

**UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE,  
ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY**

**BACHELOR'S DEGREE STUDY PROGRAM**

**ESSAY - 6**

**COMPREHENSIVE ESSAY READING - Part 2**

**MODULE – 52**

[Instructions: Read the essay and when you encounter each set of questions, indicate your answer on the separate answer sheet.]

REPORT BY: Ripley Wilson

**“BARRIERS TO BEING AN EFFECTIVE ESL TEACHER IN ASIA”**

**INTRODUCTION**

Marco Polo may have been the first non person to ignite interest in Asia among people of the western world. His book, *Travels of Marco Polo*, “gave medieval Europe its first significant knowledge of China, and its first awareness and understanding of other countries such as Siam, Japan, Java, Cochin China, Ceylon, Tibet, India and Burma. For a long time this publication was the only existing source in Europe for information on the geography and life in the Far East.”<sup>1</sup>

For centuries since Marco Polo, *Asia*\* has continued to be a land of mystery and intrigue for most of the Western world. Modern Asia, however, is “the world's largest continent, having a land mass of 17,139,000 sq. mi. (44,390,000 sq. km.), with a population of about 3.3 billion people, nearly three fifths of the world's total population.”<sup>2</sup> This gigantic area is home to approximately 30 different independent nations, some of these being very small in land mass and population.

The variety of cultures may also be an explanation for its popularity among adventure seekers, tourists and ESL teachers. Many people with dreams of learning a new culture and spending time in an Asian land obtain a TESOL degree. This provides a way for them to be able to teach during their stay abroad. Though they have acquired the TESOL degree, they really have no prior experience and often don't understand how to teach. Subsequently, these would-be ESL teachers may even leave for the Asian country without even getting a basic

\* In this thesis *Asia* mainly refers to 6 independent nations (Japan, South Korea, The Republic of China, China, Thailand, and Vietnam). These are the main nations that teachers travel to teach English in and they represent the mass of the population of Asia Major. Though the R.O.C. (Taiwan) is not its own nation according to China, it has its own culture and President.

understanding of the language, culture, food, or even the geography of this new frontier that they are soon to be thrust into.

Being ill equipped to teach can just be one of the barriers to teaching in an Asian land. It is far from being the most daunting one, though being an unprepared teacher can have grave repercussions on the students' language developing skills. There are four further major problems that all foreign ESL teachers face. These consist of culture, language, sleeping problems and getting accustomed to the new foods of the Asian country. How can these teachers be better prepared? What skills can be learned in the teacher's homeland before they leave it? These questions will find their answers in the pages that follow.

There are many ways of learning about the barriers that a teacher will face in Asia before going there. For a teacher, learning how to teach people in one's own country can be less frustrating and very enlightening as to what teaching in Asia would be like. Being properly and adequately prepared to teach in Asia can help a teacher to have fewer problems with their stay.

## **Chapter 1: INFERIOR ENGLISH TEACHERS**

Many English speaking people are enthralled with Asia and the possible life adventure that they can have when there. Upon arrival in Asia, some realize that they have no understanding of what they are doing and just try to "wing" it or improvise as they go along. These kinds of people can have negative effects both on their students and those who are hiring them. They can end up being that "bad teacher" that everyone remembers during their own education, remembered for the poor job they did of educating.

Students the world over, can remember the one (or more) bad teacher they had while going to school. What made these teachers into bad teachers? They might have been overly strict, unapproachable, under qualified, had bad teaching techniques or one of many other reasons why people, including teachers, are disliked. This chapter will focus on poorly qualified teachers in Asian lands and the cause and effects that they have on the Asian peoples.

Unqualified teachers do not only have negative effects on the students they teach. These teachers, by being a disturbance or nuisance to the Asian Governments, hinder the possibility of other teachers going to these lands in the future and having an uncomplicated entry into the country.

### **NATIVE & NONNATIVE\* SPEAKERS**

There are two basic genres of inferior teachers in Asia: First; there are “home grown” deficient teachers. These are indigenous teachers within Asia who, themselves, have only a very limited, or no understanding, of the language. Second; there are the foreign teachers who flock to Asia for adventure and excitement. While in Asia, teaching takes a back seat to their discovery of themselves and the country.

The Television program “The English Teachers” which “Follow(ed) six young Canadians on a journey of self-discovery as they travel to Taiwan to teach English”<sup>3</sup> during its first season was recently aired on the LIFE Network. Some of the teachers on this program

\* Nonnative: In this thesis Nonnative refers to people who are from an Asian land and have not traveled abroad to study English. Or, in other words those who have not obtained

extensive English training and still teach it to others . It does not refer to those who have traveled to an English speaking country and then return to Asia to teach what they have learned.

had degrees and even previous teaching experience. However, most did not have even a minimal understanding of what they were doing there.

One of the University educated teachers on the program was seen threatening to kick and punch his students because they had not finished his homework. The show went on to reveal the so-called “teachers” making one blunder after another at teaching in Taiwan. Programs like this make light of the seriousness of going to teach people a language in Asia. The TV show also had some of the teachers illegally working without their Bachelors degree and the necessary accompanying visa for teaching in Taiwan.

This kind of behavior has prompted many countries to legislate laws pertaining to foreign teachers and enforce their legislation. These laws ensure that teachers who are coming into their country must at least have a degree in higher learning. “The Korean government is also trying to improve the 'image' of the ESL industry in Korea by enforcing the rule that (teachers) must all have at least a B.A.”<sup>4</sup> Many other countries in Asia are following suit and have instituted similar laws, with the strictest being in Taiwan and Japan. Soon, China will have these laws also.

The Asian ESL Journal says regarding “nonnative English teachers (there) is a belief that their 'pronunciation' of English is bad, when in fact it is not. It is suggested that those who hold this belief indeed show their acute awareness of the depth and intensity of 'pronunciation' and are well on the road to speaking with what can only be termed, 'a very satisfactory level' of

English pronunciation.”<sup>5</sup> This, however, is not the case with most Nonnative English teachers in Asia. Due to the fact, they have not had experience or training in English teaching.

An example of Nonnative teachers teaching English comes from an ESL teacher who went to Asia. Charles A. Curran says; “though Japanese students do in fact study English in high school, they do so from nonnative speakers who, in many cases, cannot speak English. Often these English teachers stress grammatical rules and vocabulary, designed to help students pass college entrance examinations.”<sup>6</sup> These students may be learning how to read and write English, but they are not learning the primary inaugural aspect of the language, which is verbal vocalization. These students have no experience with speaking. Thus, when they have the opportunity to talk with an English speaking person, they are not able to.

This is not to say that there are no good effects coming about as a result of these Nonnative teachers’ English instructing efforts. Many of these teachers are helping students see the need to get further training in English. Still, when the Nonnative teachers teach, they can only do so to a rudimentary level before they don’t comprehend what they are teaching. These teachers can have the bad effect of not helping students to correct accent problems, as they themselves have them. This can make it harder for students to learn proper English later, as they may not understand English which is void of their accent. This is detrimental, as the reason that they are likely learning English is to converse with English speaking people.

### **UNQUALIFIED**

Native and Nonnative speaking teachers have different ways of demonstrating that they are not equipped with the skills that are needed to teach English. The skill level and understanding of the language can be very different between these two classes of teachers and yet they can both be equally unqualified to teach.

Native English speaking teachers can have the misconception that because they already know English; they can teach. One's ability to speak any language does not mean that one is able to teach it. Teaching takes more than just the speaking of a language. It takes an understanding of the intimate details of the language, the knowledge or ability to explain the language in simple, but concise terms that match the level of the students. Elsa R. Auerbach of the University of Massachusetts at Boston and a member of NCELA\* wrote a paper called "Reexamining English Only in the ESL Classroom". In this paper she refers to native speaking teachers when she says, it "is widely agreed within the profession that it is wrong to assume that just because one speaks English, one can teach it; specialized training is required."<sup>7</sup>

Although this is true, teachers with little or no experience continue to flock to Asia, to teach. In the countries of Vietnam, Thailand, China (currently), Malaysia, and a few other Asian countries, it is not a requirement that the teacher has a Bachelors degree. This is slowly changing. In most of those countries, a B.A. is needed to get a decent job because of the bad experiences countries have had in employing untrained teachers. This really shows the need that teachers have, to be trained to instruct people.

The Bible says at Luke 14:28; "who of YOU that wants to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the expense, to see if he has enough to complete it?"<sup>8</sup> The answer may be an ESL teacher in Asia. To an English teacher, this tower can represent their understanding of what they are really getting into by going to Asia to teach English. The teacher may not understand how to teach and manage a class (likely of children students). They may also not comprehend the "Cultural Barriers" that lie in the way of their success.

\*NCELA: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Education is a Program which "is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's

Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement & Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students to collect, analyze, and disseminate information relating to the effective education of linguistically and culturally diverse learners in the U.S.” 9

A problem that is prevalent among Nonnative teachers is also summarized by their lack of knowledge in teaching methodology and in current English. One of the only genuine evolutions in the world is the evolution of a language. A language is like time: it never stays still, it is always changing and it never returns to where it has been previously. This is because of the ever-changing cultural and intercultural changes. This stresses the importance of keeping oneself inundated with the most up-to-date English and English teaching methodologies.

“One concern is Asian English teachers who have not kept up with the changing vernacular. The result is akin to one being taught English by Shakespeare.” 10 These teachers may not have a thorough understanding of modern English. This is also the problem with some of the Asian textbooks designed to instruct English. They are obsolete in our modern English world.

Krittika Onsanit, an English teacher, who spent time teaching and traveling through out Thailand, has personal experience with out-of-date textbooks. He had this to say about the textbooks that he found there, “Thai schools.... are unpredictable. Some have pretty good instructional texts for conversation.... Others have old editions of language and vocabulary workbooks that are completely out of date.” 11 Students cannot be properly instructed when the teaching materials that their teacher is using, are archaic and no longer functional for English learning.

A teacher who has not prepared for teaching English in Asia may feel like Glenn Watts, an English teacher in Hong Kong did, “Sometimes I sit here and stare into space trying to figure out how to teach these kids, and NOTHING is coming into my head, and I'm just sitting there feeling stupid and worthless and wondering WHY IN THE WORLD did I come all the way over here just to be a BAD English teacher, you know? And I think about all the food I miss and all the friends I wish I could hang out with and all the music I could be playing”.<sup>12</sup>

These unqualified teachers, both Native and Nonnative, may want the best for their students. However, by being untrained, they can impair rather than benefit their students. They would do well to remember Samuel Johnson’s words, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”<sup>13</sup> Or, in other words, although they may mean well, their lack of ability proves to be a detriment to their effectiveness.

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

589. For centuries since Marco Polo, *Asia*\* has continued to be a land of mystery and intrigue for most of the Eastern world. Modern Asia, however, is “the world’s largest continent, having a land mass of 17,139,000 sq. mi. (44,390,000 sq. km.), with a population of about 3.3 billion people, nearly three-fifths of the world’s total population.”<sup>2</sup> *Asia* mainly refers to Japan, South and North Korea, The Republic of China, Thailand, and Vietnam. This gigantic area is home to approximately thirty different independent nations, some of these being very small in land mass and population.
590. There is a problem with some of the Asian textbooks designed to instruct English. They are obsolete in our modern English world. A language is like time: it never stands still, it is always changing and it never returns to where it has been previously. This is because of the ever-changing cultural and intercultural changes. This stresses the importance of keeping oneself inundated with the most up-to-date English and English teaching methodologies. “One concern is Asian English teachers who have not kept up with the changing vernacular. The result is akin to one being taught English by Shakespeare.”<sup>10</sup> These teachers may not have a thorough understanding of modern English. .

591. A TV show in Taiwan showed some of the teachers illegally working without their Bachelor's degree and the necessary accompanying visa for teaching in Taiwan. One of the University educated teachers on the program was seen threatening to kick and punch his students because they had not finished his homework. The show went on to reveal the so-called "teachers" making one blunder after another at teaching in Taiwan. Programs like this make light of the seriousness of going to teach people a language in Asia. This kind of behavior has prompted many countries to legislate laws pertaining to foreign teachers and enforce their legislation. These laws ensure that teachers who are coming into their country must at least have a degree in higher learning. "The Korean government is also trying to improve the "image" of the ESL industry in Korea by enforcing the rule that (teachers) must all have a M.A.
592. The Republic of China, China, Thailand, and Vietnam. These are the main nations that teachers travel to teach English in and they represent the mass of the population of Asia Major. Though the R.O.C. (Taiwan) is not its own nation according to China, it has its own culture and President. Teachers should try to understand the language, culture, food, or even the geography of this new frontier that they are soon to be thrust into. After all when you have the ability to speak any language, that means that one is able to teach it as well.

### **FROM THE MOUTH OF THE STUDENTS**

Many students being taught by unqualified ESL teachers in Asia can see the problems that these ill-equipped teachers cause in their students' learning development. In an interview, an English student from Osaka, Japan talked about how "across Japan the schools use basically the same textbook and this textbook has a lot of bad and ineffective English inside of it." 14 This textbook from Japan is the principal teaching aid through which the students are taught by their Nonnative speaking teachers. The Japanese students memorize this textbook, then subsequently have trouble learning proper English.

The lack of verbal practice by students who are taught by Nonnative teachers can have profound effects. An example of this is an international English student from Japan named Akemi Ota. She said this about her language learning in Japan: “I studied English for almost nine years in Japan, but when I arrived in America I was surprised about how poor my English speaking ability was.”<sup>15</sup> Most people after learning a language for four years can understand almost everything, except the subtle nuances and culturally related phrases or sayings. This student though, could not speak proper English after 9 years. Even though she could read and write English, and had put much time and effort into English acquisition, she still remained inadequately trained.

Many Japanese students can voice their opinions about this problem later because they have the money to leave Japan and receive proper English training. Obviously not all students of inferior English teachers have the ability to speak out against their lingual oppressors. This is due to the fact, they don't have the means to speak out against them. A world traveler who goes by the alias Travel-addict, tells a story from Beijing, China that gives us a look into a deficient teacher there.

He starts by saying that the students, “sat down for an English lesson in the park. The instructor was a horrible slave driver and obviously thought she was dealing with robots, not children. I swear, I watched the group for ten minutes as the teacher instructed the 4-10 year olds to repeat "Tourists of Beijing: I hope you enjoy your time here". I'd been wandering around for at least 15 minutes when I returned to find the children in the same area, all fidgeting (as kids do when they're told to sit in one spot) and still in the middle of the English lesson. When I got up close, I noticed the teacher was STILL making them repeat the same sentence.”<sup>16</sup>

These students did not have the opportunity to complain about their teacher, but from the story, we can infer that they were not enjoying their English lesson. The fact they were fidgeting shows that their minds were tired; they had lost their interest and their ability to concentrate on the subject. Children need to have diverse activities to enjoy learning and they also do not have the attention span of older students. This teacher was obviously not trained how to teach language, as evidenced by the limited lesson material that she used. Christine Chang, an English educator from Taiwan, gives good suggestions for teaching children in her paper “Teaching English to Children”.

Here are a few of her suggestions on how to properly teach children between the ages of 5-10: “Look for interesting and familiar topics to children. Provide (them) with exciting and challenging activities. Make good use of the five senses. Utilize teaching aids.”<sup>17</sup> The Chinese teacher in Travel-addict’s story used none of the known or proven methods for teaching children. This may not be the fault of the teacher; it may be the curriculum administrators who demand that she teach this way. Nonetheless, this Nonnative speaking teacher is doing a poor job of teaching English. She is not teaching in a manner that will inspire her student’s interest in learning.

With a bit of training, practice of teaching methodologies, and an earnest desire to teach, an unqualified teacher can be transformed into a beneficial English teacher. On the other hand, a native English-speaking teacher may find it harder to become an efficient teacher as they will have to overcome many cultural barriers in their quest to become a superior English teacher.

## **Chapter 2: TURNING CULTURAL BARRIERS INTO CULTURAL BRIDGES**

## **MODULE – 53**

Since the time of Marco Polo, Asia has had a culture that is “**Night**” to the western cultures proverbial “**Day**”. This difference between cultures can be found in everything from: the Asian Pentatonic scale in music, to the varieties of religion, their cuisine and their diverse ethics about life. They are culturally different from the West in almost every way. This can present itself as a problem when English teachers move to Asia to teach. Though, in today’s “melting pot society”, we can see more of Asia’s culture in the western world.

They can find themselves lost in a manner of “Culture Shock”, and this can negatively affect their ability to serve as an efficient English Teacher. There are four major barriers to being an effective teacher in Asia: Language, Ethos, Circadian Rhythm problems and Cuisine. These must be dealt with, to ensure an effective stay in Asia by the English teacher. Each barrier can be effectively overcome and can contribute to the experience of teaching in Asia.

By overcoming these barriers, the teacher can teach himself healthy routines that will contribute to being a good teacher and having a well-managed class. By learning the culture on a more personal level, he will also learn a lot about the people and the most effective way to reach their minds and hearts with what he is teaching. This will make his stay in Asia a success, rather than being the unqualified native English speaking teacher that Asia is all too familiar with.

### **THE LINGUISTIC BARRIER**

A language of one form or another is the way that every human around the world communicates with each other. Language has been defined as the process that “consists in the

oral utterance of sounds (or body language kinesics) which usage has made the representatives of ideas. When two or more persons customarily annex the same sounds to the same ideas, the expression of these sounds by one person communicates his ideas to another.”<sup>18</sup>

Every Asian country has at least one unique language that differentiates it from the other Asian languages, with some having a number of diverse tongues. To make it even more difficult, Asian languages include both tonal and non-tonal languages in a widely varying assortment. These languages also may have many varying dialects that make communication within the same language a “headache”. Thus, an English teacher would do well to have some basic understanding of the Asian languages spoken in the country that they have chosen as their destination. Getting an understanding of the new language can present itself as a large barrier to a “fresh off the boat” English teacher.

Michael Turton, an English teacher, said this about the need of learning a language when you are in the country where they speak it; “it is insulting to live somewhere without speaking a local language (Taiwanese often express contempt for foreigners who live in Taiwan without speaking the language), and for another, those foreigners generally know very little about Taiwan (although they invariably believe they know everything).”<sup>19</sup> He also goes on to explain that speaking the local language is also a good way at procuring higher paying jobs.

If a teacher were not to learn the language of the country he was in, he could also be putting himself in a precarious situation. The teacher would be isolated from most of society in this new country. If a situation arose where he needed help, he could be in a considerably daunting predicament. Thus learning a new language can also serve as a safeguard for a teacher

who is dwelling in an Asian country where the vast majority of people are not able to speak English.

At times in the classroom it can be trialsome to explain things, such as the simple directions for a classroom activity, without even a limited knowledge of the local language. Even if the teacher is not a master of their new language, learning a few encouraging words for commendation uses can help to encourage their students to further their new language development.

Learning a new language can be a barrier to the teacher and may seem very difficult for him to do. A key to overcoming this barrier is getting proper training and practice. Many teachers in Asian lands can take advantage of affordable language classes offered in the Universities. Though this may be a barrier initially, this eventually can give him insight into the lives of his students. Thus he is able to have empathy and sympathy for the struggles that they face. Also, how can anyone be an effective language teaching teacher if they only know one language?

The answer is simply that a teacher who knows only English is not as effective at teaching a language, as a teacher who knows two or more languages. Learning a new language can also teach them different approaches that they can apply to their teaching of English. Basically the same principle teaching elements can be utilized in teaching all languages and using new ones will make the English teacher a more versatile instructor. This barrier may be hard to subjugate to a level of understanding that is to the teachers liking, but even a small vocabulary can help to convert this teacher into a better one. This is because it shows that the teacher has taken the effort to learn a new language and can inspire the student body to do the same.

Language is very closely related to culture; culture spawns the manner and subject content of what people speak about and what they labor at in life. Sandra L. Richter, who teaches both Japanese and Spanish to high school students, says that “In teaching you have to plant the seed of enthusiasm, and for this purpose I think that culture is crucial. It is impossible to separate language from culture.”<sup>20</sup> Culture can be said to be to language as the rudder is to a sailing ship, it is not the greatest component in size, but it is the pivotal aspect to the direction that language will take.

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

593. A few of suggestions on how to properly teach children between the ages of 5 and 10 are to look for interesting and familiar topics to children. Provide (them) with exciting and challenging activities. Make good use of the 5 senses. Utilize teaching aids. The Chinese teacher in Travel-addict’s story used none of the known or proven methods for teaching children. This may not be the fault of the teacher; it may be the curriculum administrators who demand that she teach this way. Nonetheless, this Nonnative speaking teacher is doing her best in teaching English.
594. Getting an understanding of the new language can present itself as a large barrier to a “fresh off the boat” English teacher. Every Asian country has at least one unique language that differentiates it from the other Asian languages, with some having a number of diverse tongues. To make it even more difficult, Asian languages include both tonal and non-tonal languages in a widely varying assortment. These languages also may have many varying dialects that make communication within the same language a “headache.” Though this may be a barrier initially, this eventually can give him insight into the lives of his students.
595. With a bit of training, practice of teaching methodologies, and an earnest desire to teach, an unqualified teacher can be transformed into a beneficial English teacher. On the other hand, a native English-speaking teacher may find it harder to become an efficient teacher as they will have to overcome many cultural barriers in their quest to become a superior English teacher. Thus learning a new language can also serve as a safeguard for a teacher who is dwelling in an Asian country where the majority of people are able to speak English.
596. Learning a new language can be a barrier to the teacher and may seem very difficult for him to do. A key to overcoming this barrier is getting proper training and practice. Many teachers in Asian lands can take advantage of affordable language classes offered in the Universities. Though this may be a barrier initially, this eventually can give him insight into the lives of his students. Thus he is able to have empathy and sympathy for the struggles that they face. Just the same anyone can be an effective language teacher even if they only know one language.

## THE ETHOS BARRIER

### MODULE – 54

Ethos has been defined as “the set of beliefs, ideas...about social behavior and relationships of a group of people.”<sup>21</sup> Another reference work describes it as, “The disposition, character, or fundamental values peculiar to a specific... people, culture, or movement.”<sup>22</sup> It can simply be explained as the essential elements that brings into being a unique culture. Along with each original language that has been established in Asia, there is an equally distinctive culture to match.

Asia can boast to have the world’s oldest culture, “China's recorded history of 5,000 years is the history of a brilliant civilization and unique culture.”<sup>23</sup> Many of these cultures are very diverse with only subtle nuances of any resemblance to each other. Others, like Korea and Japanese borrow some of the Chinese’s culture, such as the writing of some characters.

Though an English teacher will only come into contact with one culture at a time, there is extensive variety held within every Asian country’s cultures. To a foreigner these culture distinctions can almost appear to be totally diverse cultures within the same Asian country. An example of these internal differences comes from NBC Asia, who has difficulties explaining Western culture norms in a single general term. “The term "condom" in English has three versions of Chinese translation for greater China. In Hong Kong it is called "safety bag", in Taiwan "insurance bag", and in mainland China "contraceptive bag". A universal Chinese translation for these three areas is rarely found.”<sup>24</sup> These Asian culture are likely very

different to the culture that the English teacher has come from and this barrier will take a lot of getting used to. The teacher will also be able to help his students to understand the language better by teaching the students about his culture.

The English teacher when instructing will also need to take into consideration the differences between his own culture and that of his students. He will be used to the way that he was instructed in his homeland. In Canada and the U.S.A., two of the largest ESL teacher providers for Asia, students are encouraged to speak up, to ask impromptu questions and, at times, to express conflicting opinions as methods to aid instruction. These methods though are not compatible or effective with cultures such as that of Japan's. Robert L. Seltman an English teacher in Kyoto, Japan gives a list of the reasons his research and hands on experience show that these type of techniques for teaching do not work.

He lists these as the reasons and explanations for those approaches not working: (1) "Students are traditionally not encouraged to speak out of turn, or in ways that suggest a challenge to the authority of others." (2) "Expressing divergent, conflicting opinions is considered rude...with students hesitant to express themselves spontaneously." (3) "Students are insecure about their English abilities, most having had very little firsthand experience expressing themselves, despite years of English study."<sup>25</sup>

The cultural differences may act as barriers and render some of his teaching procedures useless. Thus, a teacher would need to learn how to not offend or push his students out of their comfort zones with his teaching style. He would also need to examine how to draw his students out and help them to become more comfortable with acting in accordance with the parameters of the culture that they are learning. This should be done on a gradual basis with only one small cultural barrier being broken at a time.

By learning through books, movies, magazines, the internet and hands on experience, a teacher can learn about the new culture that surrounds them. It is a barrier that can be overcome with compromise and patience towards the new culture shown on the teacher's part. The teacher should expect to make funny blunders in the language and demonstration of the new language. Therefore the teacher should learn and expect to be laughed at by his students and other people that he meets, not taking this as a personal slight against him. Having a sense of humor will help the teacher not to make fewer mistakes, but to handle them better when he does makes a cultural mistake.

### **SLEEP & HEALTH BARRIERS**

Sleep is one of the most important things that we as humans do in our lives. If we live 75 years and have an average night's sleep of 9 hours, we will have spent around 250,000 hours sleeping during our life. Most studies say that 1/3 of our life is devoted to sleeping. This shows the importance of sleep in our lives, though many people have bad sleeping patterns. For a teacher, jet lag and healthy sleeping habits can be hard barriers to overcome since they are faced with overcoming so many other barriers and new situations at the same time that their sleeping habits may be neglected or their circadian cycle upset.

How important is sleep in our everyday life? Sleep is very important to our daily lives, "one of its central purposes is to rest the body and restore its energy levels. You need enough healthy sleep, both in terms of quantity and quality, to be optimally alert when you are awake."<sup>26</sup> how much sleep do we really need though? The right amount may vary in minute amounts depending on the person, but there is a general amount that everyone should aim to

achieve each night. The “BEST is that amount which leaves you wide awake and alert all day long EVEN in boring physically inactive situations. This usually takes 9 hrs/day of sleep per day for adults over the age of 21. From age 14 to 21 the body's need for sleep is 10 hours/day on average.” 27

An English teacher may find it challenging to get the needed nine hours of sleep each night. A reason for this could be that talking via the internet or phone with missed friends and family will need to take place at very late hours of the night. Another hindrance to healthy sleep may also just be the stress of being in an unfamiliar setting. The teacher would want to avoid staying up too late as this would impede his abilities to really concentrate on being an effective teacher.

Life in a new country is very hard on a teacher, “the adjustment away from the familiar lifestyle of your home country may come some changes which affect your health. Lifestyle changes in your eating habits, sleeping patterns, local climate, and stress level, can also affect your physical health as well as your emotional well being.” 28 Caring for your health, both mental and physical, in a foreign country should be taken very seriously. As getting sick or depressed may lead in a difficult medical situation or even a situation where a teacher can lose their job.

Having healthy sleeping patterns with set times for going to and waking up from sleep can help to prepare the way for other good routines in a teacher’s life. Having these set times, this adds stability to the life of the English teacher and, if he has adequate sleep, this routine will help him to feel full of energy and also promote other good routines in his life. These routines can help the English teacher have a more realistic understanding of how much free

time he has to spend on the various needs of life, including instructional preparation and relaxation time.

Jet lag can be another sleeping related barrier to an English teacher. Jet lag is described as a “physical condition caused by crossing multiple time zones (mainly) during flight. The condition is generally believed to be the result of disruption to the circadian rhythms of the body.”<sup>29</sup> Jet lag affects everyone differently and has a wide assortment of symptoms, ranging from fatigue to loss of drive or motivation or worse. Another way of looking at it is that it affects your internal clock. Actually “your body's biological clock is set to a cycle longer than 24 hours. This is why it is easier to wake up late than it is to wake up early and easier to stay up late than to fall asleep early. This is why jet lag is less of a problem when going east to west than the reverse.”<sup>30</sup>

This would make travel to Asia harder for English teachers from Europe than those from North America or the west of Asia. Jet lag is not usually a long lasting sickness, but it causes loneliness, loss of motivation, loss of sleep (for many days), headaches and other problems. Thus jet lag can really have a negative effect on an English teacher's health and it can set the pattern for further sicknesses. Sickness is a very important barrier to avoid in Asia because the medical treatment can be not as advanced (as more developed countries), getting treatment can be a challenge with the language barrier and it can be expensive for serious medical attention and other less acute problems.

Talking in particular about Taiwan, Robert Storey, a writer for Lonely Planet publications, says “the most useful vaccinations are for hepatitis B, tetanus, and influenza.”<sup>31</sup> The prescribed vaccinations will vary from country to country in Asia, as some countries are

tropical they therefore require inoculation from ailments such as Malaria, different strains of Hepatitis and other tropical diseases. There are also many diseases caused by parasites and animals, such as Dengue fever or Diarrhea, and these varieties of sicknesses have no vaccination or preventative measures that can be taken to combat them.

Another serious problem that can threaten the health of an English teacher in Asia is adequate drinking water. Many Asian lands are over populated and thus their over abundant population leads to many water sources being polluted, rendering them unfit or unsanitary to drink from. A paper written for Earth Summit 2002 says concerning Asia's water situation, "in Asia one in three people lack access to safe drinking water. 500,000 infants die each year from diarrhoeal diseases related to a lack of adequate WSS\*."<sup>32</sup> This means that finding water will almost indubitably affect an English teacher's wellness when he stays in Asia.

The main thing for an English teacher to remember is that his health is the most important thing he has; without it he cannot be a teacher or even possibly stay in Asia. The book "Culture Shock (A guide to Customs and Etiquette) Taiwan" simply says "take time to recover from illness. Force yourself to change your pace so you can finish the race, rather than letting the race finish you. Try to maintain your usual exercise routine."<sup>33</sup> Conquering the barriers that sleep problems and health problems can pose is mandatory for an English teacher to have a effective and lengthy stay in Asia.

\*“Water supply and sanitation (WSS)” 34

### **THE CUISINE BARRIER**

“Yummy! This is so good, I have never tasted anything like it before. What is it?”

This could be one of the questions that are better left unanswered in some Asian countries, if not all of them. Each country in Asia has its own type of cuisine to match its culture and languages. It varies from the East Indian influenced Thai cuisine, to the purist Japanese cuisine, to the largely seafood based cuisine of the Philippines. There also is a wide variety of diversity in the food within any one of the Asian countries cuisines. A teacher would want to remember this, “Do not expect to get your native food that you used to have.” 35 The new cuisine can be very different from the food that the English teacher is used to.

Through the melting pot societies that are found throughout the English speaking world, an English teacher can become somewhat accustomed to some of the cuisines before setting off for Asia. By and large though the Asian food found in the western world vary greatly from the food found all throughout Asia. One English teacher had this to say about Taiwanese cuisine, “totally inedible. I mean, it ain't the kind of Chinese food you get from your local carry-out back home. It's greasy, smells bad, looks bad, feels bad in your mouth and tastes yucky.” 36 Thinking that they would have the exact same type of Chinese food was this teacher's mistake.

Asian food can be a barrier to an English Teacher in many ways, especially if he is not willing to try things out of his comfort zone. Being unwilling to eat the new cuisine can be detrimental to a teacher's physical health and his mental well being. Cuisine can also be a barrier to a teacher by bad food or inadequately prepared food also being a health threat. Food poisoning and E coli poisoning can be frequent in Asia.

Obviously if a teacher is not willing to eat much of the new foods available to him, he will become malnourished and this will also change the way that his students view him. One ESL teacher said “I was offered the opportunity to have a Chinese cook that would prepare "western" meals for me or I could eat in the cafeteria with everyone else. I chose to eat with the students and faculty of the campus.”<sup>37</sup> This teacher, William Eubank, was given a chance at a luxury that most teachers are not offered in Asia. Eating in the cafeteria with the students is normal in many Asian countries’ schools.

Another cuisine barrier could be the method by which a teacher now must eat his food. Asia is home to the most distinctive form and also most ancient technique of eating food, Chopsticks! Chopsticks or Kuai Zi as they are known in China begin their documented history when “first mentioned in writing in Liji (The Book of rites), a work compiled some 2,000 years ago.”<sup>38</sup> Ever since then they have become the main way that Asians eat their food. Jessica Luo an ESL student from China says that “most oriental people use chopsticks just like western people use forks and knives. However, using chopsticks is harder than using a fork. You have to use fingers to control a pair of chopsticks instead of holding forks with the whole hand.”<sup>39</sup> Learning how to use Chopsticks properly may take some time. A teacher would give a bad impression on his students if he refused or did not try to use them. If he didn’t use them, he would be showing them an unwillingness to get to know their culture.

An English teacher from Korea has this to say, for other English teachers, about the use of chopsticks. She says this about her experience in Korea, “Learn how to use chopsticks. Forks are almost non-existent.”<sup>40</sup> Everyone in the world likes what they hold dear to be respected, so even if a teacher was bad with chopsticks and tried, he would be more appreciated.

An additional cuisine barrier for an English teacher to tackle is the eating of new strange and exotic foods and delicacies. It would not be good if a teacher did not eat the food that was given him in front of his students. It could be a land where food is scarce and by not eating it could show disrespect for what could be provided for him. Another possible situation would be that if a teacher did not eat the food set in front of him, he may lose the respect of his students. Eating the food, whether it looked good or not, would show respect for the culture of the students and also encourage them to try parts of the English culture that they are learning about.

Lastly English teachers can use their native cuisine to their advantage. A teacher may miss a particular type of food from his home land. In some cases, it is possible to find the ingredients in Asia and in others; a teacher must have it sent to him. If a teacher does obtain food from his home country, he can use this to teach his students about his own cuisine and culture. By giving his students some of what he received, he teaches them the admirable quality of sharing and more about his own culture and language. The packaging of these “foreign” foods has much of writing on them and can be used for a class activity and to teach the students what to look for on an English package.

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

**597.** An English teacher will come into contact with several cultures at the same time, as there is extensive variety held within every Asian country’s cultures. To a foreigner, these culture distinctions can almost appear to be totally distinct cultures within the same Asian country.

**598.** Asia is home to the most distinctive form and also most ancient technique of eating food: Chopsticks! Chopsticks or Kuai Zi as they are known in China begin their documented history when “first mentioned in writing in Liji (The Book of rites), a work compiled some 2,000 years ago.”<sup>37</sup> Ever since then they have become the main way that Asians eat their food. Jessica Luo an ESL student from China says that “most oriental people use chopsticks just like western people use forks and spoons.

However, using chopsticks is harder than using the forks. You have to use fingers to control a pair of chopsticks instead of holding forks with the whole hand.”

599. Jet lag can be another sleeping-related barrier to an English teacher. Jet lag is described as a “physical condition caused by crossing multiple time zones (mainly) during flight. The condition is generally believed to be the result of disruption to the circadian rhythms of the body.” Jet lag affects everyone differently and has a wide assortment of symptoms, ranging from fatigue to loss of drive or motivation or worse. Another way of looking at it is that it affects your internal clock. Actually “your body's biological clock is set to a cycle longer than 24 hours. This is why it is easier to wake up late than it is to wake up early and easier to stay up late than to fall asleep early. This is why jet lag is less of a problem when going west to east than the reverse.”
600. Conquering the barriers that sleeping problems and health problems can pose is mandatory for an English teacher to have an effective and lengthy stay in Asia. The main thing for an English teacher to remember is that his health is the most important thing he has; without it he cannot be a teacher or even possibly stay in Asia. The book “Culture Shock (A guide to Customs and Etiquette) Taiwan” simply says: “Take time to recover from illness. Force yourself to change your pace so you can finish the race, rather than letting the race finish you. Try to maintain your usual exercise routine.”

### **Chapter 3: DEVELOPING THE SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS**

#### **MODULE – 55**

The biggest part of being a teacher is their ability to actually instill facts and to instruct their students. Many unqualified teachers are going to Asian countries to teach English solely on the rationalization that because they speak English this makes them capable to teach it. Time and time again, this has been proven false; an English teacher must also possess the knowledge of the intricate details of the English language. A teacher must learn how to be a student and think like one before trying to teach a student. An English teacher must learn the best way to reach his students and to build a craving in them for English knowledge.

There are many skills that an English teacher must know other than just having a knowledge of English. A teacher must also be prepared to teach different levels and learn how to teach different groups of people. The skills that an English teacher needs, other than English skills,

can include: class management, classroom environment, knowing the students, and the developing of appealing qualities to complement the teacher's instructing skills.

These skills may overlap each other in some ways and these skills are not the only talents that a teacher needs to have. If an English teacher develops these techniques to instruct his students, he will be well on his way to being a very proficient teacher. Asia has had and still has enough teachers come to teach English that do know very little about how to handle a group of students or actually how to explain English at the caliber of academics that the English students are at.

Many job classifieds for English teachers in Asia read like this one from Taiwan: "Similar to a North American kindergarten, each teacher is responsible for his or her own classroom. Students are grouped by age and the number of students never exceeds 16 per class." 41 Thus, without these aforementioned skills to help handle the students, an English teacher would have a very hard time to get the students to settle down and concentrate on learning. Most of the students that English teachers instruct when in Asia are children, therefore an English teacher may want to learn how to best interact with children. Getting to know the students that the English teacher is designated to teach can help be an aid to teaching in many ways.

### **GETTING TO KNOW THE STUDENTS**

Getting to know your students is the first important thing a teacher must do when first introduced to a new classroom of students. In Asia it is likely that these students will be children, thus the first activity done with the students should be appropriate to their age and education level. There are many activities to do with the new classroom of students. A good

start is: on “the first day of school, sit with your students in a circle and tell them a little bit about yourself. Draw students in by sharing things about yourself they'd want to know--like if you've gone skydiving or lived any place unusual.” 42

An introduction may be a little difficult due to the language barrier, but this does not make it impossible. Likely your students know to answer to questions such as: How big is your family? What is your name? How old are you? Also if a teacher has even a basic grasp of the language of the Asian country, this can allow them to say the question in the Asian tongue and then ask it in English. It is an immediate way to start teaching the students and you may not even know their name yet.

The cardinal rule of dealing with people and especially people or students that you are just meeting for the first time is memorizing their “*first name*”, at least. In his book “How to Win Friends and Influence people”, Dale Carnegie expounds on the importance of learning peoples names. In the chapter aptly named *If you don't do this, you are headed for trouble*, the book says “a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.” 43 Thus, by getting to know your students' names and remembering them, you will draw them closer to you. Showing an interest in their names is the best way to show a personal interest in the students.

Getting the students to know each other is a key to good classroom management. Another activity to have your students do is to interview each other and the teacher. This may possibly be the first time that some are meeting each other and, rather than waiting for the shy students to do it on their own, help these students to integrate with the rest of the class. It also will give the teacher the opportunity to watch how well the students interact with each other.

The English teacher can watch for the different personalities and this will give the teacher an idea of how these children will conduct themselves in the actual teaching setting.

### **ENDURING QUALITIES**

English teachers in Asia may be very stressed out when they arrive due to the exigencies of travel, foreign environment and so on. Even when they have acquired employment there can still be a lot of stress involved with the experience. This is what makes the qualities that they have so important. An English teacher should not let his own stress affect his teaching manner. If laughter is the best medicine, then smiling must be an integral part of it as well. The students may be apprehensive about the foreign teacher and may fear him a little bit.

A medical journal gives this suggestion for patients, but it applies just as well to students. It says about smiling, "it's contagious! A smile will tell your (students) that they are welcome and that they are on friendly ground....The effects of smiling are instant and are by far one of the easiest ways to boost morale." 44 Another reference work goes as far as to say this about smiling; "Force yourself to give a wide, eye-crinkling grin and you'll activate pleasure centers in your brain, and feel better instantly. Not just any smile will do, though, according to a report in Psychological Science....you need to involve the muscle that runs from cheekbones to corners of the lips, and muscles that circle each eye."45

Therefore even though there is a language barrier in between the students and the English teacher, just by smiling the ice and tension can be broken. When the teacher stops and gives a large smile, he will forget about the stress he had previously and he will put the

students at ease. A smile is also contagious and when he smiles he may receive many smiles back, as a result these smiles will put him at ease as well. Having the quality of happiness, which includes smiling, is very helpful. It will help an English teacher to make the students interested in learning because when people are happy or energetic about a subject this enthusiasm infects other people.

When teaching English, a teacher should have the quality of patience. This will allow him to deal with difficult situations and difficult students in a calm manner. Since the teacher in Asia will likely be teaching children, patience is a “must have” quality because children will always try the patience of their teacher. Dr. Donald Huffman and Dr. Maxine Huffman are two retired professors of English who taught in the province of Hangzhou in China, as well as many other countries. They give suggestions for what qualities an English teacher should have, when they say, “I would tell any new ESL/EFL teacher to have patience, a willingness to listen to the students outside of class as well as within the classroom, and to be involved in the solution of the problems which the international students faced.”<sup>45</sup>

The Huffman’s bring out another significant quality that an English teacher should have when teaching in a new country, this is the quality of being approachable to the students. A teacher who smiles shows that he is a kind person and therefore someone who may be approached for help. Students may need more help with English or they may just need someone to listen to their problems. When an English teacher is helping to solve a problem that is not English related, he would do well to obtain help from one of his assistants or another staff member who is versed the Asian language that the student speaks.

We all have different abilities in our acquisition of a new language. A teacher would need to be approachable to the students that are not doing as well and whose personality is too timid to ask for help. If this was the case with the student, the teacher would want to take the initiative to set up a time to help this student further.

Therefore, three qualities that English teachers should pack in their bags when going to Asia are happiness (smiling), patience, and approachableness. These obviously are not the only qualities that a teacher would have need of, but they are three qualities that many English teachers fail to have in enough quantity. Adapting to the culture of the Asian land is another good quality that an English teacher can have. Giving an appropriate greeting in the morning may help to draw the students to you, such as a small bow at the beginning of class in Japan.

### **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

The classroom includes everything in the classroom, the students, the teacher, the walls, the desks, and the attitudes of the people in the classroom. To have a healthy ESL classroom environment a teacher would want an “environment which fosters self-esteem and encourages risk-taking.”<sup>47</sup> This an important part of the environment because no one likes to make mistakes, but one of the best ways to learn a language is through the mistakes that we make. Building the self-esteem of the students ensures that they will be willing to use their English skills outside the classroom.

An English teacher would want to keep focused on what he is teaching and foster a learning environment which encourages and builds confidence in the student’s ability to speak English. An English teacher would also want to pay attention to his students and make sure that

all the students are receiving an equal opportunity to give an answer or say something in English. Don't let the brave or more gifted students dominate the lessons.

An English teacher should take into consideration the physical classroom environment as he and his students will spend a large portion of time in that room. "Things to consider when organizing your classroom are cleanliness, light and temperature. Although you may not have complete control over some of these elements, try to make or suggest improvements as necessary." 48

Having as much sunlight as possible in a classroom is very good for students as it helps the students to stay more alert and awake. Sunlight helps humans to synthesize Vitamin D and also has an effect on our circadian rhythm. "We know that humans need sunlight; the small-air ions occurring naturally in fresh air .... makes people alert." 49 This certainly shows the importance of having sunlight in the classroom environment.

Plants can be an added touch to the classroom environment as they provide a fresh oxygen supply to the classroom. Plants can also be used by the teacher to build responsibility; the teacher can have different students each day or week responsible for watering the plant. The teacher can use the plant for a visual English lesson as well, explaining what the different parts of a plant are called in English.

Another vital aspect to the ESL classroom environment is the colors that are predominant in the classroom. Different colors affect the human brain in different ways and trigger different emotions and reactions in people. For example research shows that "warm colors and brilliant lighting increased muscular tension, respiration rate, pulse, blood pressure, and brain activity. Insufficient lighting causes visual fatigue. Distracting color combinations

can lead to task confusion and slow reaction. Quality lighting and appropriate colors improve visual processing and reduce stress.”<sup>50</sup>

Every color has its own effect on how the students formulate their thoughts and actions. According to the research of Eric Jensen (a leader in brain based teaching), “Brown promotes a sense of security and relaxation and reduces fatigue. Blue calms a tense person and increases feelings of well-being. Red is an engaging and emotive color which can stimulate hunger or excite or disturb the individual.”<sup>51</sup> The teacher would want to take into consideration and undertake needed steps to improve the colors and lighting in the classroom to have an effective teaching environment.

### **CLASS MANAGEMENT**

A further skill that an English teacher will need to develop is his classroom management. Everyone has been employed by someone, but they may not have ever been the one to be in charge or responsible for a group of people. A teacher needs to know how to handle and control a classroom full of people and keep them on task. For a teacher, being organized is a key point to having successful classroom management.

The more organized that an English teacher is, the smoother the class will run. Organization when coupled with routine is fundamental to establishing good classroom management. If a student knows that there is a set place to hand in an assignment, it will make it easier for the teacher to move from one activity to another without pausing for the giving of instructions. It will as well give the teacher more time to actually teach the lesson at hand.

Classroom rules are also a vital part of good-quality classroom management. These rules would vary in style according to the level and maturity of any given class of students. The type of rules that an English teacher would employ would be different than a non-language teacher. The English teacher may want to encourage speaking in English during class as this may be the students' only daily practice. This would be a rule that many standard teachers would not use.

Chris Gunn, an ESL teacher in a University in South Korea, designed his own lesson for having his students help make their own classroom rules. He says "It is surprising how fair students will be if they are given the helm. They used to surprise me (not anymore as I expect it now) by coming up with a set of rules similar to the ones that I would come up with if I were to make the rules. But because they fashioned the rules themselves, they are more likely to respect them." 51

Nonetheless, an English teacher must be the leader of the classroom. He should even ensure that his influence is above that of his teacher assistants. An English teacher must think about how to handle difficult students. In almost every classroom of students, there is at least one child who will be a disruptive force in the classroom. If not dealt with, this student can make teaching miserable and undermine the teacher's authority in the classroom. This encourages other students to behave in the same manner.

Michael A. Turton, a long time English teacher in Taiwan, has many suggestions for handling troublesome students and preventing others from becoming so. Michael gives these five suggestions:

1. "For right-handed teacher, put the noisiest kid on the seat closest to your right shoulder. This will make it difficult for the student to catch your eye, get the attention he (noisy kids are

almost always boys) wants and make noise. In the seat behind/next to his put your best female student.

2. Slow students should be placed in the center of the classroom where you will naturally maintain eye contact with them. This will help prevent them from talking when they get distracted. Good students can be placed on the wings where they will strive to maintain eye contact with you regardless.

3. Isolate noisy students if possible by moving them to seats which are between two empty seats.

4. Learn their names! Not only will they respect you more, but you can call on people who are causing trouble by name.

5. Students should be shifted regularly in their seats. Do not allow permanent pairings of children to form, they will talk incessantly.” 52

Effective classroom management can be the lubrication in education that keeps it running and doing so in an orderly and smooth fashion.

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

601. Many job classifieds for English teacher in Asia read like this one from Taiwan: “Similar to a North American kindergarten, each teacher is responsible for his or her own classroom. Students are grouped by age and the number of students never exceeds seventeen per class.” Thus, without these aforementioned skills to help handle the students, an English teacher would have a very hard time to get the students to settle down and concentrate on learning. Getting to know the students that the English teacher is designated to teach can be an aid to teaching in many ways.
602. An English teacher should take into consideration the physical classroom environment as he and his students will spend a large portion of time in that room. “Things to consider when organizing your classroom are cleanliness, light and temperature....” Having as much sunlight as possible in a classroom is very good for students as it helps the students to stay more alert and awake. Sunlight helps humans to synthesize Vitamin C and also has an effect on our circadian rhythm. “We know that humans need sunlight; the small-air ions occurring naturally in fresh air .... makes people alert.”
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different than a non-language teacher. The English teacher may want to encourage speaking in English during class as this may be the students' only daily practice. This would be a rule that many standard teachers would use.

604. Slow students should be placed in the center of the classroom where you will naturally maintain eye contact with them. "For right-handed teacher, put the noisiest kid on the seat closest to your right shoulder. This will make it difficult for the student to catch your eye, get the attention he wants (noisy kids are almost always boys) and make noise. In the seat behind/next to his, put your best female student. This will help prevent them from talking when they get distracted. Good students can be placed on the wings where they will strive to maintain eye contact with you regardless. Isolate noisy students if possible by moving them to seats which are between two empty seats.

## **Chapter 4: PRE-TRAINING FOR TEACHING IN ASIA**

### **MODULE – 56**

"Setting a goal is not the main thing. It is deciding how you will go about achieving it and staying with that plan."<sup>53</sup> These famous words were spoken by one of the greatest football coaches ever, but how do they apply to an English teacher? Most ESL teachers or would-be English teachers begin by setting a goal of where they want to teach when they finish getting their degree in TESOL or tertiary degree. This sometimes is where their planning stops. Anyone can board a plane without making a meaningful study of how to teach, as well as learning the language of the Asian country they are going, and many other vital components that would make their stay in Asia successful.

It would be more beneficial and less stressful if these teachers took more time to plan their voyage to Asia. Planning ahead, tutoring in the teacher's own country and learning an Asian language are three ways that these future teachers could prepare for their stay in Asia. By just doing these three things, an English teacher could learn what will be required out of

them and learn skills that will ensure that they have the most productive stay in Asia. The research done before could also help an English teacher to fit in better and understand the situation in the Asian country. This will alleviate problems associated with being so far from their home country.

### **PLANNING AHEAD**

It starts with a desire for adventure and a yearning gaze in the direction of the unknown and subsequently an English teacher is hooked on the idea of going to Asia. Planning ahead can save a teacher from many stresses and emotional headaches that unprepared English teachers commonly have. A good maxim to keep in mind when planning is “Plan backwards as well as forward. Set objectives and trace back to see how to achieve them. You may find that no path can get you there. Plan forward to see where your steps will take you, which may not be clear or intuitive.”<sup>54</sup>

There are so many things to prepare for when considering teaching English in Asia. This can disconcert a future traveler. Teachers can easily classify the major things to prepare for into the categories of health, finances, lodging, and language. These are factors that are most prudent to expend energy in preparing for. Lodging may not always be a problem as many positions throughout Asia provide a residence.

An English teacher can prepare for their health concerns in two ways for their stay in Asia. First; they can take care to prevent sickness by taking needed precautions. This can be done by staying away from sick people and by getting the proper amount of sleep to keep the immune system healthy. Showing the importance of this a research article says that “both the

length and depth of sleep are increased as an integral part of the body's attempt to repulse microbial invaders. The upshot is that there is a positive, circular interaction between the immune response and sleep. Sleep enhances the immune system, and the immune system enhances sleep.”<sup>56</sup> Also by ensuring a good night's sleep the teacher will remain aware and alert during their classes.

The second type of preventative measure that an English teacher can take to preserve his health is by getting inoculated prior to leaving for Asia. The necessary vaccinations will vary depending on the Asian country that the English teacher has chosen to take up residence in. A teacher would need to do research into what sicknesses are common and which vaccination(s) would be needed in the particular Asian country that he has chosen.

An English teacher would want to have a reasonable reserve of cash for their arrival in Asia. A financial planning specialist, Robert La Carriere, says that “Many teachers forget to make provision for ... unexpected ill-health or other of life's surprises.”<sup>57</sup> The teacher would want to have funds set aside for emergencies, such as getting sick or problems with a close family member back in their native land. Also, if possible, an English teacher should ask about the availability and the cost of accommodation prior to leaving their homeland. An English teacher would also benefit from researching what the ordinary wage is in the country they are going to teach in. This will allow the English teacher to prepare a budget for his stay in Asia. This will permit the English teacher to focus on his teaching rather than having money problems at the fore of their thoughts. Additionally, the English teacher's proposed budget may permit them to save money even while they teach in Asia.

## LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE

Learning a new language would be the largest undertaking that an English teacher might do to prepare for their stay in Asia. This endeavor would take up more time than all the other preparations compiled together. An English teacher will have to be willing to put much effort and time into learning even a limited amount the new Asian language. A resource that many people have found effective in learning a new language is the Pimsleur CDs and cassettes. “The Pimsleur Method... utilizes your innate language-learning skills through listening and speaking instead of reading textbooks.” 58

Learning an Asian language may teach the English teacher some different methods of teaching a language that they were not previously acquainted with. Learning an Asian language will also help them to have empathy and have an understanding of the barriers that are needed to overcome to master a new language. Being able to speak the language of an Asian country will possibly open a door to better jobs as well. There is a large need for English tutors and English translators in Asia; by speaking the language of the land, the teacher can get this type of job.

In addition, knowing the language will help the English teacher if he does get sick and is in need of medical treatment in Asia. Learning the Asian tongue will be part of the adventure and something that the English teacher has accomplished by going to Asia.

Knowledge of an Asian language will be something that will help the teacher to do his job and is a skill that will help him to interact with more people in the Asian country. The ability to have new friends because of speaking an Asian language will help the English teacher to avoid getting lonely and depressed while away from home.

## TUTORING

To overcome some of the barriers in being an effective teacher in Asia, an English teacher can prepare himself in another way. He can become acquainted with the most difficult form of English teaching, tutoring! Tutoring can be more challenging to an English teacher than teaching a class full of many students.

This is because the teacher in a classroom can use other students to help teach the ones who are not learning as quickly. Also, in a classroom setting there is a sense of competition among the students and this can encourage students to learn quicker. English teachers, when teaching a class of students, move at the pace at which the majority of the students can keep up to. Tutoring on the other hand involves moving at the pace at which one student can keep up to. The pace of teaching one student is usually much faster than teaching several students. This can mean that an English teacher will need to prepare more information when tutoring just a single ESL student. Tutoring is going to take more effort on the English teacher's part than teaching an entire group of students.

Another benefit of tutoring prior to an extended stay in Asia is that the English teacher can get experience tutoring English students of all ages. The experience gained in tutoring in the teacher's homeland will help establish his credentials when he seeks employment in an Asian land. The time that the English teacher spends in tutoring will instill in the teacher a hands-on glimpse of what problems the tutees (or international students) have with learning English and how to handle them.

Tutoring will be the great way to prepare a teacher to teach in Asia. The English tutor can look for students in the Asian language that they are learning. This will give the English teacher the opportunity to practice his newly acquired and limited linguistic skills.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion, this compiled research highlights the major barriers that exist in the path of becoming an effective ESL teacher in Asia. The research underscores the negative or unconstructive results that unqualified native and non-native English speaking teachers have had in Asia. The damage caused by unqualified teachers is not only felt by students, but also has affected Asian governments to the point of establishing laws to filter out poor-quality English teachers.

Even the students of these inferior teachers recognized the fact that they were not doing a proper job of teaching their students English. Due to these unqualified teachers, there is now the requirement of a Bachelors degree to teach in many Asian countries, but with the completion of a Bachelors degree this barrier is easily conquered.

There are four major cultural barriers that impede the success of an English teacher; these are the linguistic barrier, the ethos barrier, sleep & health barriers and the cuisine barrier. All four of these barriers are large stumbling blocks that must be cleared off the path of an English teacher. This can be done by putting forth effort to overcome them. An English teacher can prevail over these barriers by eating new types of food, forcing one's self to get sufficient sleep or learning a new language. By overcoming them a teacher will mature as an instructor and will add to their personal skills and abilities.

By adapting to the new language, cuisine, and culture a teacher will encourage his English students to do the same. This will help the students to break down barriers of their own on the road to learning English. Another benefit to the English teacher is that he will grow both as a person and as a teacher.

There are many English teachers who are not qualified to teach. They may possess a working knowledge of English, but they may fail in being a teacher. Not having these skills can be a barrier for anyone who wants to be an effective English teacher in Asia. A well prepared English teacher would want to cultivate ability in such things as: class management, classroom environment, knowing the students, and developing appealing qualities. These skills can complement the English teacher's instructing skills and really assist the English teacher in being most productive.

Cultivating these skills will help an English teacher to be able to teach his students effectively and will help the English teacher to become closer to their students. They will also facilitate a smoother operating classroom, which both the students and the teacher will enjoy being part of.

Nothing can be lost by preparing ahead, but lots of problems can arise because of not being well enough equipped to teach English and live in Asia. The recommendation is that English teachers going to Asia do three things: Plan Ahead their journey, learn a new language (even a little goes a long way) and practice their teaching skills.

All the barriers that lie in the way of being an effective ESL teacher in Asia can be overcome. Getting mastery of some of these barriers will take less time and not as much effort; others, such as learning an Asian language, will take considerable time and energy. By being

prepared and having the required skills, an English teacher can ensure that their stay in Asia is a success and that both they and their students will benefit to the greatest extent.

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

605. Being able to speak the language of Asian country may possibly open a door to better jobs. There is a large need for English tutors and English translators in Asia; by speaking the language of the land, the teacher can get this type of job. Learning an Asian language may also teach the English teacher some different methods of teaching a language that they were not previously acquainted with. Learning an Asian language will also help them to have empathy and have an understanding of the barriers that must be overcome to master a new language.
606. It would be more beneficial and less stressful if these teachers took more time to plan their voyage to Asia. Planning ahead, tutoring in the teacher's own country and learning an Asian language are two ways that these future teachers could prepare for their stay in Asia. By just doing these things, an English teacher could learn what will be required of them and learn skills that will ensure that they have the most productive stay in Asia. The research done before could also help an English teacher to fit in better and understand the situation in the Asian country. Therefore, this will only increase problems associated with being so far from their home country.
607. A well prepared English teacher would want to cultivate the ability in such things as class management, classroom environment, knowing the students, and developing appealing qualities. There are many English teachers who are not qualified to teach. They may possess a working knowledge of English, but they may fail in being a teacher because they do not speak the native language of the country. Not having these skills can be an insurmountable barrier for anyone who wants to be an effective English teacher in Asia.
608. The benefit of tutoring prior to an extended stay in Asia is that the English teacher can get experience tutoring English students of all ages. The experience gained in tutoring in the teacher's homeland will help establish his credentials when he seeks employment in an Asian land. The time that the English teacher spends in tutoring will instill in the teacher a hands-on glimpse of what problems the tutees (or international students) have with learning English and how to handle them. The ability to have new friends because of speaking an Asian language will help the English teacher to avoid getting lonely and depressed while away from home. The English tutor can look for students in the Asian language that they are teaching. This will give the English teacher the opportunity to practice his newly acquired but limited linguistic skills.

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