEFL YL & LT SIG March 2009](#)

This conference is jointly organised by the British Council and IATEFL's Young Learner & Learning Technologies Special Interest Groups. Sponsored by Cambridge ESOL, it is for all teachers of English and focuses on three of the most important topics in the rapidly changing world of English Teaching.

The conference agenda features over 90 speakers with differing backgrounds and a wide range of geographies. We hope the varied sessions will address some of the global issues in teaching young learners and demonstrate innovations around Assessment and Testing, Learning Technologies and CLIL.

For more information about the conference itself, including registration, go to the YL SIG pages.

For further details and pre-registration, please visit: <http://www.countryschool.com/ylsig2/index.php>

### [New Trends in CALL: Working Together, 9-12 September, Spain](#)

After 13 years EUROCALL returns to Valencia. Some of the more senior members of EUROCALL will recall the 1995 Conference which took place in September that year, hosted by the Department of Modern

Languages. Although e-mail was only slowly emerging at the time, EUROCALL '95 was one of the first conferences in Spain to digitise and publish the abstracts of all the presentations on the web. An emerging world wide web that seemed revolutionary at the time. For anybody who might be nostalgic, the 1995 abstracts can still be accessed at <http://eurocall.webs.upv.es/euro95/home.htm>. The proceedings of the '95 conference are also a valuable witness of what was prominent at the time in relation to CALL and TELL. Looking back we can see that some of the concerns in the mid nineties are still valid today, for example issues such as integrating CALL into the language curriculum, incorporating speech recognition tools into language courseware, parser analysers, interactive learning environments and so forth.

The 2009 EUROCALL conference will focus on New Trends in Computer Assisted Language Learning with a special emphasis on innovative ways of collaborating and working together in the advancement of language learning and teaching. The conference sub-themes are an example of the numerous branches that have grown out of the CALL tree and is an illustration, we think, of the roots that this area has planted in a collective will to actively contribute towards better understanding and improving language learning with the assistance of information and communications technologies. CALL researchers, developers and practitioners are therefore invited to submit proposals relating to any of the following subthemes which, we think, summarise current interests and concerns in CALL:

- Curriculum development for CALL
- Assessment, testing, feedback and guidance in CALL

- Pedagogical change in technology integration
- Catering for Less Widely Used and Taught Languages in CALL
- Research in new language learning environments
- Innovative e-learning solutions for languages
- Building national/international partnerships for networked language learning
- New role of writing as a tool for communication
- New developments in multimedia courseware design
- Networked language learning in adult education
- Learning Management Systems
- Mobile Learning
- Virtual Worlds
- Corpora
- CALL supported Content Integrated Language Learning (CLIL)
- Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)
- Computer Assisted Translation
- Formal and informal language learning

For further details and pre-registration, please visit: <http://eurocall.webs.upv.es/eurocall2009/>

### [EAQUALS AGM and Conference: 23-25 April 2009](#)

The 2009 EAQUALS AGM and Conference will take place between 23rd and 25th April in Istanbul. The event will be hosted by one of the Turkish Accredited members of EAQUALS, Istanbul Bilgi University's English Language Programs Department who are actively involved in the planning and preparations as well.

**Venue:** santralistanbul® Campus, Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey

The theme of the conference: Quality in Language Teacher Training and Development.

The provisional programme for the meeting is as follows:

#### **Thursday 23rd April:**

From 9.15: Inspection Subcommittee meeting, and later other committee meetings

11.00 – 17.00: Inspector training and inspector meetings

20.00: Informal dinner

#### **Friday 24th April:**

09.15-12.30: Member discussion groups

14.00-16.15: EAQUALS Annual General Meeting

16.30-17.30: Meetings of SIP groups

20.00: Conference dinner

**Saturday 25th April:**

09.15-17.15: Conference Day - open to non-members

[Click here to register on-line for the Inspector training day, AGM and Conference\(for EAQUALS member – 23rd – 25th April 2009\)](#)

[Click here to register on-line for the Public Conference on 25th April 2009](#)

[Draft programme of the Public Conference on 25th April 2009](#)

[Click here for the Accommodation information and for the booking form of The Peak/Yenisehir Palace hotel.](#)

**Additional information**

Istanbul is an ancient but up-to-date city. The old versus the new, the traditional versus the modern - these are contrasts a visitor often observes. The city is full of diversity and colourful views. It is also one of the world's largest cities, and the only metropolis to straddle two continents. It's location on the slopes around the Bosphorus Straits and the Golden Horn makes it a particularly spectacular place.

Further useful information about the city can be found at: <http://www.istanbulcityguide.com>

For further details and pre-registration, please visit: <http://www.eaquals.org/news/item.asp?n=2967>

## Book of the week

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### **Becoming A Language Teacher: A Practical Guide to Second Language Learning and Teaching**

By **Elaine K Horwitz**

#### **Book Details**

- Paperback: 272 pages
- Publisher: Allyn & Bacon; 1 edition (February 5, 2007)
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 0205430821
- ISBN-13: 978-0205430826
- Price: \$52.00

#### **Book Description**

Becoming a Language Teacher is a comprehensive guide to the knowledge and classroom skills teachers need to meet the needs of all language learners. The book encourages each reader to develop a personal approach to

language teaching. A much-needed resource in an era when all mainstream classroom teachers need to always be focusing on language, *Becoming a Language Teacher* recognizes that the development of academic literacy is the goal of many language teachers and essential to the school success of English language learners—unlike most methods books, which concentrate on language for communication purposes rather than for academic needs. Employing a warm and supportive tone, respected author Elaine K. Horwitz clearly explains fundamental knowledge about second language acquisition and language teaching, as well as answers to practical questions such as: How do I plan a lesson? How will I know if the students are learning? How do I teach language when I am also teaching content material? How do I effectively use technology in language teaching? How can I ensure the academic success of my students? By considering actual classroom situations, readers learn how to make instructional decisions in their own teaching settings.

### **From the Back Cover**

A much-needed resource in an era when all mainstream classroom teachers need to be constantly focusing on language, *Becoming a Language Teacher* recognizes that the development of academic literacy is the goal of many language teachers and essential to the school success of English language learners—unlike most methods books, which concentrate on language for communication purposes rather than for academic needs.

**Reviewers Praise this New Addition to the ELL/EFL field:**

“The strength of this book is the practical suggestions that it provides as far as teaching writing, reading, listening, and speaking to second and foreign language learners.”

–Eva Yerende, University of Texas at Arlington

“The style of writing is very readable and comprehensible. The author includes activities and strategies that many students want and need to help them connect to theory.”

“[This book] is thorough and concise. It is practical and insightful for both preservice and inservice teachers.”

–Gerald McCain, Southern Oregon University

Employing a warm and supportive style, respected author Elaine Kolker Horwitz clearly explains fundamental knowledge about second language acquisition and language teaching and answers practical questions such as:

How do I plan a lesson?

How will I know if the students are learning?

How do I teach language when I am also teaching content material?

How do I effectively use technology in language teaching?

How can I ensure the academic success of my students?

By considering actual classroom situations, students learn how to make instructional decisions in their own teaching settings. This resourceful text will surely become a must-have for any language teacher.

## Cool ELT resources

### English Teaching Resource Center

The English Teaching Resource Center (ETRC) was created by the U.S. Embassy and “I. Creanga” State Pedagogical University in collaboration with the British Embassy to Moldova. It is a multi-media center created to help English teachers improve their knowledge of English, to assist them in developing their lessons and classroom teaching skills, and to promote communication and professional association among English language teachers across the republic.



In the beautifully remodeled ETRC, teachers can:

- read the latest books on English teaching methods,
- find authentic English language materials,
- plan their lessons and network with EFL colleagues.

The English Teaching Resource Center is open free of charge to all English language teachers in Moldova. It is the place where teachers find experts in the language who can answer their questions, help with lesson planning, and provide tips on how to make teaching effective and easy. It is also a place where teachers can make themselves heard and hear others, where they can relax and meet friends and colleagues.

Explore ETRC at <http://www.etc.md>

### **English Resource**

The English Resource is your one stop ELT Resource Site. Here you will find free photocopiable downloads for your ESL/EFL classes, teaching ideas, Job Center and a lot more.

Search our Archives which have over 150 high quality teaching ideas you can download or print out. You need to register but the registration is free.

**English Resource**  
Your One Stop ELT Resource Site

Here are some more links to help the busy teacher.

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Bottom Of The Barrel: <http://www.bottom-of-the-barrel.com>

Here's a site for people to vent their frustrations at actions, events, or other screwy things that people, companies, or even countries do. It also includes forums and jokes. Go there and let the world know who you are.

Language Solutions: <http://www.languagesolutionsinc.com>

They publish great books Discover Debate, Getting Ready For Speech, and Listen Kids! (which was co-authored by our ideas man Dana Chaffin). Request a free copy and get access to their free teacher support pages. Dana also had a hand in some of their teacher support so you know it's good.

TriMira Publications: <http://www.trimira.com>

This site sells e-books by Dana Chaffin. There are currently only two of his e-books on line there but Dana says there will be more soon. You can download a free sample of both books. If you like the ideas on this site, you'll love his books.

Explore English Resource at <http://www.englishresource.com>

### **Tools for Educators.com**

Tools for Educators.com is an affiliate site of Mighty Education Systems. It contains programs for teachers to use to create worksheets, printables, games, printouts and more for their classes. You can find matching ready-to-print

flashcards, games, bingo boards, worksheets, wordsearches, crosswords, board games, and phonics materials at MES-English.com.



FREE worksheets, worksheet creators, printables wizard and on-line teaching materials makers with images from Tools for Educators.com . Use these printout generators, game makers, and programs for teachers to make and print teaching resources with pictures or text. They are simple, but beautiful, versatile and powerful. I hope your students (and you) enjoy the resources.

Free Word Search Maker with images for hints or with text hints. You choose! Generate a free printable wordsearch with pictures and choose the text that goes in the puzzle. You can make a custom word search in seconds, but it looks great.

Explore Tools for Educators.com at <http://www.toolsforeducators.com>

**A to Z Teacher Stuff**

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A to Z Teacher Stuff is a teacher-created site designed to help teachers find online resources more quickly and easily. Find lesson plans, thematic units, teacher tips, discussion forums for teachers, downloadable teaching materials & eBooks, printable worksheets and blacklines, emergent reader books, themes, and more.



A to Z Teacher Stuff team says, “There are thousands of pages here to explore, so press Ctrl+D to bookmark A to Z Teacher Stuff, and plan to return! Enjoy your visit!”

Explore A to Z Teacher Stuff at <http://www.atozteacherstuff.com>

## Word of the week: wherefore

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wherefore • \WAIR-for\ • adverb

meaning:

1 : for what reason or purpose : why

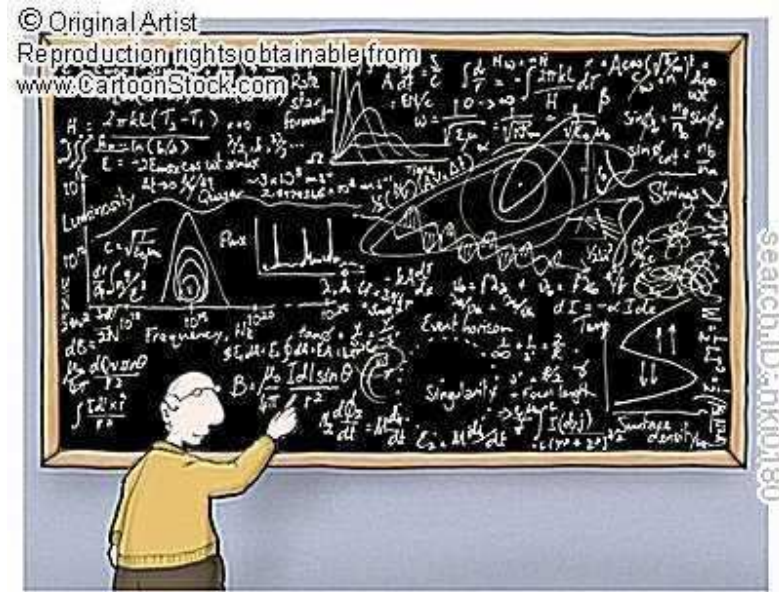
2 : therefore.

example: “O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?” (William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet)

To know more about the word ‘wherefore’, please visit: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/cgi-bin/mwwodarch.pl?Mar.15.2009>

# ELT cartoon of the week

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Astrophysics made simple

# Research paper

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## **Culture Influences on English Language Teaching**

By **Zhang, Xue-wei; Yan, Ying-jun**

### **Abstract**

It's obvious that the teaching situation and teaching methods used in English Language Teaching (ELT) in China need to be changed to involve culture instead of language knowledge only. To further explain the importance of culture teaching, teachers need to know to what extent cultural background knowledge influences language learning and teaching, and how teachers can take advantage of that influence. To account for the roles culture plays in language learning and teaching, it is necessary to demonstrate the functions it may perform in the components of language learning and teaching, such as listening, speaking, reading, and translating. [This paper was supported by the Foundation of Harbin Institute of Technology at Weihai.]

To access the full paper, please visit: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal>

## Subscriber space: Research paper by Mahnaz Azad

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### **Accommodation Theory Revisited**

By **Mahnaz Azad, Islamic Azad University**

In interpersonal situations, language can be used to convey information about one's personality, temperament, social status, group belonging, and so forth. Although many of us like to think that we interact essentially the same way to virtually every person we encounter, due to fairness and our integrity, this simply is not true. In most instances, it is desirable, and even necessary, to adjust our language patterns to our conversational partners, be they close friends or loathed offender. Sometimes we encode this deliberately and consciously, other times it emerges automatically and may not even be decoded overtly (Giles and Baker, 2008). Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), initially known as Speech Accommodation Theory, was first developed by Giles in (1971) so as to explain how we manage certain facets of interpersonal communication, particularly, our choice of accents and dialects. Indeed, it was originally conceptualized to excavate more complex socio-psychological understanding of language choices than a mere recourse to people's socially normative dispositions. Over the years, and with various colleagues, Giles has elaborated and revised the theory in varying directions and it has, according to many commentators, assumed the status of a major socio-psychological theory of language and social interaction. In

what follows, the underlying concept of Accommodation Theory, its components and related issues will be elaborated and subsequently, its similarities with some other models, some proposed criticisms regarding the theory, and finally some of its implications will be presented.

Each one of us is aware that our style of speech changes in the twinkling of an eye, as it were, depending on a wide range of variables such as the setting, the topic of discourse, the person we are interacting with, the purpose of the interaction, and so on. For instance, we tend to speak more slowly when conversing with foreigners, or use grammatically simple language with babies or children (baby talk). We also tend to match non-verbal behaviors. It would create greater rapport and cause people to approve us more. This can be unwelcome, especially if it is perceived as aping or being overly familiar. The reverse also happens: people deliberately assert their identity by speaking and acting differently from the other person. In other words, we accommodate to others by adjusting our communicational behavior to the requisite roles that participants are assigned in a given context.

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