

general goodwill that Thais express towards their teachers. This is further highlighted by the "Pay respect to your teacher day," which occurs once a year and involves students "waiting" (holding their hands in front of them, as in prayer) their teachers in a special ceremony.

For teachers, the ramifications in the classroom are profound. Rather than working in an environment in which classroom control and discipline issues may distract teachers from developing and refining content and methodology, in Thailand, the reverse is true. You will find the teaching experience you gain in Thailand to be a rewarding and fulfilling experience. Teaching issues, such as the planning of well-structured lessons in which you present new language in clear contexts, and then provide a range of practice activities, are paramount. Speaking English is increasingly "cool" in Thailand, so your students will be motivated and eager to learn about you from the outset. This is a wonderful country for teachers to work in.

#### **Person-oriented versus goal-oriented society**

Western societies are very much goal oriented. This is perhaps an obvious fact, yet one I only gradually became aware of after living in Thailand for several years. Personal relationships are often (at least partly) sacrificed in order to achieve tasks, to "get things done." The boss bawling out the office worker who was responsible for a "foul up" is a scenario that we all know of and accept as normal. In Thailand, it is not. In fact, such an occurrence in Thailand would result in the boss losing the respect of all staff, angry at his/her treatment of another person.

There is a gentleness about Thais in their dealings with other people that, for a Westerner, is both delightful and perplexing. Perplexing, because it seems to sometimes lead to systems we take for granted, such as public transport, not working properly or efficiently. And yet, if we believe the notion that if you live in a culture for a time, you "take on" aspects of that culture, the net effect of living in Thailand will be to make you a more tolerant, patient, gentle and accepting person.

#### **Life in Thailand**

Living in Thailand can be both delightful and challenging. From the beautiful countryside, beaches, people, to the spicy, tangy, and sometimes pungent cooking, and from the noise, traffic and pollution of Bangkok, to the peace and quiet of a Buddhist temple in the country, teaching in Thailand will provide you with an experience that you will never forget. And if it all becomes too overwhelming, there is always a McDonald's or Burger King around the corner, a cinema showing Western movies, or a huge air-conditioned shopping mall to take refuge in.

As a teacher in Thailand, you will have the opportunity to experience Thai culture well beyond the stereotypical cultural shows and excursions that are the bread and butter of the package tour industry. Most students at Nava Language School come from Thailand's growing middle class, so

whether you have young learners, teens, adult or corporate students, you will develop a much more accurate picture of how Thais really live compared to what you could ordinarily learn on a visit to the country.

Thailand is aptly known as "The Land of Smiles." There is no better place to visit, to live and work, and to enrich your life with new experiences.

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## **NameProGuide: Web-based Name Pronunciation Guide**

Students in today's classrooms come from a great variety of cultures. In a sample of 800 names in San Francisco Bay Area Foothill College's NameProGuide database, students list 74 different countries of origin and over 56 different languages or dialects. In fact, the changing population in the San Francisco Bay Area is exemplified by the statistics from the 2000 U.S. Census for one city in Foothill's enrollment area, Milpitas, CA. "The racial population for Milpitas has changed dramatically during the last two decades as the number of Asians has boomed and the number of Whites has dropped sharply."

Reflecting this high level of diversity, Foothill instructors reported at divisional and departmental meetings that they felt ill prepared to read the class rosters aloud on the first day of class. On a daily basis, instructors at all levels, from elementary to the university, face the challenge of making each student feel welcomed and empowered in their classrooms.

To address this problem, participants in Foothill's Diversity Seminars suggested that workshops to assist in the pronunciation of student names be held. They were quite successful, but retention of the information quickly evaporated. Because of that, it was suggested that an interactive, web-based guide for pronunciation of names from several languages and backgrounds be developed.

A proposal for this project was drafted and a grant in the amount of \$34,000 was awarded to Project Director, Nile Norton, by the California Community College Chancellor's Office fund for Improvement of Instruction. Collaboration between the Foothill's Office of Multicultural Relations and the Computers, Technology, and Information Systems Division resulted in the student development of three prototypes. The current web site is a direct result of the winning student design.

Applications of the NameProGuide are not limited solely to student names. Used in a broader liberal arts setting, the NameProGuide can apply to the memorization of scientific or musical terms, foreign language training, accurately pronounced graduation lists, or simply electronic class rosters.

One's name and its unique pronunciation form an essential part of one's identity. Students' names, correctly pronounced, demonstrate that the instructor cares about his or her students and reinforces their acceptance in the class.

The NameProGuide is a tool designed to support instructors by providing aural and visual methods of learning students' names and information on their cultural background.

Enabled to confidently address your students or colleagues, pronouncing their names as they would, you open the door to a more successful and inviting classroom.

Please visit the web site at <http://www.nameproguide.org> and experience the ease of searching student names by:

Alphabet  
Class  
Division/department  
Geographic region  
Country of origin  
Languages spoken

To find out how you might become a part of this project, or for more information, email the project director, Dr. Nile Norton, through the web site at [info@nameproguide.org](mailto:info@nameproguide.org) or write to him, requesting a brochure at:

NameProGuide  
157 Yesler Way, Suite 515  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Phone: (206) 382-9798

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