

elt!

NOTES

CCA Teachers' Newsletter

UPDATES, TIPS AND RESOURCES

April 2023

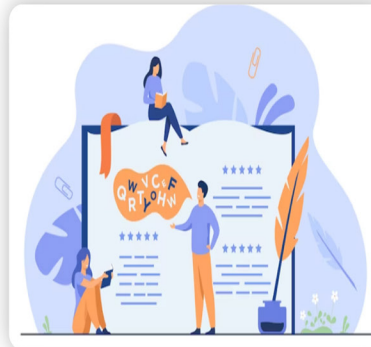
APRIL:

A month to celebrate English and English language teaching

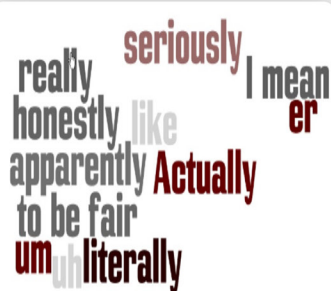
Some fun facts about English



There are an estimated 170.000 words currently in use in English, about 2.000 of which are believed to have been invented by William Shakespeare.



A new word is added every 2 hours. Between now and your next meal, a new word will be put in the dictionary!



There is a name for the words that we repeat often meaninglessly. Like "Actually," "honestly," and "basically". They are known as **crutch** words.



Some of the oldest words in the English language are still in use today: **I, love, black, mother, fire, hand, and hear**. Some of these words date back to 900 AD.

Celebrating Multilingualism & Cultural Diversity

By Astrid Cruz and Alejandro Ramírez



Participants from the new College Horizons cohort in Puerto Boyacá.

English Language Day at the UN is celebrated on April 23rd, the date traditionally observed as both the birthday and date of death of William Shakespeare. But also, the UN has found it as an opportunity to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity. That is why we would like to share with you some content we hope you find interesting about these two concepts that concern us as a cultural and binational center.

The world in which we live now is, in its nature, multilingual. Think of, for example, your cellphone... can you change its language? The different possibilities surpass English or Spanish. Multilingualism, defined as the ability to speak two or more languages (Milambiling, J. 2011), is a world phenomenon that we cannot ignore, as it is on the TV, on the radio, on social media, in music, in literature, in the classroom. Linguistic diversity is also a powerful resource towards building peace, so much so that the United Nations recognizes it as one of its core values and has adopted Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish as its six official languages. This situation poses a new opportunity for teachers who want to learn from and engage with their students and colleagues

insofar as possible. Here are some ideas for the application of multilingualism in our classes:

1. Explore vocabulary building exercises

Show pictures, play sounds, or bring realistic toys of familiar objects or colors and have students identify them in English. This exercise works for several levels and gets everyone to relate to the target vocabulary regardless of their linguistic background. You may, as well, ask what those words are called in their mother tongue, and take some time to reflect upon similarities or cognates (orange in English and naranja or anaranjado from Spanish, for example)

2. Avoid demonizing the learner's L1

Maybe you have heard or said “you need to think in English” ... well, it turns out that invalidating the L1 means to invalidate the student’s culture and background. Language is the medium by which we give input to our brain, which means it’s a representation and understanding tool. And since our L1 is the code students are more familiar with, it is virtually impossible to think in a code they do not identify with yet. “At the times when students do switch to the first language for simple comfort reasons, the teacher can make use of conversational moves such as second-language translations of a student’s first-language utterance that can scaffold the student’s use of

the second language and encourage the student to use the second language for practice purposes.” (Dailey-O’Cain, J., & Liebscher, G. 2009). This does not mean that direct translation and dependence on L1 in the classroom should be encouraged, but it is rather an invitation to welcome the idea that students still need their L1 to understand and process the L2. And that once they have consolidated their foundations, they will transition to the L2 in a more fluent way.

3. Use flipped learning

Encourage learners to prepare the target content or answer specific questions from the class before they get to the class. They can prepare and try to understand the new information in their L1, but they need to be able to express what they understood in the target language. This way you validate the students’ linguistic background while preparing them to use the new language properly.

4. Teach about and through the language, not just the language

All learners are capable of learning about the language, and this added knowledge helps them develop metalinguistic skills and therefore, acquire higher L2, or even L3 competences (Otwinowska, A. and De Angelis, G. 2014). Bring up material that helps students familiarize themselves with the culture of the target language they’re learning. At the Colombo, for example, you may do so in your classes by utilizing authentic material from books, or through the mediations.

Whether teaching elementary, middle, or high school, nowadays our students are becoming more diverse and multicultural. For this reason, it is important that teachers learn and promote cultural diversity and awareness in their classrooms. Fostering multicultural awareness in the classroom helps students from different backgrounds succeed in a diverse world. Therefore, to properly understand and encourage



cultural awareness, teachers need to know all the different types of diversity they may find in their classrooms.

One of these types is race, this type can influence the way students see themselves and others when they participate in class activities.

Another type of diversity is Ethnicity. This refers to the culture and nationality of a person. While individuals may have the same skin color, they may come from different countries and have diverse beliefs and cultural worldviews.

Religion is also a type of diversity to be considered. Teachers should understand that students have different religious beliefs or no religious beliefs, and this could affect their participation in the classroom. Consequently, students may respond differently to classroom activities due to their religious beliefs.

In addition to religion, gender identity plays an important role in cultural diversity. It is paramount to recognize each student’s gender identity and know how they would prefer to be seen. Thus, educators need to respect their students’ identities and use preferred pronouns when communicating with them.

In summary, cultural diversity awareness is essential in the classroom since every student is unique and has a completely different background. Teachers need to learn about each student’s culture, ethnicity, gender identity, and religion. This not only will help teachers to understand their students better, but also, establish a better learning environment. Teachers need to make a concrete effort in order to teach a broad curriculum that captures students’ cultural diversity in its whole spectrum. This awareness will prepare diverse students to thrive in an interconnected world.

Editors

Alejandro Ramirez
Pilar Bravo
Robinson Rodriguez
Yennifer Lombana

Photography

Robinson Rodriguez

Graphic Design
Colombo M&C

2023 TESOL International Convention & English Language Expo

By Pilar Bravo and Johana Melo

*What better way to celebrate English than with the TESOL International Convention & English Language Expo that took place in late March and early April. This year, they organized a face-to-face version from the 21st to the 24th of March and then, the virtual one, on the 3rd and the 4th of April. The theme was **Inspiring Innovation, Empowering ELT Professionals**. And we couldn't feel more identified with it, because inspiring and empowering others is what have kept us going for over 80 years.*



Every year, we look forward to this amazing event that proves an ideal scenario to learn about best practices from teachers and administrators around the globe, insightful research results in the field and new materials and teaching/learning resources. The international nature of this conference allows us to identify trends in ELT, which is key if we want to continue to meet our learners' real needs in a competitive and effective manner.

Here's a brief report of those tendencies we could spot:

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

More widely spread awareness has been identified towards DEI not only in ELT, but in all levels of professional and academic development. The call is for institutions like ours to work on an education that helps individuals and society, in general,

recognize and develop the knowledge and skills that drive better jobs and better lives, generate prosperity, and promote social inclusion for all.

Leadership in Education

Leadership has been considered one of the most salient soft skills in different areas of human development. But it has become even more relevant in education, as a skill, rather than a hierarchical position in an organization. Both students and educators are being encouraged to develop leadership to make positive changes finally take place in society. And for that to happen, we all need to learn about, practice, model and teach others the power of influence; that force that empowers others and maximizes both individual and joint efforts to achieve results and generate change. Now, what change(s) would you like your students or fellow teachers to achieve? How can you inspire them to do it?

Transformation in assessment practices and Policies

The pandemic brought about opportunities to explore varied resources and techniques to facilitate assessment online, face-to-face or in a hybrid way. Tools such as Kahoot, Formative, Quizizz, Socrative, Plickers, and Mentimeter continue to be popular among English instructors not only to offer content for practice, but also, as means for assessment.

Gamification has become a practical way to get students motivated in the learning process and a meaningful method to assess students' progress. Mission-based games, for instance, can be an innovative, engaging and still, effective assessment method.

Some other innovative practices include the use of student-centered rubrics (rubrics co-created with students); drama-based assessment activities; rhetorical techniques; inclusive assessment for mixed-ability classes;

and dynamic assessment, an evaluation method used to identify individuals' skills as well as their learning potential. It is highly interactive and process oriented.

Adult Education and Workforce Development

It seems we, at the Colombo, are in line with this global tendency. Through the establishment of new agreements with the government, like the one we have with Boyacá, or the design of the modular syllabus for employability, we are responding to the needs of the adult and young adult population seeking employability routes. The emphasis tends to be on helping learners develop both basic communication skills as well as other 21st Century job skills such as leadership, collaboration, initiative, creativity, organization, among many others.

But our job cannot stay at the curricular design level. To ensure effective

implementation of innovative and needs-based curricula, we also need to develop relevant and effective teacher-training material and opportunities.

Social and Emotional Learning

SEL still is and will continue to be a hot topic in ELT for quite some time. Experts agree the emotional aftermath of the pandemic has only started to show itself among all age groups: children, adolescents, and adults. There is an urgent need for all of us to learn and practice self-awareness, emotional self-management, and responsible decision-making, especially. They will positively impact our mental health in general, but more specifically, our learning potential. We cannot forget emotion has a substantial influence on the cognitive processes in humans, including perception, attention, learning, memory, reasoning, among others.

Redefining the role of technology in education

Educational technology has undeniably taken on a more prominent role in ELT. But more than ever before, teachers are talking about making wiser use of technology for meaningful and varied purposes, not just to motivate learners.

EdTech is more commonly used nowadays to offer students opportunities for authentic learning experiences; to foster learners' autonomy; skill-integrated practice of the language; collaboration (peer-assessment, peer-feedback, collaborative writing, PBL, etc.); and enhanced and more accessible professional development opportunities. Finally, immersive technologies like augmented and virtual reality continue to make inroads into the field of technology-enhanced language learning.

Tips for CCA Teachers

Coining new ways to celebrate

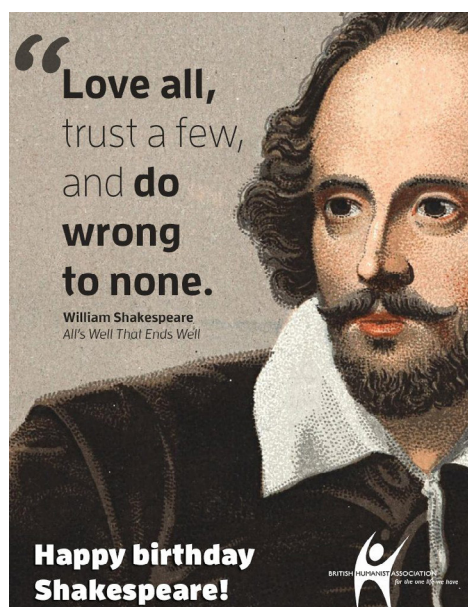
Celebrating may well be something that unites people. Whether you find yourself cheering for your favorite football team or you let yourself be enthralled by B-day celebration, it never gets old to throw a laugh or two, on your own or with your favorite people in the world.

April offers the perfect excuse to bring about a celebration aimed at amalgamating nations across the globe through a sharable feature: language. English Day is, for obvious reasons, a major event within the schemata of United Nations that commemorates language awareness and emphasizes the democratization of the renowned lingua franca.

Here you have a couple of ideas to celebrate the English Day in your classroom:

Host a B-day celebration!

A party with your students that revolves around identifying the "honoree", William Shakespeare. Think about it as a mystery with a series of missions for students to



complete. You can easily play games such as hangman or an IPA competition and provide clues after to find out about the mystery. These activities can use words

By Robinson Rodríguez

related to the writer such as gloomy, frugal, or suspicious, to have a direct relationship with the writer.

Flipped "who wants to be a millionaire?"

To make it more challenging for your students, you can ask them to find out information on the English Day and have them work on a Speed Dating by groups where they share the most relevant aspects of it. You can conclude this activity with an engaging "who wants to be a millionaire?" activity to reinforce the objective of the celebration. Use IPA in the options to add an extra level of difficulty.

Always keep in mind the goal of these activities is to incentivize language exploration and wonder as part of what learning a language entails. Make the most it, change it, modify it to your heart's content so you can provide an awe-inspiring learning experience for your students.

What else is news?

April is full of events, challenges, and celebrations at the Colombo.

Let's see some of the most important ones:

By Pilar Bravo, Yennifer Lombana and David Cano

B2G Agreements: an opportunity the Colombo keeps thriving in



The Colombo continues to gain better and better positioning in the B2G (Business-to-Government) field. Some of our teachers might remember ELT projects like the ones we executed in Tocancipá, or in tourist towns such as Villeta, Choachi, La Vega or Nimaima. But we also have some extensive experience working with the Secretary of Education in Bogota and, of course, the U.S. Embassy.

Here's a brief report of both current and upcoming B2G projects, led by David Cano this year:

- ✓ **SED Early Childhood:** an ongoing agreement with the Secretary of Education of Bogota, launched on April 18th, to provide early childhood and primary school teachers training

in English Language competence and teaching methodology. We hope around 270 educators can benefit from this unique opportunity.

- ✓ **SED Teachers:** an ongoing program aimed at training public school teachers in English Language competence and teaching methodology. This one covers both urban and rural areas of our city.
- ✓ **AmCham:** The biggest ongoing project aimed at improving employability and English language skills of youngsters in Bogotá (800 students), Cali (250 students), and Medellín (150 students). A whole CERF band will be certified at the end of the program. Apart from the English classes, participants have received a monthly monetary incentive granted by AmCham and will participate in short employability courses.
- ✓ **SED English for Teens:** another exciting project, coming soon, to teach English to 830 highschoolers in public institutions in Bogotá in F2F modality. It will go from May 2 to September 14, Tuesdays and Thursdays or Wednesdays and Fridays, from 3 pm to 5 pm. Material: Smart Choice. Classes in rural schools of Bogotá. The CCA will hire transportation from a spot in Bogotá to the rural schools.

- ✓ **SED Rural Teachers:** an upcoming initiative to teach a new group of public-school teachers, only for rural areas of Bogota. Classes will be online and will go from May 16 to August 31, from 6 to 9 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Material: Smart choice or Wide-angle depending on the level.

- ✓ **Tocancipá:** an upcoming project to reactivate our English Language programs in F2F modality, for the whole community. It will cover:

School students. From May 2 to November 2, 2023. Tuesdays and Thursdays or Wednesdays and Fridays, from 2 to 5 Pm. Material: Speak your Mind.

Community. From May 2 to December 7, 2023. Tuesdays and Thursdays or Wednesdays and Fridays, from 6 to 9 pm. Material: Speak your Mind.

KTP. From May 6 to December 9, Saturdays, from 8 am to 12 noon.

As you can see, we have plenty of job opportunities and rewarding teaching experiences for teachers. We are actually looking for teachers for many of the new projects. If interested, please, contact Luz Orrego, our agreements assistant, lorrego@colombobogota.edu.co.

Or please, fill out this form: <https://forms.office.com/r/9P8FC7mrGX>

5th Bilingual Job Fair

The **Fifth Bilingual Job Fair** is just around the corner, and we are ready to connect bilingual candidates with great companies that belong to diverse productive sectors such as finances, technology, education, tourism, among others.

In previous versions altogether, more than 2.900 people registered and 52 companies offered more than 5.000 vacancies. In 2023, only, we are ready to break records with 22 companies and more than 4.000 vacancies.

So, once again, the Colombo is committed to helping people realize their dreams, while transforming their lives through the power of bilingualism.

Help us spread the word so that all people interested can join us this coming **Tuesday, April 25th from 11 am to 4 pm at Plazoleta City U** (right in front of Colombo Downtown). For more info, visit our landing page: <https://www.colombobogota.edu.co/feria-laboral-bilingue/>



What else is news?

ABLA Conference

ABLA is the Association of Binational Centers in Latin America. And this year, Bogota will be hosting its biannual conference. From the **23rd to the 25th of May**, the space will be reserved for **executive directors, academic and cultural directors, and Education USA advisors from all over Latin America**. This 3-day part of the conference will consist of a combination of virtual and face-to-face plenary sessions and panels by experts on the future of education. It will also offer hands-on workshops designed to further the development of new strategies that can be applied by most BNCs to support the continued development and sustainability of their programs.

May 26 will be the last day of the whole event and has been especially planned to

Top Show Folk Edition

As you might already know, The Top Show is our most rambunctious and amazing music festival. Although it is the Colombo who organizes it, it is also supported and sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. It is a free event and open to all audiences.

For the past two years, we have invited emerging artists and bands of medium and wide recognition, nationally and internationally. Its diverse and inclusive approach makes this festival a unique cultural experience in Bogotá.



foster teachers' professional development. Around 1800 teachers from all over the region have been invited to either attend or present at this hybrid conference. ABLA 2023 will revolve around the lessons learned in recent years and their impact on our teaching practices. Educators will join the conversation about the opportunities for growth that we can build together in the aftermath of a very demanding context. Under the title "Beyond New Challenges: Binational Centers and their Role in Transforming Language Teaching

in Latin America," we will discuss the expansion of our centers in the online world through new "hybrid" and "phygital" spaces. We will share insights about the social and emotional needs that impact our students' academic success and the role that strong communities of practice play to help teachers with their professional development in diverse circumstances.

AEP teachers' attendance on the 26th is expected. If interested, other teachers can ask their supervisors about available spots.

The artists performing at **Teatro el Ensueño on May 13** are: Electrochonta, Edison Velandia and Adriana Lizcano, La Comadre and a couple of new bands that will be selected soon. The ones performing at **Media Torta on May 27** are: Cholo Valderrama, Systema Solar, Electrochonta, Tommy Z (USA), Max Pollak Trio (USA)

The 2023 Edition will be dedicated to Colombian and American folk music and hopes to represent the diversity and musical richness of both countries. Don't miss it!



General ELT Notes References

Milambiling, J. (2011). Bringing One Language to Another: Multilingualism as a Resource in the Language Classroom. In English teaching forum (Vol. 49, No. 1, p. 18). US Department of State. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs, SA-5, 2200 C Street NW 4th Floor, Washington, DC 20037.

Multilingualism. (n.d.) <https://www.un.org/sg/en/multilingualism/index.shtml>

Dailey-O'Cain, J., & Liebscher, G. (2009). Teacher and student use of the first language in foreign language classroom interaction: Functions and applications. First language use in second and foreign language learning, 131-144.

Otwinowska, A. and De Angelis, G. (2014) Epilogue. Education for Multilingualism: From Political Discourse to Classroom Applications. In: A. Otwinowska and G. De Angelis (eds.) -Teaching and Learning in Multilingual Contexts: Sociolinguistic and Educational Perspectives (pp. 232-238). Bristol: Multilingual Matters

"How to Celebrate English Day" <https://www.theteflacademy.com/blog/how-to-celebrate-english-language-day/>

MUNDY D. "How to Celebrate English Language Day in the Classroom" <https://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk/english-language-day/>