

2012 FAAPI Conference: "Engaging, Inspiring, Empowering: Research on Motivation and Autonomy in ELT". A.P.I.Z.A.L.S, San Martín de Los Andes, 2012.

# Conference Report: Engaging, Inspiring, Empowering: Research on Motivation and Autonomy in ELT.

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Cita:

Carla Raguseo (2012). *Conference Report: Engaging, Inspiring, Empowering: Research on Motivation and Autonomy in ELT*. 2012 FAAPI Conference: "Engaging, Inspiring, Empowering: Research on Motivation and Autonomy in ELT". A.P.I.Z.A.L.S, San Martín de Los Andes.

Dirección estable: <https://www.aacademica.org/asociacion.profesores.ingles.rosario/11>

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## **Conference Report**

### **2012 FAAPI Conference: "Engaging, Inspiring, Empowering: Research on Motivation and Autonomy in ELT"**

**San Martín de Los Andes, 20-22 September 2012**

**Organised by A.P.I.Z.A.L.S.**

**Selected papers published at <http://www.faapi.org.ar/congreso-faapi/publications/>**

by Carla Raguseo

The **XXXVII FAAPI Conference** was organized by **APIZALS** and took place in San Martín de los Andes from September 20th to 22nd. This conference brought together national and international EFL scholars and teachers from all over the country to share experiences and discuss issues related to motivation and autonomy in English Language Teaching. The papers and workshops were divided in sub-themes including autonomy and motivation at primary, secondary and university levels, academic research on motivation and autonomy and the variables affecting motivation and autonomy in teaching and learning scenarios that are increasingly permeated by digital technologies.

The plenaries by **Dr. Ema Ushioda** and **Prof. David Little** provided a conceptual framework for the main themes developed at the conference, which bear cross-curricular relevance. Dr. Ushioda argued that we should approach motivation from the complexity theory, moving beyond an abstract notion of the L2 learner into a complex view of "a real person situated in a temporal, spacial and physical context". There has been a shift in focus from a decontextualized view that only considered internal psycholinguistic processes to a sociocultural, sociohistorically situated process.

Similarly, David Little contrasted two views of learning autonomy. The first view, which focused on self-instruction, was rooted in individual and cognitive orientations; while the current one considers autonomy "a social phenomenon grounded in interaction and collaboration" i.e. autonomy does not just mean learning "on our own" but rather articulating our individual knowledge with that of others.

As we can see, current approaches converge on the importance of considering the social dimension of motivation and autonomy as central driving forces harnessing the construction of knowledge in XXI century learning environments.

These views can clearly account for most of the papers and presentations I attended which stressed the importance of generating contextualized materials for our classes,

negotiating evaluation criteria with students, fostering intercultural reflection among other classroom practices related to the conference topics.

The other two plenary speakers were **Dr. Mario López Barrios**, who presented an analysis of FAAPI conferences over the last decade, and author **Susan Wilkinson**, who was interviewed by **Claudia Ferradas** on her literary works about Argentina (Anglo-argentine literature) and how these can be used to foster intercultural reflection in the EFL classroom.

I also attended two panel discussions dealing with CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and the role of technology in the classroom.

Finally, I had the honor of presenting my paper **“Using Blogs and Wikis to teach Writing as a Process”** to a small but very enthusiastic audience, who were eager to learn and integrate digital tools into their classes.

During the conference, I was very lucky to meet some colleagues whom I had interacted with online for several years. I also had the pleasure of sharing this experience with other APPrIR members who gave me their permanent support, such as Mariel Amez, Florencia Viale and Andrea Monserrat.

All in all, attending the XXXVII FAAPI Conference was a very enriching experience both at the professional and personal levels. I am aware of the great opportunity I was given by being awarded an *APPrIR First-time speaker scholarship grant*. Therefore, I will be delighted to pass on the experience and knowledge gained at the conference to the whole APPrIR community.