

THE HELTA

INSIDER

HONDURAS TESOL NEWS MAGAZINE



Honduras

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Celebrates

2nd Annual Helta Tesol PD Congress

in La Ceiba

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The HELTA Insider is a dream come true, it is testimony to the positive changes occurring in Honduras and YOU our educators get to be a part of it!

The HELTA Insider is a News Bulletin designed to inform and communicate trends and tendencies in Bilingual Teacher Professional Development and serves as the Voice of the namesake organization Helta Honduras Tesol.

Our objective is to create a space to showcase all the bilingual literary talent we have among our teachers and students alike. We want to promote literacy by publishing outstanding literature produced by our pupils.

We want to promote Professional Teacher Development, we want to see the leadership in you rise to the top as we lead a revolution in Transformational Education- Education where the quality of the lives of all our citizens are improved through the values and traditions being taught in classrooms all across Honduras and the world.

We want to change the way the world perceives Honduras as a violent and unsafe place to live; we have the "power of the pen" to write a different story of a Honduras advancing in Biliteracy, with teachers who would do anything for their students to learn and learn well.

We invite you to enjoy our second edition thanks to Editorial GS and their staff we can offer this level of quality and look forward to hearing feedback from you our teachers. We also hope that you be motivated to submit articles, short stories, news of trends in learning in your zone of Honduras.

**#English #Teachers #Write with us
#Speak your Truth**

**Send us your #stories #poems #essays
#articles #questions #letters #good #news**



Email: hondurastesol.newsletter@yahoo.com

To "Buy-a-Code-breaker-4aTEACHER" you can inbox us at:
1. Write us at: cbctutor@gmail.com or
2. Contact us on Facebook/[cbcodebreaker2013](https://www.facebook.com/cbcodebreaker2013) or
3. Whatsapp us at 50499826053 for payment details.
Help us bring happiness to classrooms all around Honduras to start!



The Future of TESOL in Honduras

By Grazzia Maria Mendoza Chirinos, M.Ed., M.A, HELTA Honduras TESOL President

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

I am pleased to address all of you again, after almost a year we have the chance to meet face to face again to learn and create new projects together.

I truly believe in the power of teachers like you who do their best to find opportunities to grow professionally, to learn from peers and colleagues, and to collaborate in great, amazing projects. This was evident to me and several presenters throughout this year regional events, it was evident to me through messages you have sent and it was evident to me through your interest and engagement in the work we have been doing.

It never ceases to amaze me how teachers, especially English teachers, are such special beings. We have so many superpowers, but the biggest one is our interest in learning more and more every day. We are so amazing, that we seize every available opportunity to find new materials, new lesson plans and tools that will make our classes fun, interactive and relevant for our students. We are so great, that we look for teaching opportunities everywhere we are, no matter if it is at home, at the

supermarket or even at the movies. We can be on vacation and find an amazing site that will make a wonderful photograph that will engage our students in learning. That is how special we are!

As a consequence, I see a bright future for TESOL in Honduras. Last year we were 190 participants and presenters exchanging ideas, sharing knowledge, increasing our expertise. This year we are 260 participants and presenters sharing the same joy. In my mind, this means that as years go by the number of engaged teachers "Reflecting about the Future of TESOL" could increase steadily by 70 participants every year. This means that 19 years from now when we become 21, we will have reached an approximate attendance of 1500 teachers. It will mean an average of 60 presentations per year, which in turn reflects 1260 presentations that will have been modified, used, developed and benefited hundreds of teachers, but most importantly hundreds of students in our country. It will mean that you as teachers will have made a difference in

someone's life, at least one life every year and when we multiply those numbers it means changing hundreds of lives and education in our country. It means your hard work will have a ripe harvest of well-rounded citizens.

You are here because you want to learn and grow professionally. You are here because you understand the importance of improving yourself in your field.

You are here because networking and collaboration will bring the most out of your teaching practice.

We, HELTA Honduras TESOL, are here because we enjoy and feel passionate about serving and working with motivated and engaged teachers like you and we feel strongly committed to serving all of you every step of the way. We are here because you are simply amazing teachers!

As said last year, Honduran English teachers you rock, Honduran TESOLers you rock...so, let's rock this conference!



An Opportunity To Say **THANK YOU!**

Every little bit counts and in HELTA we appreciate every one of you and the personal sacrifices you make to "Be There" for our Honduras TESOL events.

God has truly brought together a new generation of educators with one purpose in mind: Transformational Education - education is no longer just theory recited before a group of well-behaved unquestioning minds but instead it is a reservoir of competencies and unlimited

potential just waiting to be explored by you our Teachers who have travelled far and wide to be with us and appreciate all that is done in your honor as shapers of the future of tomorrow.

To the US Department of State through the PAS office at US Embassy in Tegucigalpa for their sponsorship, funding of materials and support during all this time.

A very special acknowledgement for Ms. Carmen de Urcuyo,

Cultural Affairs Specialist for Programs, Embassy of the United States of America.

To Centro Cultural Sampedrano, our very heartfelt thanks for all that you do to add that local touch to our activities.

To all our sponsors, your invaluable contributions mean the world to us at HELTA and to our teachers, we could not do all that we do without your support.



THE HELTA INSIDER



SOUTH REGIONAL NEWS

Volume 2, June 2016

SIS promotes our Helta Southern Regionals

By Suzanne Rajkumar

They say Choluteca is scorching but our experience was a wonderful breezy Saturday with eager minded teachers and student teachers anxious to learn more. It was a wonderful experience and promises to be even greater in 2017.

International School for hosting our regional activity. It was a blessing to share our workshops with such engaged young persons desirous of positively impacting bilingual education in Honduras.



The SIS Team & our Presenters.

Thanks to our South zone collaborators and the Southern



Photo credits: Certificates and Prizes won at our HELTA South Regionals



Photo: CBC Codebreaker Playshop- the best way to end the day having fun!



Saturday morning. Volume one of our HELTA INSIDER



Teachers engaging in the ICEBREAKERS workshop at our HELTA Southern Regionals

THE HELTA INSIDER



NORTH REGIONAL NEWS

Volume 2, June 2016

EL PROGRESO

celebrates 1st HELTA

Regional Conference for 2016

By Suzanne Rajkumar, Vice-President II, HELTA- Honduras TESOL

Eternity Christian School and Institute hosted our first HELTA Regionals and it was amazing. Many teachers from Tela, La Lima, El Progreso and environs were in attendance. Congratulations to the Principal and her wonderful team: Erika, Karen, Kelsey, Ms. Velásquez, Mr. Cerella and so many others for helping coordinate a wonderful event. Participants were able to register early, relax and mingle a bit before an entire

day of intensive yet dynamic professional development. Our program included sessions about: Inclusive Classroom Teaching (Peer Collaboration), Icebreakers for small and large groups, Student-centered activities to enhance speaking skills, Web 2.0 tools to enhance EFL skills and Collaborative Writing Strategies, Critical Thinking Skills Development, and Making English Learning Enjoyable through simple

activities.

It was a great Saturday and this fun energetic group even danced to the Hokey-Pokey to keep their spirits high. It was an opportunity for laughter, learning and networking.

Thank you El Progreso, we are looking forward to Regionals 2017.



Teacher Registration El Progreso, May 2016



Teachers enjoying their program of activities, El Progreso, May 2016



A packed auditorium for Opening Plenary, Helta Regional EI Progreso, May 2016



Teachers playing CBC Codebreaker, Helta Regionals, EI Progreso, May 2016



Teachers received their Diplomas for Participating in Helta Regionals, EI Progreso, May 2016



The Best part of the day, Giving away presents from our sponsors! Helta Regionals, EI PRogreso, May 2016

CCS hosts

2nd HELTA Regional in San Pedro Sula

By Suzanne Rajkumar

Centro Cultural Sampedrano celebrated our second regional conference in the North Zone in July 2016. Their warmth and attention was much appreciated as always. Our programming included a full day of workshops and plenaries where all teachers were able to actively interact with our presenters, sharing their ideas

and experiences to improve our common goal of improving and providing the best possible bilingual education in Honduras.

Our turnout was small but to the advantage of all participants who were able to receive gifts from our sponsors and collaborators; the US Embassy - provided innovative

teaching material, SECOMAR & Individual Collaborators-provided Codebreaker games for the participants and MacMillan Publishers for providing a variety of ESL material as gifts to our attendees.





Teachers enjoy playing CBC Codebreaker at
 CCS Helta Regionals July 2016



Observing, learning, having fun all in a day's work
 for HELTA Honduras TESOL

¿Debo aprender otro idioma?

Entrevista con JOSE IGLESIAS, Director of Learning and Development at PartnerHero
Former owner of The Learning Center at San Pedro Sula

Pregunta:Cuál es su opinión acerca de la importancia de que un empleado laboralmente activo estudie o domine un segundo idioma.

R/

Es imperativo que ahora hoy en día todo empleado independientemente del área en que se encuentre domine el idioma Inglés. Honduras está en el punto más importante dentro del rubro turismo y se ha dado a conocer a nivel global y sabemos de antemano que el idioma que predomina los negocios es Inglés, siendo este el tercer idioma más hablado del mundo, por detrás del chino y del castellano. Se debe de saber manejar tanto en un contexto laboral como social, es por ello que se requiere de cierta destreza en la fluidez del mismo de forma oral y escrita. El poder desenvolverse en un contexto bilingüe da un mayor valor agregado al profesional. Este logra posicionarse en un nivel competitivo dentro del mundo de los negocios y así optar por mejores ofertas laborales tanto fuera como dentro del país. El idioma Inglés hoy en día no es más un lujo, status de cierto nivel social como solía pensarse años atrás; es fundamental para sobrevivir en un mercado altamente competitivo. Podemos observar hoy en día los diferentes rubros donde se exige personal bilingüe con un alto porcentaje de conocimiento del idioma. Honduras posee un mercado bilingüe altamente competitivo y entre más fluida sea la persona mejores oportunidades esta logra tener. Hablar mas de un idioma ayuda a retrasar la aparición del mal de Alzheimer.

Pregunta: Nos puede brindar algunos tips para facilitar el aprendizaje del inglés, en especial para los adultos que suele dificultárseles un poco más el proceso.

R/

Dentro del país existen varias empresas dedicadas a la enseñanza del idioma Inglés, todas estas siendo muy competitivas y con excelentes programas. Es importante que la persona sepa que al incorporarse a un curso de Inglés debe de dedicarle tiempo no solo en la hora clase, imperativo lo practique lo más posible fuera del contexto de la misma. Debe de llevar a cabo conversaciones en ingles con otras personas, perder el miedo y la pena. Usar el material y herramientas proporcionadas, como ser; audio, videos, laboratorios en línea, libros de trabajo y sobretodo la práctica, que es lo que le va a ayudar a la persona a desenvolverse mejor. La Fluidez del idioma no se trata de que tan rápido lo hables, muchos tienden a confundir eso con fluidez, se enfoca en la manera que utiliza el vocabulario para darse a entender. Una de las áreas más problemáticas es la pronunciación, por ello es muy importante la dedicación y práctica. Existen varios sitios en la web los cuales son gratis y pueden ahí practicar la pronunciación con ejercicios de repetición. Puede también grabar su voz leyendo un texto y luego escucharlo y comparar pronunciación del programa en sí. Existe el paradigma de que en Latino América se dificulta más el aprendizaje del idioma, ya que 23 horas del día se habla español y una hora Inglés; durante su curso, en lo personal no creo en ese paradigma ya que es una limitación mental en la persona. Es un estilo de vida vivir inmerso en el idioma Inglés, ¿eso qué quiere decir?, es vivir, comer, beber y pensar ingles las 24 horas del día este donde este. ¿Cómo se logra? Escuche programas en Inglés, vea la televisión en Inglés, tiene hijos bilingües hable con ellos Inglés, trabaje en una empresa multinacional aborde a sus compañeros de trabajo en Inglés. Borre de su mente la pena y vergüenza de cometer errores, estos son partes de la vida y más en el proceso de aprendizaje. Existen varios métodos donde el participante puede sobrellevar esas limitaciones y volverlas en fortalezas en su diario vivir. Las personas que me conocen saben que en donde este y con quien este les abordo en Inglés. LIVE - THINK - SPEAK ENGLISH is my motto

THE HELTA INSIDER



CENTRAL REGION NEWS

Volume 2, June 2016

SIGUATEPEQUE

celebrates 1st HELTA TESOL Regional Conference for 2015

By Esther Bettney, Vice-President I, Helta- Honduras TESOL

On October 23rd 2015, Comunidad Educativa Evangélica hosted HELTA Honduras TESOL's Regional Conference in Siguatepeque. In total, fifty-one teachers representing a variety of public and private schools in the department of Comayagua attended this wonderful day of professional development. Teachers participated in 3 excellent workshops over the course of the day. First, Irma Rodríguez, an English teacher from Instituto León Alvarado in Comayagua, presented "Material Design in the EFL Classroom". Irma provided many practical and hands-on examples of materials which can be created to support student learning using simple resources. Esther Bettney, English Program Coordinator at Comunidad Educativa Evangélica, led a workshop entitled, "Input and Output in the English Classroom". In this workshop, teachers considered the amount of English input and output in their own classrooms and learned strategies to increase

both components. Grazzia María Mendoza, English Area Coordinator at Zamorano University, shared about Trace Effects, a collaborative English language video game created by the United States Department of State. Grazzia demonstrated the game and how it can support students' writing development. She even gave away some free copies of the game to a few lucky teachers! Grazzia closed our time together with an overview of the mission of HELTA-Honduras TESOL to provide support for English teachers throughout the country and invited teachers to

become members to enjoy the full benefits of this excellent organization. Overall, it was an excellent day and we are looking forward to another regional conference in Siguatepeque later this year! Enjoyable through simple activities.

It was a great Saturday and this fun energetic group even danced to the Hokey-Pokey to keep their spirits high. It was an opportunity for laughter, learning and networking.

Thank you El Progreso, we are looking forward to Regionals 2017.





Engaging Students Through **Meaningful** Language Opportunities

BY : Esther Bettney, M.Ed., Comunidad Educativa Evangélica, Siguatepeque, Honduras



In a recent study I conducted at a bilingual school in Honduras, students emphasized their use of English outside of the classroom as a major contributing factor to their learning of English. Actually, 96% of students in Grades 3-11 who participated in the study indicated they used English outside of school for a variety of purposes, including conversing with English-speaking family and friends, translating for family members, accessing a variety of media forms and technologies, such as music, video games, social media, websites, television programs, movies (including foreign films with English sub-titles), and cell phone and computer interfaces. One Grade 9 student stated, "Learning English has been easy, because reading and talking to North-American people has helped me. Also, watching English TV shows...Also listening to music in English has made it easy."

While students emphasized their use of English outside of school, they saw few connections between their everyday use of English and

their English classes. Students argued their English classes should be more connected to their established uses of English.

For example, one student explained instead of writing essays, they should focus on more practical forms of writing in English, such as communicating with a friend through email. While students used English regularly outside of school, and felt this contributed strongly to their language development, they generally saw few connections between their lives and their English classes.

While some teachers attempted to make connections between English classes and the outside world through activities like reading the world news in English or organizing pen pal programs, they recognized this was one weakness of the English program. In reflecting on his classes over the past school year, one teacher explained: "I think the students are right. There wasn't a whole lot of opportunity to have meaningful use of the language. Yeah, it was very limited, in terms of real world application." Most teachers believed there were currently limited opportunities for students to connect what they were learning in English class with their lives outside the classroom, even though students clearly valued this type of learning.

While students and teachers in this study recognized a lack of connection between English inside and outside of the classroom, students require opportunities to

use their second language in meaningful ways (Day & Shapson, 2001; Genesee, 1994). As well, if students are not exposed to a variety of language uses, they can develop a narrow type of academic-only language (Abello-Contesse, Chandler, López-Jiménez & Chacón-Beltrán, 2013). English teachers can provide students with meaningful opportunities by first asking their students how they use English outside of school and their goals for the use of English in the future. Teachers can then create classroom tasks which clearly relate to their students' language needs. By providing meaningful language opportunities, teachers will engage students and students will see a clearer purpose in their English classes and connection between their classes and their lives outside of the classroom. Teachers will also prepare their students with the language tools needed both for their present lives and for their future ones.

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British Council ELTeCS E-Newsletter

posts about Honduras TESOL 1st International Conference

Posted by Renate Thummler, Editor ELTeCS Latin America & Caribbean
Written by Grazzia Mendoza, M.Ed, President HELTA- Honduras TESOL

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/eltecs-latin-america-caribbean>

Our Honduran English Language Teachers Association has come to be as the result of the project PD for English Teachers sponsored and funded by the US Department of State through the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund and the US Embassy in Tegucigalpa.

There has been a process since November 2014 of providing professional development to English teachers in Honduras in different regions.

During these professional development sessions we have worked on the constitution and bylaws of the association, this has been our first objective. During these workshops we have had good teacher attendance, around 30-80 teachers for each one-day professional development meeting.

A second objective of the project has been to reactivate our affiliation to TESOL, as we were an affiliate from 1984-1994. We have received the application from TESOL International and are working on completing the process. Hopefully we will be done with it before the Congress in November.

We are close to the conclusion of the project. It will conclude next November from the 19-21 with a Congress for English Teachers. The Congress will be held at the binational center in the north region of our country, Centro Cultural Sampedrano, located in San Pedro Sula, Cortes.

Dr. Yilin Sun, past TESOL president will be our

keynote speaker and we have national speakers as well as speakers from the United States, Central and South America already lined up in our program.

At present we are working on our website, but we have a FB page HELTA-Honduras TESOL <https://www.facebook.com/PDEnglishTeachers> and our contact e-mails are: to request the Call for Proposal and to request information of membership fees and how to volunteer for different activities hondurastesol@yahoo.com

Grazzia Maria Mendoza, M.Ed, President
HELTA-Honduras TESOL





Quick Look!

A Sneak Peek into the Workshops being presented at our 2nd Annual HELTA Honduras TESOL International Conference.

CALL

Computer Assisted Language Learning Workshop

Carlos Saavedra, 2nd Annual HELTA Congress Presenter

In this session the presenter, Carlos Saavedra from Eternity Christian School and Institute in El Progreso reflects about the use of technological resources. He mentions that there are many limits because of several factors such as "little or no technological resources in institutions, lack of motivation in the application of technological tools and institutions that possess technological resources face problems as low knowledge about the applicability of technological tools, successful integration of ICT in the various classes" (Saavedra, 2016).

He also includes in one of his presentation an important aspect of CALL which is social networks as a means to communicate in a digital world, taking

us into a virtual reality that can enrich learning processes and benefit educators in new learning process designs.

Alejandra Sierra, our presenter from UNAH, Tegucigalpa reflects about the changes in technology and how these

impact learning. She focuses on an important and relevant aspect for teachers: assessment when we use technology, tools to use, roles for teachers and students and how to provide "immediate feedback and evaluation" (Sierra, 2016).





Yoga in the Classroom: Mindfulness and Cultural Values

By Alejandra Sierra, 2nd Annual HELTA Congress Presenter

Alejandra Sierra, also takes us into an interesting mindset, Yoga in the Classroom! She considers this as a tool to add to relaxation and integrating the mindfulness process into our classrooms. Providing learners and teachers a space for breathing, emptying their brains, focusing on one task at a time and connecting students' senses provides for a setting that can modify behaviors and bring a "new twist to the classroom". (Sierra, 2016).



Bringing Cultural Values & Contexts into the Classroom

Sherie Henderson, 2nd Annual HELTA Congress Presenter

In the age of Cultural Values, Sherie Henderson from AEI (American English Institute) from the University of Oregon brings cultural values and contexts into the classroom as a means to increase "students' observation skills, critical thinking and fostering of intercultural awareness." (Henderson, 2016)





Critical Thinking Workshop

By Juan Ayestas, 2nd Annual HELTA Congress Presenter

Juana de Ayestas, presenter from Zamorano, Honduras; explains to us out of her experience putting into practice Critical Thinking processes that students are able to engage in Task Based Project or Competency Based Environments in which learning becomes relevant, engaging and productive. Students are able to innovate, create and be original. Language becomes not only a tool for communication but one for creativity development.

6 critical questions

things to think about when someone has something to say

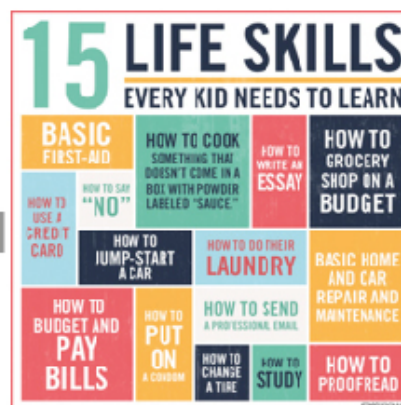
who	Who said it? Is someone you know? Someone famous? Is someone in authority? Should it matter who said it?
what	What did they say? Are they giving facts or opinions? Did they give evidence? Did they leave something out?
where	Where did they say it? Was it in person or in private? Did other people have a chance to talk about that when asked?
when	When did they say it? Before, after, or during an important event?
why	Why did they say it? Did they explain their reasons? Were they trying to make someone look good or bad?
how	How did they say it? Were they happy, sad, angry or didn't care? Did they write it or speak it? Could you understand it?

Copyright © 2009 critical thinking anytime

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

Salvador Buendía, 2nd Annual HELTA Congress Presenter

Salvador Buendía, presenter from El Salvador, focuses on teaching EFL and how it is not only about skills development in the language but focusing on attainment of “life skills that connect students to the world so they can succeed in our dynamic world”. He emphasizes on the importance of having learners obtaining proficiency but also focus on competences such as “critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity – that are necessary to their academic, professional, and personal life” He focuses on presenting strategies related to motivation and innovation in the English classroom.





Classroom Management Workshops

By Raul Agreda, 2nd Annual HELTA Congress Presenter

Raul Agreda, presenter from El Salvador reflects about our interest in having our students "learn for life". He discusses how important it is to experience their feelings and needs and interests creating environment where "students feel comfortable and special; they'll feel safe enough so learning will occur".



Image Source: <http://resources.depaul.edu/deblogs/Amanda-Bergeron/Pages/Positive-Environment-.aspx>

By Paul Stufkens, 2nd Annual HELTA Congress Presenter

Paul Stufkens, presenter from Zamorano, Honduras delivers a presentation related to avoiding misbehavior instead of resorting to punishment. He considers "the teacher to make the class as varied and as interesting as possible, to keep student misbehavior to a minimum and interest in the class at a maximum".



(Cartoon source: <https://www.pinterest.com/alesiadb/education-cartoons/>)

A Little Classroom humor

<https://www.pinterest.com/alesiadb/education-cartoons/>





What is CBC Codebreaker?

With CBC Codebreaker we get inside your head! It is a dynamic card game designed for 1 to 4 players. It is based on having students learn to make the right grammatical judgments with a 99.9% level of accuracy (we leave .1% open for the unexpectedness factor) when organizing their ideas in English or Spanish. It is all about DECIPHERING the Spanish/English Language Code within a millisecond of a minute. It is about making split-second decisions with immaculate precision...and it is tons of FUN too!

Memorability is also remarkable—once the skill is learnt the brain wants more and more stimulation...kids and adults will want to learn more! Reading Comprehension velocity also impacted positively with CBC Codebreaker.

Gamification principles applied to “tedious, mundane, complex grammar concepts” using CBC Codebreaker.

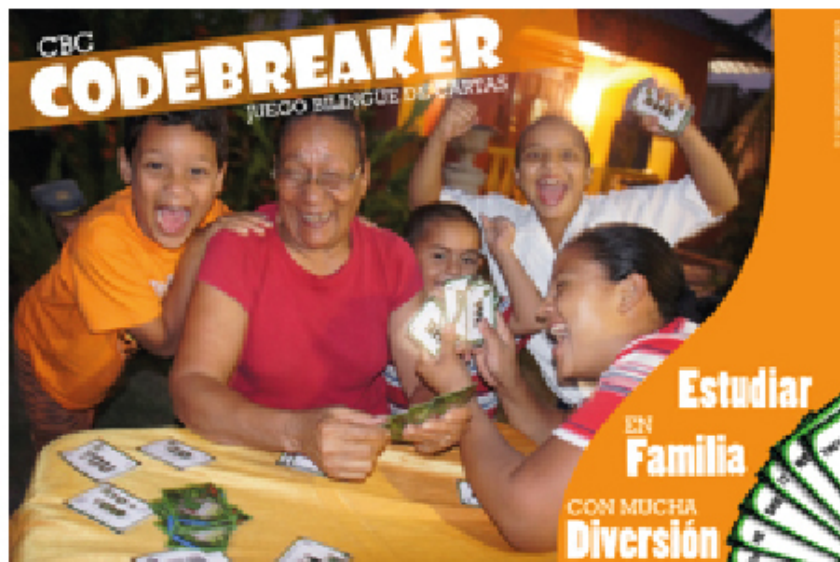
I come from a card-game playing country called Trinidad and Tobago, playing cards is a KEY SOCIALIZING tool on our island and every Trini has had lots and lots of fun playing in family, with friends, even with strangers getting out a pack and playing ALL-fours (traditional TnT game)—there is teamwork, healthy joking, healthy

competition, strategizing, use of memory to keep track of cards played etc. Quick thinking, strategizing, sizing-up a situation, keeping track of your opponent's game etc are skills we acquire through continuous play. Sadly for many of my students they had spent so much time studying and working to put themselves through college and university they had had very little time to play board-games also known as table-games, much less play the taboo-associated card-games where people in Honduras usually play for money!

I came to the conclusion that the LACK OF PLAYING “strategy based” BOARD GAMES in family delayed the development of certain life skills like “sizing up

‘a situation or “reading people’s faces to anticipate their intentions etc. **My empirical theories on the power of Gaming were CONFIRMED by Gamification exploding all over the internet.** My game is not digital yet because most kids in Honduras don’t have access to tablets etc but my card-game is HIGHLY INTERACTIVE, even teachers were squealing with delight when we played.

I have the chance to make my MISSION of: BRINGING HAPPINESS TO CLASSROOMS AROUND THE WORLD A REALITY through my ESL games. CBC CODEBREAKER has been tested with my adult students, undergrads, kids in 3rd grade, 5th grade and they’ve all had a great time playing it.



Volume 2, June 2016

(approx.)

with 6 Donations from Complete Strangers



 Thank You,
Ramen Aguilar!

*This gift was lovingly presented to an educator
because of you at our
South zone regional conference in Charlotte
on the 21st of May 2016.*



The cover features a photograph of four young people (three women and one man) smiling and looking at something off-camera. They are dressed in casual clothing. The background is a warm, reddish-orange gradient. The title is prominently displayed in white and yellow text. Below the title, the authors' names are listed. At the bottom, there is a quote from 'El Periódico de Honduras'.

THE HELTA INSIDER



WEST REGIONAL NEWS

Volume 2, June 2016



Why a Red Macaw in Flight?

By Suzanne Rajkumar

The brilliant Red Macaw in full flight is to remind us of the constant "Upward Potential" that we as educators provide to our learners and peers. We literally become the wind beneath their wings as we push them forward in their achievements.

The beautiful Red Macaw is also one of the National symbols and it is a constant reminder of our national identity which is to be celebrated at all times even through new languages. Our logo promotes embracing diversity over stifling our national

identity in the pursuit of acquiring a second language.

The "Red Macaw" is also a constant reminder of 2 basic principles in learning: Repetition and Reinforcement. If they can say it, so can you!

Emailing Parents:

How to Avoid Unintended Consequences

By Sarah Brown Wessling September 20, 2012 10:35 am

Practical Advice and Examples for Productive Communication We love it and we hate it. Email. With the appearance of a red flag or the sound of a friendly ping, it instantly makes communication easier and more complicated. Recent years have taught us some tough lessons about our cyber-conversations:

1. You can't take back what you've written. 2. Our first impression most often comes through what and how we write. 3. Our haste can cause us to suggest a tone or meaning we didn't intend. Educators aren't immune to these oversights, especially as our inboxes are more and more crowded.

Knowing that communication is a two-way street, I wrote a blog for TakePart.org a while ago, where I offered tips to parents on how to write those tough emails to teachers. It's productive, then, to also think practically about how teachers can respond to tough emails. I've been on both sides of these conversations: as a teacher and as a parent.

Together, they've taught me a lot about the way I want to approach these exchanges.

Here's what I've learned from being on the teacher's end of the inbox.

1. Don't get defensive. It never fails that we'll get the toughest emails on the days that we're the most exhausted or have exercised the greatest patience. It can be so easy to get defensive when our practice, our grading, or our attention to students is questioned. But these are the moments that we have to be the most empathetic. A hastened response with a defensive cloud can quickly stifle a conversation and send a parent straight for a CC to the principal. Instead we have to take a breath and put the email into context.

2. We're teaching all the time. Yep. All the time. We're even teaching parents when we respond to their emails or questions. We're teaching them about the culture of our classroom, about the way we've seen their child learn, about the way we make deliberate instructional decisions.



3. No one is perfect. In the same way that we teachers are fully aware of our imperfections, parents will make mistakes, too. Approaching a parent with curiosity or empathy can go a long way in creating a strong partnership. This means that instead of leading with accusation, a start of thanks (I appreciate the way you've been following up at home), empathy (I know how important your child's success is to you), or curiosity (I've been curious about how the homework process is going with "Zoe" and am anxious to hear more about it), will open lines of communication.

4. Turn these communications into opportunities. Whether you're responding to a parent or initiating the conversation, our email communications can be incredibly powerful. Seeing even the most difficult messages as an opportunity can help us all work towards the same goal: creating a better opportunity for students to learn.

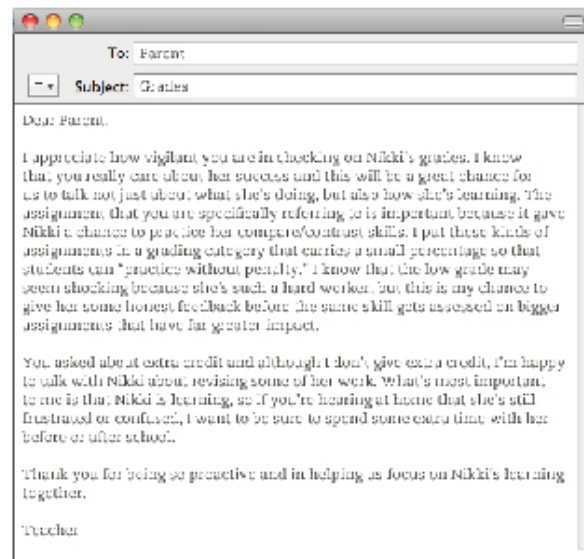
5. Use the phone, too. Sometimes the email's tone will tell you just how frustrated the sender is, and in such cases a phone call can be much more productive. Don't hesitate to use it as an opportunity to listen and put the concern in context. Knowing these traits of productive conversations is one thing, but remembering to use them when a tough email comes in, can be another. Nevertheless, our responses are an extension of our professionalism, and I thought this exercise in thinking really practically about sample responses could be helpful to all of us trying to find the right words.

The response about social or behavior concerns

- It's important to talk about just the student and not other students in the classroom. In this example, I've used phrases that may be part of the classroom like "classroom friends" (which is probably more common in primary vs. secondary classrooms).
- Don't place or displace blame. That only takes you further away from the issue: helping the student have an optimal learning environment.
- Create a context for the parent. Help her to understand the entire situation.

The response about grades

- Even though it's incredibly easy to get pulled into a debate about "getting more points," or a grading policy, this has to be a conversation about learning. Knowing what you want students to have learned for a given assignment will be imperative going into these conversations.
- In these conversations, I try to address any specific questions about an assignment by providing a clearer context about grading policies, how points are distributed, or the purpose of an assignment.



The response about a classroom practice

• One of the toughest responses to craft can be the ones where our decisions about the classroom and how or what we teach are being questioned. I've fielded questions ranging all the way from why I grouped students in a particular way, to why I gave homework over a break, to why our department had chosen to teach Maya Angelou. Curiosity is the key here. Sometimes the real question underlies the complaint, and we can make a lot of progress by understanding the difference.

• We have to know when our instructional decisions are sound and shouldn't be changed, versus when we may have overlooked something and we have room to revise.

As the school year gets into full swing, undoubtedly parents and teachers alike will find themselves needing ways to engage in problem-solving conversations. Hopefully these examples can help us keep learning, and that cooperation comes through as the heart of our messages. And don't forget – sending positive emails home are fun to do, too!

Updated 9/14/14

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HONDURAS TESOL NEWSLETTER



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