

ELT IN THE REGION: ISSUES & CONCERNS

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Damon Anderson became RELO Jakarta in July 2003, covering five countries in the Southeast Asia region. Before this he was RELO Budapest covering 16 countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Since joining the Foreign Service in 1983, he has served as ELO based in Washington, RELO Lome, RELO Jakarta, ELO Ankara, Chief of the Programs Branch in ECA/A/L, Chief of the Materials Branch in ECA/A/L, and Editor of the professional journal, The English Teaching Forum.

As a trainer, Damon has worked with teachers in over 95 countries around the world.

Before joining the Foreign Service, Anderson directed the Intensive English Program at Arizona State University. He holds an MA from the University of Arizona in Applied Linguistics and in Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language. Undergraduate studies at Ohio State and the University of Arizona included foreign language and literature, chemical engineering, and mathematics.

English is an important communication tool in the Asian region. It is the official language of ASEAN. It is the language that international relief agency workers have used in their humanitarian efforts. It is not only used with "native" speakers of English, but also between "non-native" speakers (e.g., a Japanese person talking with a Malaysian person, when neither one knows the other person's native language). It is probably because of this importance that many country education systems have begun to teach English in the primary levels and continue through the undergraduate levels.

There are, however, several issues and challenges throughout the region that teachers and administrators are wrestling with in order to ensure that the quality of English language teaching is at more than just an adequate level.

This talk will try to point out and describe what a few of the more common and pressing issues are throughout the region such as teacher proficiency, teacher and student motivation, curriculum implementation, and assessment.

The presenter will suggest directions to look in for finding solutions with the caveat that there are no simple solutions and that generalizations at best only help us to begin to define a problem. It is hoped that conference participants will be able to discuss and address these issues throughout the conference