

Spotlight on the Trainer: Leticia Goodchild



This month sees the second in our series of interviews highlighting a NILE trainer and their work.

Dave Allan, NILE's founding Director, speaks to Leticia Goodchild, originally from Bahia Blanca in Argentina, a former NILE MA student and now a NILE trainer, university lecturer and Norwich resident.

DA: What first brought you all the way from Bahia Blanca to Norwich and what were you doing in BB at that time?

LG: Honestly, NILE was the magnet that drew me to Norwich. I wanted to do an MA in the UK, and when I contacted you at the time and read the course outline, I didn't have to look any further. It was the right course in the right place with the right trainers. In Bahia Blanca, Argentina, I was the proprietor and Director of Studies of an English Language Institute called "Helen Keller", which ran language courses for learners of all ages at all levels.

DA: Was it really worth coming all that way from your home town to Norwich to study and to do so several times?

LG: Absolutely. In Bahia Blanca I couldn't get the professional training and education that NILE offers. By taking courses nearly every year, and sometimes twice a year, I was keeping abreast of new developments in the field of language pedagogy and keeping one step ahead of my colleagues. This meant that I was not only in a position to innovate, improve and raise standards in my own business, but also the knowledge I gained and the skills I developed at NILE were cascaded to other teachers in the south of Argentina. I found this experience inspirational, which led me to become a 'NILE-ophile'.

DA: What was the most important thing that happened as a result of your time as a student in Norwich?

LG: Apart from having met my husband and having two lovely children in Norwich, on a professional level my MA experience at NILE opened up multiple opportunities. Among them, perhaps the most important is that I met lots of interesting people who have shaped me both academically and intellectually. It was great at the time to be taught by some of the writers of the books I was using with my own students in Argentina, or by academics and trainers that I'd heard so much about. My experience as a student in Norwich greatly inspired me to venture into other territories in the field of language education and encouraged me to take up a PhD in Education.

DA: How did you end up living in Norwich?

LG: I used to come to Norwich to complete the taught component of the MA. It was then when I met Jem, my husband. He moved to Argentina with me soon after my MA graduation ceremony at the University of East Anglia, and lived there for nearly five years. Our daughter, Emily, was born there. I wanted to have another baby straight away, but my husband, being English, said that if there was going to be another child, she or he would have to be born in his country. That's when I decided to come to live in Norwich. Shortly after moving here, I got pregnant with Jeremiah. We are now settled here; this is a fabulous city, so we're all very happy to live in Norwich.

DA: What is it like now being a trainer for NILE, having been a student?

LG: Having been a NILE student for so many years (from 1996 to 2007) and having attended so many courses, I believe, puts me in a position in which I can have a good idea of what a language teacher expects from these courses. Of course, context and culture are crucial in determining what we want to get out of a course, but I feel I have an added advantage being a former NILE student, as I can emulate those that taught me in the past.

DA: What is your main job in Norwich now and what are you focusing on at the moment as an area of special interest?

LG: I am a Lecturer in Spanish in the School of Language and Communication Studies at the University of East Anglia. I am completing a PhD at the School of Education in the same university, researching the interface between intercultural education and language pedagogy. Coincidentally, my supervisor is the same one I had in my MA days, Dr. Barbara Ridley, a member of NILE's Advisory Board!

DA: What courses have you worked on at NILE?

LG: I work with primary and secondary teachers, exploring CLIL and its application in the classroom. Intercultural education is a key component in CLIL, so I can put my knowledge and expertise into practice.

DA: What's the thing you most enjoy about teaching and training at NILE?

LG: There are three in fact. Firstly, the teachers who come to do the courses. I learn from them as much they learn from me. Secondly, the other NILE trainers. They are great, and we have a lot of fun together. And finally, NILE directors, who look after us so very well. The atmosphere at NILE is unique, not only in the classroom, but also in the staffroom, and in the pub on our social evenings!

DA: What do you miss most being away from your original home?

LG: My family and friends. I also miss the everyday contact with my Argentine students in the EFL context of my (now ex-) English language institute.

DA: What were your first impressions of Norwich and have those views changed now you live here?

LG: Norwich is a truly beautiful city. The first thing that struck me about the city was its greenness. Norwich has got everything. It's a great place to live in, and I am convinced I made the right choice nearly six years ago when I decided to settle here.

DA: How many thousands of miles have you travelled between here and Argentina since your first visit to Norwich?

LG: 140,000 miles, I think!

DA: What are your hopes and plans for the future?

LG: Get my PhD! Carry on with my teaching at the UEA and NILE, and continue with my research into the development of interculturality. Getting more publications is one of my main goals, as well as making presentations at conferences. My next presentation will be in Tucson, Arizona, at the Second International Conference on the Development and Assessment of Intercultural Competence. January 29-31, 2010. Thank you, Dave, for interviewing me.

To find out more about NILE, CLIL and places in Norwich that Leticia mentions, visit the following websites:

www.nile-elt.com

www.onestopclil.com

www.uea.ac.uk

www.visitnorwich.co.uk

www.visitnorfolk.co.uk

Second International Conference on the Development and assessment of Intercultural Competence:

http://cercll.arizona.edu/icc_2010.php