



# News Letter

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## TESOL Italy's

### 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

By Stefano Mochi

Dear Members,

TESOL Italy's 37<sup>th</sup> convention, which will be held in Rome on 16-17 November 2012 at Polo Didattico in Piazza Oderico da Pordenone 3, is fast approaching. Also this year, as in past years, it has been our priority to do our best to make it worth attending.

The role of language, even though explored in innovative ways, is once again at the centre of the debate as the title we have chosen, *Language Landscapes*, clearly shows. Of course, within such a broad topic, more specific issues will be investigated, as for example how to equip students with digital skills, how to create an inclusive environment for them and, finally, how to build up an effective community of practice within which the foreign language can be learnt.

The plenary speakers invited to discuss the issues pointed out above are, in tune with the tradition of TESOL Italy, eminent scholars from all over the world like Kathleen Graves, Neil Mercer, Alan Maley and Monica Barni. In particular, Kathleen Graves will tackle issues related to the inclusive curriculum; Alan Maley will illustrate what he defines an 'aesthetic approach' to foreign language teaching; Neil Mercer will explore dialogue in the language classroom and, finally, Monica Barni will investigate the multicultural aspects of language teaching and learning.

As president of TESOL Italy I wish to thank them for accepting the invitation. Apart from them, I also wish to give a heartfelt welcome to all the other speakers that have submitted their proposals. I am sure that their expertise and commitment will make the debate as lively and illuminating as ever.

Going back to the title of the convention, the association between 'Language' and

(continued on p.9)



## Food for thought

From TESOL publications



Bridging the gap between teacher preparation and the actual teaching experience

by Franca Ricci Stephenson

In September 2012 TESOL Quarterly has dedicated a special issue to novice teachers<sup>1</sup> in the field of English Language teaching. All the articles are quite interesting, and I especially found some considerations worth submitting to your attention. I refer to Thomas S.C. Farrell's<sup>2</sup> article *Novice-Service Language Teacher Development: Bridging the Gap Between Preservice and In-Service Education and Development*. He focuses on the gap between pre-service teacher preparation and in-service teacher development, as, no matter how good the pre-service preparation and training are, novice teachers find classroom reality such as lesson planning, lesson delivery, classroom management and identity development, very challenging without much institutional help or guidance from colleagues.

We are told that in Canada supportive environment seem to be the exception rather than the rule. Professor Farrell writes about novice teachers' "reality shock" caused by the combined difficulties of two complex jobs: teaching effectively and learning to teach. The danger being that "*what is presented in language teacher education programs may be completely washed away by the first-year experiences*".

Though there is still no agreement in the English Language teaching world about what specific courses should be included in pre-service training, Professor Farrell argues that a course should especially be included, focused exclusively on exploring the first years of teaching through reflective practice. Farrell identifies reflective activities and assignments related to the subject matter of that course as the best to develop nov-

### In This Issue:

Tesol Italy's 37th Annual Convention	p. 1
Food for Thought	p. 1
From the Editor	p. 2
Buzz-Words	p. 3
Webwatch	p. 4
News from the Local Groups	p. 5
On Teacher Quality	p. 5
What an Inspiration!	p. 6
Translation in Love	p. 7
The way they learnt	p. 8
TESOL-Italy Groups	p.10

ice teachers' skills in managing challenges, conflicts and problems they may face in their first years of teaching. He believes that "*preservice preparation is a time to begin forming habits and skills necessary for the ongoing study of teaching*".

He suggests that reflective practice opportunities be offered during teacher preparation courses and continued through the first years of teaching: "*novice teachers can take responsibility for their own development by engaging in reflective practice throughout their first years so that they can better assess and manage whatever issues and problems they face in their particular context [...]*Novice-service teacher development begins at preservice levels in SLT preparation programs and continues into the first years of teaching in real classrooms. It includes three main stakeholders—novice teachers, second language educators, and school adminis-

(continued on p.9)





## Buzz-words

Lucilla Lopriore

Buzz-word: 'a word or phrase that people in a particular group start to use a lot because they think it is important'

### Buzz-word of the day:

## Languaging

The term 'languaging' has been used more and more frequently in the last decade particularly within the so called 'ecological' perspective that views language learning as a continuous, dynamic, and often unpredictable, process, depending on individual variation (Larsen-Freeman, 2006). This perspective is in contrast to cognitive views on language learning, which perceive language learning as a uniform cognitive process. The process, although supported by cognition, may be subject to different progression pace, while learning is activated in and enhanced by the social context. Learning is the result of the relationship between the learner and the context that produces a number of affordances and it is actualised in action. And this is particularly true in content and language-integrated classrooms. (Atkinson, 2002; Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008; Järvinen, 2009).

Cortese and Hymes (2001) see languaging as the way in which individuals 'give voice to their own identity' in a social context and as the 'rooting of the psychological and moral individual in the local social dimension' (p.199). Languaging is associated with 'positioning oneself within the repertory of customary practices of a local culture' and with acquiring a 'linguistic sense of place' (p.194).

One of the first scholars who used the term 'languaging' was Robert Lado who defined it as a term that would represent a speaker's full linguistic performance in contrast to the attention usually paid by many speakers to some elements or part of the language.

"Since English has no generic term to refer globally to the various uses of language, I will use 'languaging' for convenience. [...] In languaging our attention is not on the language" (Lado, 1979:3).

In his investigation of the relationship between language and thought, Vygotsky (1962, 1978) highlighted the specificity of the function performed by language. Language is the most important mediating tool in higher mental processes and cognition and it is continuously shaped by speaking and writing, the two skills traditionally activated in the learning process. Further expanding this concept, Merrill Swain, while challenging the same notion of language as the only a conveyor of meaning, stated: "...our capacity for thinking is linked to our capacity for languaging" (2006: 95) that is when a person produces language he or she is engaging in a cognitive activity, an activity that goes beyond mere output. This means

that language is an agent in the making of meaning. Languaging, according to Merrill Swain, conveys the idea of an action, a continuous dynamic process whereby language is being used to make meaning. Contrary to Lado's use of 'languaging', Swain's is focussed on producing language in an attempt to understand, and language is used to mediate problem solutions, even when the problem lies in the choice of the appropriate word to be used. This way, "Languaging about language is one of the ways we learn a second language in an advanced level" (Swain, 2006:96). In order to provide a practical example of languaging, Swain reports an experimental study where biology students learning about the human circulatory system were asked to explain aloud to themselves in their own words the meaning of each sentence that they read, while the control group had been asked to read the article several times silently to themselves. The first group, the "languaging" group, understood the circulatory system much better than the control group.

"Languaging mediated the students' language learning by drawing their attention to language-related problems they had and by giving them tools to reason with. Their languaging articulated and transformed their thinking into an artifactual form, and as such it became available as a source of further reflection" (Swain, 2006: 106). Languaging was for them the means for that further reflection; they created new meanings and understandings, they learned through and about language. But, are we teachers prepared to help our students this way?

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## Web Watch

by Esterina La Torre

“Bookmarking” is one of the most popular activities for English teachers when they are online. What happens when you are surfing the net just for the pleasure of reading or for searching some special tools? You usually find lots of interesting sites or resources you do not need at that precise moment, but you want to save them for future use, so you bookmark them on your PC. In this way your bookmarks grow and grow becoming a multitude of messy links and it is very difficult to find that specific link you remember putting in one of your many folders. You may need a link when you are at school or with a colleague and you can’t find it because it has been bookmarked at home on your PC: this is the reason of the rise and development of Social Bookmarks. *SocialBookmarking* is the method of saving bookmarks directly online. With the great advantage that you can access them from any computer by logging into your social-bookmarking account. There are lots of them but the best social bookmarks are the visual ones showing links connecting them to images:

<http://pinterest.com/> Pinterest is a visual bookmarking system that allows you to organize and share all the novelties you find on the web. People create boards, pin sites on them and organize their favorite topics. Best of all, you can browse pinboards created by other people and repin the things you like on your personal boards. Browsing pinboards is a fun way to discover new things and get inspiration from people who share your interests.

<http://bagtheweb.com/> BagTheWeb helps users to put Web content in order. For any topic, you can create a “bag” to collect, publish, and share any content from the Web. Beyond most curation tools’ capability, BagTheWeb enables users to build networks of bags.

<http://www.skloog.com/> Skloog allows you to import the bookmarks you already have. This is a particular feature some of the others sites left out. You have your choice of a few browsers and sites to import from. I like the way they have chosen to include importing from Xmarks. For all the people who are using this soon-to-be-extinct Firefox plug-in, this is a great way to capture all of their bookmarks.

<http://www.symbaloo.com/> Symbaloo is a tool that allows users to add all their most important links in a format that is easy to use. The user’s webmix appears as coloured buttons with icons or logos. The user can drag and drop items to organize them in a convenient and practical way. The items, or tiles, can be searched, so the user can find those that are most relevant to the items he is adding and can view his home webmix or browse webmix collections. News highlights and major news are also accessible through tabs on the Symbaloo homepage. The user can access an online resource simply by clicking one of the tiles on the webmix he is currently viewing.

<http://www.livebinders.com/> Livebinders is a digital 3 ring binder where you can put virtually anything: webpages, PDF’s, documents, images, or videos. Everything is organized by tabs within which you can even have subtabs. You can also change the layout of a page. The default is the one column with the webpage. But there are also many other options like titles, text and media and tables.

### TESOL Italy Naples local group

A successful conference “L’educazione linguistica nell’Italia che verrà” was held in Naples last April, organized by Bruna Di Sabato (Presidente del Corso di laurea magistrale in Lingue straniere per la comunicazione e la cooperazione internazionale), on behalf of the Istituto Suor Orsola Benincasa, and Tesol Italy Naples local group.

The theme of the conference was the teaching of foreign languages and of Italian as a second language in the near future and it was meant to highlight the significant changes that are characterizing the Italian school and teacher training systems today. Speakers: Paolo E. Balboni and Maurizio Piscitelli

Here follows an abstract of the contribution from Paolo E. Balboni, Università Ca’ Foscari, Venezia

Il Professore Balboni ha improntato il suo intervento sul concetto di educazione linguistica, approfondendo in particolare modo gli aspetti relativi alla lingua italiana o, dovremmo dire, le lingue italiane come oggetto d’apprendimento: lingua prima dei parlanti nativi, lingua seconda per gli immigrati, lingua straniera per coloro che intraprendono un percorso di apprendimento, lingua etnica per coloro che discendono da italiani emigrati. Ciascuna di queste prospettive comporta diverse implicazioni glottodidattiche che sono solo in parte assimilabili a quelle delle altre lingue occidentali. Si è poi soffermato sull’inglese, dedicandosi soprattutto ai risvolti delle ‘varietà’ di inglese ‘utilizzato’ come strumento di comunicazione a livello internazionale. Attraverso una serie di esempi di uso concreto dell’inglese tra parlanti non nativi, come lo *Euro English* parlato in ambiente UE, o l’*International English* parlato in ambienti accademici e professionali (ad esempio i convegni internazionali di multinazionali come la Glaxo), Paolo Balboni ha invitato alla riflessione su quale tipo di inglese insegnare oggi.

Il discorso si è poi spostato sulla scuola italiana: Paolo Balboni ha ricordato il Trattato di Maastricht che nell’articolo

(continued on p.11)

# On Teacher Quality

by Beth Ann Boyle

In an attempt to create quality education while cutting expenses, recent changes in the educational system in Italy are dramatically affecting language teachers and language teacher education. At the same time over the years many official documents and articles about what constitutes quality education have been produced worldwide. What are the implications of these different demands and suggestions for English language teachers in Italy?

**How the World's Best-Performing School Come Out on Top**, is a 56-page McKinsey and Company report that examines different kinds of successful schools worldwide. The conclusion to this McKinsey report was the following: "The experiences of these top school systems suggest that three things matter most: 1) getting the right people to become teachers, 2) developing them into effective instructors and 3) ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instructions for every child." (Mourshed & Barber, 2007:5). This leads to another obvious question: what do teachers need in order to become and remain effective educators?

In 2010, a 126-page follow-up to that report entitled **How the Worlds Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better** was published. As you can see from the table (Mourshed, Chijioko, & Barber, 2010:28), importance is given to the creation of support mechanisms for teachers as professionals, as well as pre-service and in-service training. F: "When teachers begin their career, little do they realise that their professional development must never end: reflective teaching is necessary in order to guarantee quality teaching. What kind of specific support mechanisms are needed?"

Improvement journey	Poor to fair	Fair to good	Good to great	Great to excellent
Theme	<i>Achieving the basics of literacy and numeracy</i>	<i>Getting the foundations in place</i>	<i>Shaping the professional</i>	<i>Improving through peers and innovation</i>
Intervention cluster <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing motivation and scaffolding for low skill teachers                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scripted teaching materials</li> <li>Coaching on curriculum</li> <li>Instructional time on task</li> <li>School visits by center</li> <li>Incentives for high performance</li> </ul> </li> <li>Getting all schools to a minimum quality level                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome targets</li> <li>Additional support for low performing schools</li> <li>School infrastructure improvement</li> <li>Provision of textbooks</li> </ul> </li> <li>Getting students in seats                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand school seats</li> <li>Fulfil students' basic needs to raise attendance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data and accountability foundation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparency to schools and/or public on school performance</li> <li>School inspections and inspections institutions</li> </ul> </li> <li>Financial and organisational foundation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optimization of school and teacher volumes</li> <li>Decentralizing financial and administrative rights</li> <li>Increasing funding</li> <li>Funding allocation model</li> <li>Organizational redesign</li> </ul> </li> <li>Pedagogical foundation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School model/streaming</li> <li>Language of instruction</li> <li>Language of instruction</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising calibre of entering teachers and principals                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruiting programs</li> <li>Pre-service training</li> <li>Certification requirements</li> </ul> </li> <li>Raising calibre of existing teachers and principals                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-service training</li> <li>Coaching on practice</li> <li>Career tracks</li> <li>Teacher and community forums</li> </ul> </li> <li>School-based decision-making                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-evaluation</li> <li>Independent and specialized schools</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultivating peer-led learning for teachers and principals                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative practice</li> <li>Decentralizing pedagogical rights to schools &amp; teachers</li> <li>Rotation and secondment programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>Creating additional support mechanisms for professionals                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release professionals from admin burden by providing additional administrative staff</li> </ul> </li> <li>System-sponsored experimentation/innovation across schools                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing additional funding for innovation</li> <li>Sharing innovation from front-line to all schools</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Common across all journeys	Six interventions: [1] Revising curriculum and standards; [2] Reviewing reward and remunerations structure; [3] Building technical skills of teachers and principals, often through group or cascaded training; [4] Assessing student learning; [5] Utilizing student data to guide delivery, and [6] Establishing policy documents and education laws			
	1 Total number of interventions in each phase: poor to fair, n=103, fair to good, n=226, good to great, n=150, great to excellent, n=94 Source: McKinsey & Company interventions database			

**The European Profile for Language Teacher Education – A Frame of Reference** (Kelly, & Grenfell, (2004) provides specific guidelines on how to develop effective educators through different steps and actions: 1) effective organisation of language teacher education, 2) the development of knowledge, 3) the development of strategies and skills to convey the knowledge, 4) the fostering of values (social, cultural, etc). The question here is: does pre-service and in-service teacher training in Italy today prepare teachers according to the guidelines?

I imagine most teachers would agree with the content of those documents, but I also wonder what teachers would say if asked what they find challenging when they enter the classroom. Teachers today wear many different hats. First they must be the "knowers", the experts in their subject. "Knowing" English does not only mean understanding linguistic notions or grammar

(continued on p.6)

## On Teacher Quality

by Beth Ann Boyle  
(continued from p.5)

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rules, but it entails being fluent in speaking, reading and comprehending the language in all its forms and thus able to communicate. Teachers must also be motivators – capable of fostering passion for learning in their students. How many other hats do teachers wear? Aren't they also curriculum developers, classroom researchers, mediators, evaluators, administrators, IT experts, life long learners, world citizens, peacekeepers and disciplinarians? Any teacher doing a practicum will soon discover this to be true.

The reading of these documents seems to have led to more questions than answers. One of my last questions today is directed to teachers-to-be and school teachers: what can realistically be done to prepare quality teachers given the current conditions of education in Italy? What are our priorities? What can TESOL Italy do? My final question today is directed to the government decision-makers, the people who are able to put the guidelines into practice: what type of school have you got in mind when the actions undertaken so far and the current forms of recruitment contradict current literature and research in the field?

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## What an inspiration!

by Beth Ann Boyle

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**TESOL-Italy's mission is to develop the expertise of those involved in teaching English to speakers of other languages, and to foster professional growth and active participation in language teaching. Its mission includes promoting community understanding of the role of language in a progressively changing environment while respecting individuals' language rights.**

Let's examine the mission in a little more detail.

**Professional growth** – Who profits most from this? This is a difficult question to answer because of the ripple effect. When a teacher grows professionally, language students and fellow colleagues benefit as well. The students have greater opportunities for learning and the other teachers can be inspired by what they see happening. It becomes a wonderfully virtuous cycle.

**Community understanding** – Where does this come from? Community understanding brings on cooperation which then leads to an increased sense of belonging as well as higher levels of intrinsic motivation.

Promoting community awareness and understanding is a profound yet simple goal.

**A changing environment** - How fast is our world changing? I can't really answer this question but I do know that it is changing much faster than in the past. Change is part of our lives and even though it can be disorienting it is important to embrace these changes in order to construct a future. It can be very exciting and language certainly plays a fundamental role.

**Respect for individuals' language rights** – What is the role of language in today's global society? There are thousands of different languages in the world today and each one with a significant role. Language is synonymous of communication; language represents culture. Language is a common resource for everyone.

### Where does TESOL-Italy fit in to all this?

When everything is running smoothly, when teaching jobs are abundant, when teachers receive the recognition they deserve and the support they need from their "employers", when job satisfaction is high, it is pleasant to be able to share and develop beliefs and practices with other inspired teachers. But when times are tough, recognition is nearly inexistent and employers are squeezing all they can out of their teachers, well, that's when being part of a community becomes indispensable.

TESOL-Italy is made up of teachers who are part of a community of practitioners that can foster professional growth. Being able to be part of this is an opportunity for all.

I would like to conclude with a question: if you are looking for greater professional development opportunities, how can TESOL-Italy help?

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# Translation in Love

by Marina Morbiducci

## EVALUATING TRANSLATION

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The good news is that the area of translation is now being evaluated also in terms of scholarship: this is what we can gather from the “Guidelines for Peer Review” as reported in the journal titled *Profession 2011* issued by the Modern Language Association of America (pp. 264-267).

The novelty might not appear so relevant to teachers daily spending most of their professional time in the classroom. But it is not so, in our opinion. As a matter of fact, if we agree that translation is gaining more and more momentum in terms of pedagogical impact in language teaching, we should welcome any effort to attribute academic value to any practice of translation, both as an invaluable tool from the standpoint of ELT trainers and educators, and as reappraisal of an academic discipline *per se* from the vantage point of specialists and researchers in the field.

From the above-mentioned “Guidelines” we quote the following pronouncement: “Translation has been an indispensable component of intellectual exchange and development throughout recorded history. Today, the ever-accelerating interaction among cultures and economies in our globalized world is exponentially increasing the need for translation. As more and more postsecondary institutions incorporate translation studies and translator training into their curricula, there is a growing need for faculty members who are scholars and practitioners of translation. Moreover, the translation of a work of literature or scholarship – indeed, of any major cultural document – can have a significant impact on the intellectual community, while the absence of translations impedes the circulation of ideas”. (p. 264)

Translation allows “the circulation of ideas” and without it there can’t be real culture at present. It was exactly Susan Sontag that in 2003 defined translation as the “circulatory system of the world’s literatures” (*The World as India. The St. Jerome Lecture on Literary Translation*, 2003; edizione italiana: *Tradurre letteratura*, traduzione di Paolo Dilonardo, Archinto, Milano, 2004) - a statement echoed by José Saramago’s remark claiming that “writers create national literatures with their language, but world literature is written by translators”. In the above quoted lecture, Sontag literally says: “To translate means many things, among them: to circulate, to transport, to disseminate, to explain, to make (more) accessible” and adds that literary translation is “preeminently an ethical task, and one that mirrors and duplicates the role of literature itself, which is to extend our sympathies; to educate the heart and mind; to create inwardness; to secure and deepen the awareness (with all its consequences) that other people, people different from us, really do exist” (Sontag, 12). Needless to underline the educational value which is encapsulated in such practice and discipline. Sontag points out that on the one hand, “[t]ranslating, which is here seen as an activity of choosing in the larger sense, was a profession of individuals who were the bearers of a certain inward culture. To translate thoughtfully, painstakingly, ingeniously, respectfully was a precise measure of the translator’s fealty to the enterprise of literature itself”. How many ethical values are included in the activity of translation! Sontag also specifies that, on the other hand: “[c]hoices that might be thought of as merely linguistic always imply ethical standards as well, which has made the activity of translating itself the vehicle of such values as integrity, responsibility, fidelity, boldness, humility” (Sontag, 2).

Evidently, various qualities are requested in order to become a responsible translator. The apparent antinomy “boldness/humility” is crucial, and would deserve more in-depth investigation. Here let’s just say that the notion of the translator’s humbleness seems to have little to do with the scholarly standards –mentioned above– which academics feel the need for. Yet, there is no contradiction, if we agree that “[e]very translation is an interpretation; each begins with a critical reading, then expands and ultimately embodies that reading” (*Profession 2011*, p. 265): this is probably why “[m]ore and more academics are therefore undertaking translation as a component of their professional activity and as a natural extension of their teaching” (*Profession 2011*, p. 264). When you translate you serve some other’s cause: it’s time that such “service” was fully acknowledged as “value” and evaluated as scholarship, too.

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# IL POLIGLOTTA

## *The way they learnt*

by Annarosa Iraldo



While getting ready to refresh, renew, update our teaching, drawing inspiration from the presentations at the 37<sup>th</sup> TESOL Italy's convention, it may be interesting to see what the "professore" of the *Poliglotta Moderno* thought about studying English. A few answers to the queries of the "studiosi" in the "Corrispondenza" column of different 1905 issues of the magazine are reported below. Among the many answers concerning phonetics, (see the unforgiving refusal of America pronunciation) one can detect here and there the principles on which the course was based. It's worth noting that the students, who are now referred to as "apprendenti", were then defined "studiosi": a different wording which shows the shift from the emphasis on perseverant study to the focus on the process of learning conveyed by the use of the present participle in today's definition of "apprendenti". Here are a few answers.

*A G. Rizzoli, Bologna:* Ripetiamo: le nostre lezioni saranno sempre brevi, chiare perché devono servire a tutti e specialmente a chi non ha troppo tempo disponibile e non conosce la lingua; in questo modo tutti dovranno imparare e bene. Due lezioni [settimanali] sarebbero troppo, lo scopo nostro non sarebbe raggiunto, la maggioranza si troverebbe sopraffatta e presto ci abbandonerebbe- Quindi Pazienza e avanti!

(11 giugno 1905) .

Avvisiamo l'Abbonato 1298 che la pronuncia dell'amico abitante in America è troppo aperta ed in alcune parole scorretta. (9 luglio 1905)

*Signori Abbonati e Lettori.* Ecco il sistema per imparare bene le lingue straniere: leggere la lezione e comprenderla, eseguire gli esercizi proposti, formarsi una rubrica o vocabolario di tutte le parole e vocaboli dati, elencandoli in ordine alfabetico tanto per l'italiano come per la lingua straniera studiata. Studiare detti vocaboli ed esercitarsi a scriverli giornalmente senza l'aiuto del vocabolario così formato. Non studiare la lezione seguente se non prima si è ben padroni, per modo di dire, delle precedenti. Ecco il modo di riuscire con sicurezza. (16 luglio 1905)

*Cortese D. Genova .* A nessuno è dato predire in quanto tempo si può imparare una lingua. Ciò dipende da molte circostanze. Dal grado di intelligenza di chi studia, dal suo grado di istruzione, e dal modo più o meno proficuo col quale frequenta le lezioni o studia da sé. Speriamo completare il corso entro tre anni, e non è troppo, dato il nostro programma *Poco e Bene* e dato che le nostre lezioni sono impartite settimanalmente Contiamo però riuscire e far riuscire anche i nostri cortesi abbonati e lettori, se praticheranno il detto *Costanza vince...* con quel che segue che non vogliamo certo applicare ai nostri gentili lettori. (1905 Anno I, N° 10 )

*Avv. Alfredo Barbaro, Folco.* Noi diamo la vera pronuncia inglese. Quella cui accenna Lei è usata in America. Se desidera parlare correttamente l'inglese segua la nostra fonetica. (17 agosto 1905)



## TESOL Italy's 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

by Stefano Mochi

(continued from p.1)

'Landscape' might at first sight appear unusual to many, since the two terms belong to different domains: to the verbal domain the former, to the visual one the latter. Yet, it is exactly to join these two different modes of communicating that such a title was chosen.

As pointed out in the 'Call for Papers', in fact, by 'Landscaping' is meant all the activities we carry out in the attempt to enhance the appearance of an area or territory. Applied to EFL teaching, such activities take on the form of the strategies and actions that we put into practice, as well as the decisions we make, in order to enhance the 'environment' in which our students learn. Through such strategies, actions and decisions, that is to say, we try to 'landscape' the language class by making it the best possible place in which students may acquire the skills, abilities and competences they need for their growth, both personal and educational.

There is no doubt that language is one of the most powerful tools we have, as teachers, to modify the environment by 'landscaping' it in the sense illustrated above. Of course, by language I do not mean only spoken language but also the language of the new media, of social interaction or, finally, the language, which shapes the awareness we have of ourselves, of our strengths and weaknesses.

In order to show how 'landscaping' and EFL teaching are closely connected, I will refer as an example to a novel by Bruce Chatwin published in 1987 and called *The Songlines*. It is a novel made up of travelling memories and reflections on man's place in the world. It is set in the outback of remote Australia and explores the ancient Aboriginal myths and culture. According to these myths, the ancestors created the world during their wanderings by 'singing them into existence':

'A song ... was both map and direction-finder. Providing you knew the song, you could always find your way across country. ... By bringing the world into existence ... the Ancestors had been poets in the original sense of *poesis*,

meaning creation' (Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines*. Penguin: London, 13-14)

As regards EFL teaching we can say that as language teachers by 'speaking' - rather than singing - the world into existence through the evocative power of language, we daily try to fulfill our students' expectations, build their self-confidence, help them develop their potentialities. By providing them with the tools (we think) they need to become successful learners, we mould, shape and change the 'landscape' of the environment in which they learn in the same way as the old ancestors 'sang' the world into existence during their walkabouts in ancient Australia.

To sum up and conclude: this year's convention wants to explore how to implement possible 'landscaping' strategies and action to make the language class an optimal learning environment. This being the aim, we hope to be equal to the task and, above all, to share it with you.

Stefano Mochi  
President TESOL Italy

### *Food for thought*

by Franca Ricci Stephenson  
(continued from p.1)

*trators—all working in collaboration to ensure a smooth transition from the SLT preparation program to the first years of teaching. The idea is that the knowledge garnered from this tripartite collaboration can be used to better inform SLT educators and SLT programs so that novice teachers can be better prepared for the complexity of real classrooms"*

Reflective teaching is certainly not a new idea for teachers of English, but what is also suggested in this article is that novice teachers should be supported by colleagues and school administrators to bridge the inevitable gap between pre-service preparation and actual teaching.

Where do we stand in Italy? We are faced with the problems of thousands of teachers on short-term contracts who can't find permanent jobs in schools after years of substitute teaching with different degrees of pre-service prepara-

tion but no help from colleagues or institutions. We also see perspective teachers faced with the possibility of winning the "lottery" of TFA (Tirocinio Formativo Attivo) training, and/or taking a chance with the newly launched "concorso", which seems to privilege what teachers need to know rather than how they should teach. In any case, however, the gap described by Prof. Farrell exists, and his considerations seem to me interesting and thought-provoking.

October 20

<sup>1</sup> Novice teachers are defined in the article "as those who are sometimes called newly qualified teachers, who have completed their language teacher education program (including teaching practice [TP]), and have commenced teaching English in an educational institution (usually within 3 years of completing their teacher education program)."

<sup>2</sup> Thomas S. C. Farrell is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada

TESOL-Italy's 37th Annual National Convention

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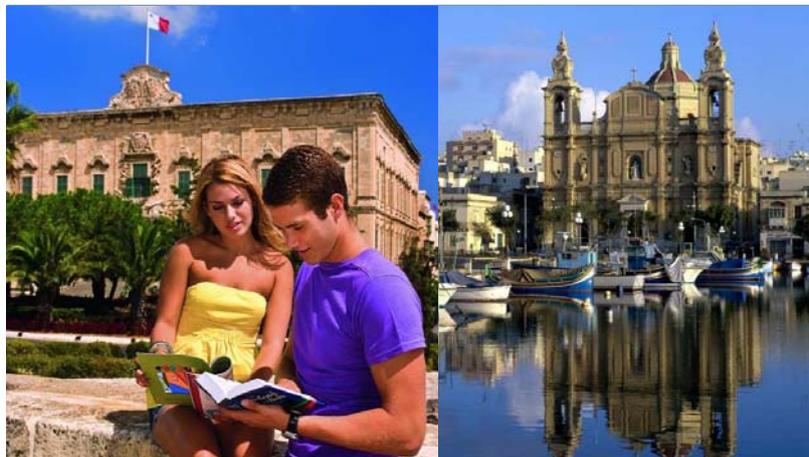
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- Museo Nazionale dell'Archeologia
- Malta Experience

*Pomeriggio* - Lezione di Inglese

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- Couvre Porte
- Chiesa di San Lorenzo
- Il Museo Marittimo di Malta

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- Casa Romana
- Le catacombe di san Paolo
- La chiesa di Mosta Dome

*Pomeriggio* - Lezione di Inglese

**5° Giorno** - Visita del villaggio di pescatori Marsaxlokk *Mattina*

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**NEWSFROMTHELOCALGROUPS***(continued from p.4)*

126, poi diventato 149, sancisce il diritto del cittadino europeo di ricevere un'istruzione che comprenda la lingua materna e due lingue comunitarie (salvo Regno Unito e Irlanda che ne prevedono solo una).

In polemica con le scelte legislative, Balboni ha fatto notare che, pur se nella sostanza rispetta il trattato di Maastricht, l'Italia interpreta a suo modo questo articolo stabilendo che i cittadini "hanno diritto a ricevere questa scelta formativa, ma possono scegliere di non esercitare detto diritto".

Il Professore Balboni ha invocato la trasversalità nel sistema formativo italiano definendola, salvo rare eccezioni, come un'occasione mancata. Della trasversalità tra mondo della scuola e mondo dell'università si gioverebbe senz'altro la formazione dei docenti.

Infine, è stato affrontato il nodo certificazione della competenza di italiano L2 tra problemi normativi, scientifici ed etici: un problema che sta molto a cuore al Prof. Balboni, che lavora da anni alla formazione di insegnanti di italiano presso la Ca' Foscari di Venezia. Nonostante il lavoro di formazione di professionalità competenti nel campo della didattica dell'italiano, non esiste una regolamentazione dei corsi per stranieri, tanto che si assiste ancora oggi alla proliferazione di un'offerta didattica poco affidabile che bada poco alle esigenze comunicative degli apprendenti e non bada a dinamiche interculturali. Il Professore Balboni, ha chiuso quindi il suo intervento auspicando una maggiore attenzione alle competenze linguistiche degli immigrati per favorire una reale integrazione anche attraverso la formazione scolastica e universitaria.

*L'educazione linguistica nell'Italia che verrà*

By Maurizio Piscitelli

Dirigente Uff. VI Direzione Generale per il personale scolastico MIUR

In un periodo particolarmente delicato del sistema scolastico italiano, la Direzione Generale per il personale scolastico del MIUR ha accolto con coraggio una grande sfida: avviare una serie di Piani di formazione nazionale, alcuni rimodulati e mutuati da precedenti edi-

zioni ed altri progettati ed implementati ex novo, sulla base delle emergenti esigenze formative del personale scolastico.

Tra le iniziative mutate dal passato si annovera il Piano di formazione linguistico-comunicativa e metodologico-didattica per lo sviluppo delle competenze in lingua inglese dei docenti di scuola primaria sprovvisti dei requisiti richiesti. L'impostazione del piano dell'offerta formativa, affidata all'INDIRE, riprende il modello di formazione blended degli anni precedenti, ma sarà erogato su di una nuova piattaforma di apprendimento a distanza, in grado di rispondere ai bisogni formativi di un bacino di utenza sempre crescente.

In corso di progettazione ed implementazione è il Piano di formazione secondo la metodologia CLIL, che in base alla riforma della scuola secondaria di secondo grado sarà introdotta nel terzo anno dei Licei linguistici già a partire dal prossimo anno scolastico (2012/2013, n.d.r.). I percorsi formativi, sia quello linguistico, che quello metodologico-didattico, saranno affidati alle Università. Tuttavia il MIUR è stato a lungo impegnato, di concerto con l'INDIRE, nella definizione del profilo professionale del docente CLIL, una novità nel panorama scolastico italiano. Nella definizione di questo nuovo profilo professionale abbiamo tratto ispirazione dalle più recenti ricerche in campo internazionale e dagli insegnamenti dei padri del CLIL (David Marsh, Peeter Mehisto, Do Coyle, Gisella Langé), adattando però il tutto alle specifiche esigenze ed al background professionale e culturale dei docenti italiani.

Quella del CLIL è una vera e propria "rivoluzione", regolamentata da una legge di Riforma dello Stato, a cui i nostri docenti sapranno sicuramente reagire in maniera brillante, come hanno sempre fatto sinora. A breve (al momento della stesura di questo contributo, aprile 2012, la qual cosa è già stata espletata, n.d.r.) le Università potranno candidarsi per l'erogazione dei percorsi di formazione metodologico-didattici del valore di 20CFU, come specificato da un apposito Decreto Direttoriale. Purtroppo quest'anno non riusciremo a soddisfare le circa 16.000 auto candidature alla formazione CLIL pervenute alla Direzione, tuttavia confidiamo di coprire almeno il fabbisogno dei Licei Linguistici che l'an-

no prossimo saranno chiamati ad introdurre questa nuova metodologia.

Tra le altre sfide portate avanti dalla Direzione per il personale scolastico, sicuramente si deve menzionare la riformulazione dei Piani di formazione nazionale Poseidon, Logos, M@tabel e IIS. Per ciascuno di questi Piani è stato costituito un Comitato Tecnico Scientifico composto da docenti del mondo accademico, rappresentanti delle varie Università italiane costituite in rete. I corsi di formazione avevano in precedenza una minima spendibilità per i docenti che li frequentavano: consentivano al massimo di acquisire il titolo per svolgere attività di tutoraggio all'interno dei Piani di formazione stessi. La riformulazione dell'offerta formativa comporta la trasformazione dei corsi in master universitari di 60 CFU, titolo spendibile a tutti gli effetti nella carriera di un docente.

Un'altra iniziativa portata avanti dalla Direzione del personale scolastico è quella relativa alla formazione dei docenti di Italiano come L2, un piano focalizzato sullo sviluppo delle competenze dell'italiano per lo studio, esigenza ormai imprescindibile per le nostre scuole sempre più multiculturali e multiethnic. Come si è cercato brevemente di descrivere in questo contributo, la Direzione Generale per il personale scolastico crede fortemente nell'educazione linguistica dell'Italia che verrà e si impegna ad offrire ai docenti, linfa vitale di tutto il sistema, stimoli formativi sempre nuovi e al passo con i tempi e con le esigenze degli studenti del terzo millennio.

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Si raccomanda a tutti i colleghi impegnati o che intendono impegnarsi nella costituzione di un gruppo provinciale TESOL-Italy di inviare all'Executive Committee la seguente documentazione:

1. Elenco nominativo degli iscritti (**minimo cinque**), con allegata fotocopia della ricevuta del relativo versamento sul c/c postale n. 15774003 intestato ad Associazione TESOL-Italy, Via Boncompagni 2, 00187 ROMA.
2. Verbale dell'assemblea costitutiva del gruppo da cui risultino l'elezione e il nome di un Coordinatore.
3. Programma delle attività che il gruppo intende svolgere nel corso dell'anno scolastico.
4. L'Executive Committee, preso atto della documentazione prodotta dal gruppo, si riunisce per deliberarne il riconoscimento ed invia successivamente il testo della delibera al Coordinatore.

Il Coordinatore del gruppo TESOL-Italy rappresenta a tutti gli effetti l'Associazione nell'ambito della provincia in cui il gruppo svolge la sua attività ed è tenuto a presentare una relazione annuale in sede di National Committee.

I membri del Consiglio di Presidenza e la Segreteria di TESOL-Italy sono a disposizione per qualsiasi eventuale richiesta di ulteriori informazioni.

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