

Are teachers managing stress or is stress managing teachers?

by Ajda Erjavec Bartolj

Successful Foreign Language Learners and Use of Learning Strategies: A Theoretical Overview

by Urška Petrevčič

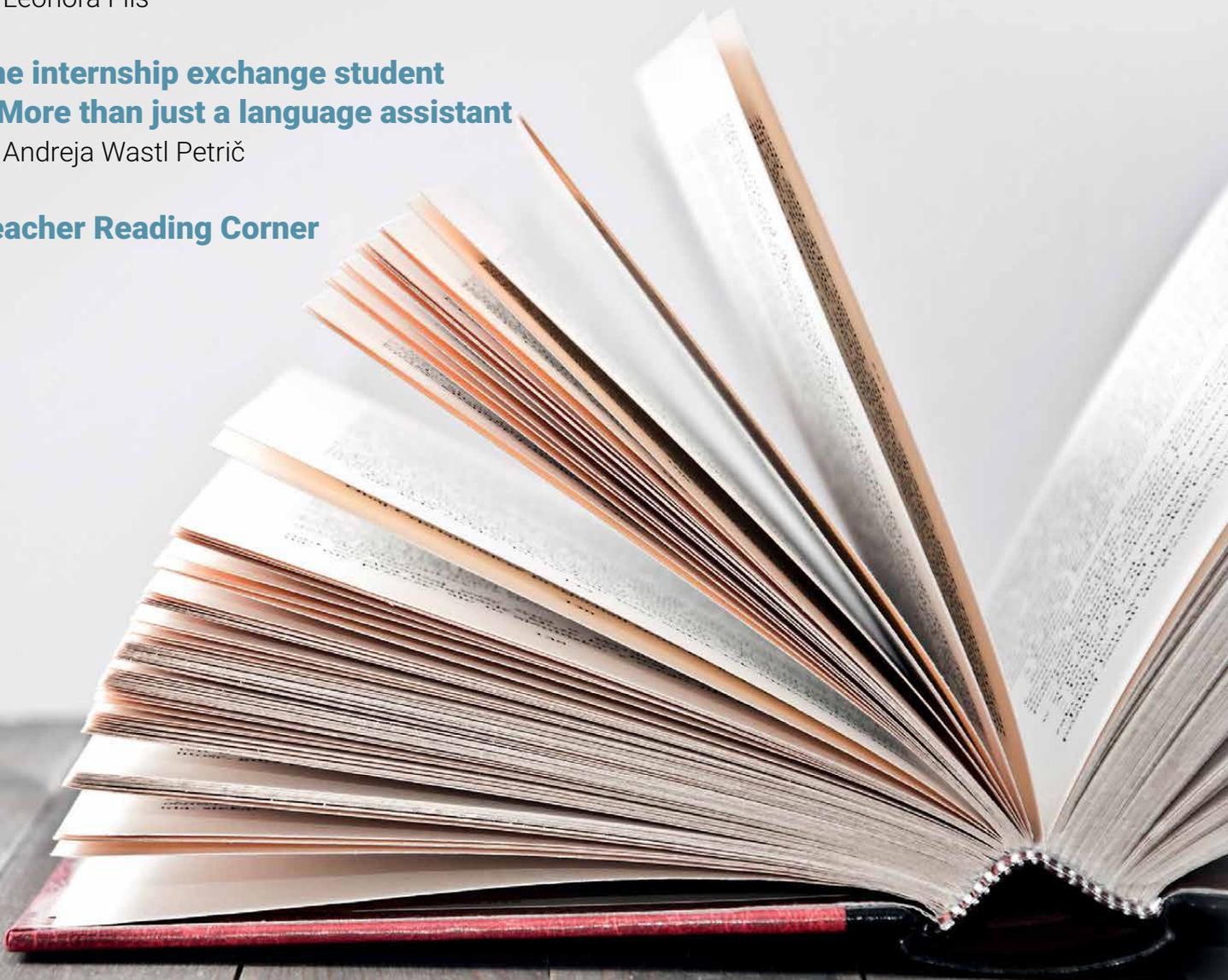
The English Book Club at the Ljubljana City Library. Why Read and Talk About It with Others?

by Leonora Flis

The internship exchange student – More than just a language assistant

by Andreja Wastl Petrič

Teacher Reading Corner



4

Are teachers managing stress or is stress managing teachers?

by Ajda Erjavec Bartolj

9

Successful Foreign Language Learners and Use of Learning Strategies: A Theoretical Overview

by Urška Petrevčič

14

The English Book Club at the Ljubljana City Library. Why Read and Talk About It with Others?

by Leonora Flis

16

Pancakes in your lesson? Hands-on activities for children

by Barbara Bujtás

18

Critical thinking at a glance (2) Case Study: Letter Boxes or Litter Bins?

Nada Đukić

19

26 th International IATEFL Slovenia Conference 2019 #empowerED

20

The internship exchange student – More than just a language assistant

by Andreja Wastl Petrič

22

Advanced NLP Course at Pilgrims

by Mojca Šterk

24

Using eTwinning in KA2 School-To-School Partnerships

by Zorica Kozelj

26

Senses – Good for the SO(u)L Experiences of a teacher training course with Fiona Mauchline and Mark Andrews in Devon, August 2018

by Irena Sonc

29

SOL observational course

by Maja Štekovič

30

The Wild Cats of Piran by Scott Alexander Young

by Mojca Belak

mag. Janja Čolić, President

janja.colic@iatefl.si

Responsible for sponsors and tenders



Words to live by: Be a person who is satisfied with what you have instead of being unsatisfied with what you don't have – happiness is not something you postpone for the future!

Sandra Vida,

Public relations

sandra.vida@iatefl.si



Words to live by: This was totally how I planned it...

Metka Lovrin,

Primary school

metka.lovrin@iatefl.si



Words to live by: "I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious." (Albert Einstein)

Nataša Meh,

Secondary school

natasa.meh@iatefl.si



Words to live by: "Never give up on something that you can't go a day without thinking about." (Winston Churchill)

Martina Volk,

Seminars

martina.volk@iatefl.si



Words to live by: "No matter what anybody tells you, words and ideas can change the world" (from Dead Poets Society)

Lea Koler,

IN editor

lea.koler@iatefl.si



Words to live by: Don't take yourself too seriously – nobody else does.

Editorial

IATEFL Slovenia Magazine
Vol. 16, No 74,
Autumn issue 2018

Published by:

IATEFL Slovenia,
p. p. 1677, 1001 Ljubljana

Email: info@iatefl.si, www.iatefl.si

IATEFL Slovenia President:

Janja Čolić

IN editor: Lea Koler

Public relations: Sandra Vida

Primary school coordinator:

Metka Lovrin

Secondary school coordinator:

Nataša Meh

Seminars: Martina Volk

Printed by: Design Studio, d.o.o.

Graphic design: Petra Turk

Articles, letters and
other contributions should
be addressed to IATEFL,
p. p. 1677, 1001 Ljubljana

Email: info@iatefl.si

IATEFL Slovenia Board Members:

Janja Čolić, President, responsible
for sponsors, tenders

Sandra Vida, Public relations

Metka Lovrin, Primary school

Nataša Meh, Secondary school

Martina Volk, Seminars

Lea Koler, IN editor

Cover-page photo,
page 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 25:
www.freepik.com
page 19: www.shutterstock.com

ISSN 1855-6833

ISSN 1855-6833



9 771855 683007

Teachers are solar-powered – we recharge during the summer.

This is a statement that has been thrown about in one version or another for the majority of my teaching career, even though it only really applies to those of us working in state schools. It took me a few years before I became really and truly fed up with the statement and with the general attitude that it displays. More so, because, for a large part of the teaching community, it simply is not true anymore.

Studies have shown that more than half of British teachers have been diagnosed with mental health issues. One study, carried out by Leeds Beckett University, warns of the rising pressures on teachers' mental wellbeing brought about by increased workload, not to mention work scrutiny and constant observation.

Professor Jonathan Glazzard, of Leeds Beckett University's Carnegie School of Education, said "It is clear from this research that teachers feel that their own mental health can have a detrimental impact on the quality of their teaching, the progress of their learners and the quality of the relationships they establish with students and colleagues."

The survey was conducted in the UK, but I cannot help but wonder if this might be an issue of more general relevance.

We are expected to give up our whole selves to the profession, to put students first and to think of nothing but work for ten months in the year. I am not talking only about working hours, as you all well know: the majority of us do not stop being teachers when we close the school gates behind us. We sit and think of lesson plans, we collect ideas, materials and activities, we buy books and games with our own money, and we do this on our own free time.

So how can we then switch off during the two months we are supposed to rest and relax? Many simply do not know. But the two months should be crucial to our mental well-being: time to spend with our own families, time to focus on our own, non-work-related hobbies we might not have time for during the year. In this issue, we feature an article on teacher burnout, which threatens to become "an evergreen topic", as the author puts it.

Only recently, teachers in primary and secondary schools in Slovenia were presented with a whole new set of rules to follow and papers to fill in, all in the course of our work. I am talking, of course, about the infamous "three pillars" of our working hours and the 33 hours of work we supposedly put in during the course of our full employment.

I will not go into the full details of what exactly this means for us, nor will I wax poetical on the grave injustice done to us with this. But I might invite the powers that be to ponder on the message they are trying to send with this, because all I can get from the whole situation is something like "You, Teacher, are not trustworthy. We do not trust you to teach our children as they should be taught in the time that you should be teaching them." Now, let me ask you, what do they think this does to our mental health? The constant surveillance, the bureaucratisation of the teaching process?

Hopefully this issue of IN magazine will help you plan your own strategies for coping with this situation and spice up your school year as well. We feature articles on a Book Club, one teacher's experience with an international intern, how to bake pancakes in the name of English and much more besides.

Don't let anyone grind you down!

Lea Koler, *editor*

Source: "Pupil progress held back by teachers' poor mental health" (23 January 2018),
retrieved from <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/news/0118-mental-health-survey/>

Are teachers managing stress or is stress managing teachers?

by Ajda Erjavec Bartolj

Ajda Erjavec Bartolj has university degrees in psychology and adult education. In addition, she has acquired competencies in stress-management, coaching, conflict resolution, NLP and designing tailor-made trainings.

She has almost ten years of experience in teaching and counselling in Slovenian primary and secondary public schools, where she has specialized in gifted education and motivation for learning and teaching.

She is the current president of Association of School Counsellors of Slovenia and employed as a school counsellor at Gimnazija Vič.



Work-related stress and stress management are not new societal topics. Clinical and organisational psychologists and other human-resources experts have been dealing with the phenomena in the literature since the late 1970s (Friedman, 2006). Nevertheless, the zeitgeist of this age suggests it is to become an evergreen issue of modern employment.

Teaching professionals are especially exposed to long-term work-related stress and therefore quite vulnerable to possible negative consequences

(Drobnič Vidic, 2014). At the same time, education professionals act as role models for children and youth, so it is exceptionally important for them to be well-balanced and emotionally stable individuals.

On stress and burnout in general

In a stress-overwhelmed world, some would advise avoiding stress altogether, but that is regrettably not possible. Stress response is an inherently normal reaction of human beings (and indeed many organisms) to changes in the environment. It could be argued it is purely biological: our organisms are aroused when we face a novelty, whether it is a pleasant or an unpleasant one, and this arousal demands more energy from our bodies than the performance of routine tasks or rest. We are simply genetically pre-programmed to become more attentive when making decisions, especially in the face of danger or when looking for food, mating, etc. Regrettably we also have similar psychophysical responses when we are facing situations of modern "survival", for instance when we are threatened by other people's perceptions of us or even when we decide to buy a new phone and want to optimise our decision.

Hence **we cannot avoid stress altogether**. On the other hand, our organisms *can* become exhausted from being constantly alert and having to deal with decisions and choices all the time. Calming down and resting our bodies

and minds are crucial for human balance and health. If one does not balance activity with inactivity, fatigue and exhaustion start to build up and can lead to the state of burnout.

Burnout is a syndrome, a pattern of several symptoms, described as a chronic state of psychophysical and emotional exhaustion, accompanied by depersonalisation and lack of efficacy. This description might remind you of depression, and you would not be far off – even if the causes and treatment are quite different, depressed and burned-out individuals may at one point function quite similarly in everyday communication and life (Brenninkmeyer, 2001).

Burnout develops through phases, and the sooner the afflicted individual finds help, the better their prognosis for rehabilitation. We can distinct at least three stages of development, each one having recognisable physiological, psychological and behavioural symptoms.

Characteristic of the first stage is exhaustion on the one hand and workaholic patterns of thinking and working on the other. This phase can last for years, even decades, and is followed by feelings of entrapment and powerlessness, a phase that usually does not last more than two years. By this time, individuals are already quite fragile in terms of health and psychological stability. They might avoid social contacts or even change their living/working environment, but it is

difficult or even impossible for them to adjust successfully due to their lack of energy and decrease in overall efficacy, coupled with cynicism, lack of emotional control, attention and memory impairment, or other similar symptoms.

The final phase is called adrenal burnout. In addition to aggravated symptoms from the previous stages, it includes physical symptoms such as difficulties with any motion, inability to stay awake, muscle and joint pain, sensory overload and exhaustion (goose bumps all over the body, tremor, oversensitivity to light or loud sounds), heart attacks, brain haemorrhages, and acute digestive disorders. Psychological symptoms include feelings of depression, inability to make choices, decisions, plans or initiatives, loss of time-orientation and sense of control, outbursts of rage or crying, loss of meaning and sense of security, inability to concentrate, thought-flow disturbances, very limited short-term memory and difficulties with recall, extreme vulnerability with feelings of being exposed, intense anger and cynicism, sense of breakdown, and possibly even attempts at suicide. A burned-out individual usually retreats from all social activities and contacts. If one finds help when the condition is fully developed, it can take **from two to six years to recuperate or it can even cause permanent damage** (Pšeničný, 2008).

The most recognisable characteristics of permanent damage are substantial and long-term decrease in work abilities, sudden and substantial decrease in psychophysical energy, inability to maintain one's psychophysical balance, periodical reoccurrence of symptoms of the adrenal breakdown, extreme resistance towards previous work and life situations, personality and identity changes, weakened self-esteem, and changes in the individual's value system (e.g. decrease in altruism or efficacy as personal values).

Stress management

It is important to emphasise that **not every extreme stress situation leads to burnout** and that many factors influence its development. If we examine the causes of burnout, risk factors can be divided into three main categories. The first has

to do with societal circumstances – as mentioned in the introduction, these are not improving towards our living less stressful lives. The second category of risk factors refers to psychological circumstances of life and work and the third to the personal characteristics of the individual (Pšeničný, 2008).

When discussing teacher stress prevention, we should therefore consider **both organisational and individual** perspectives on stress management and at the same time be aware of general societal changes that affect the stressfulness of many traditional occupations, teaching included.

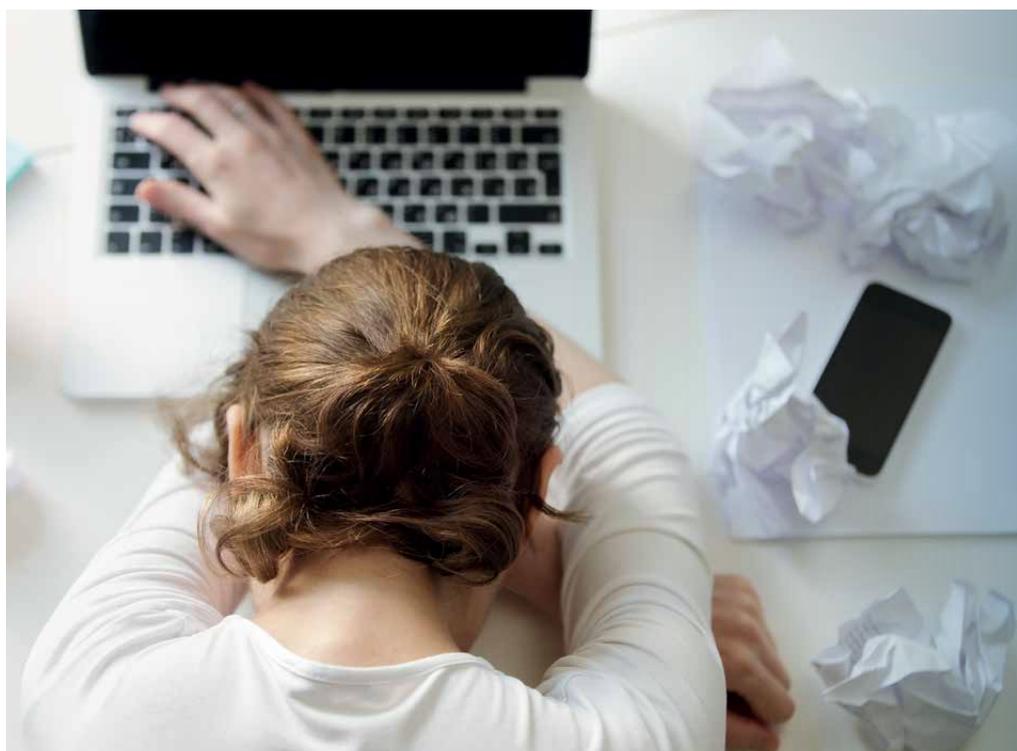
Risk factors for burnout of an individual teacher are generally related to personality traits that could lead to burnout in any profession. **Perfectionism, over-engagement, self-worth based on accomplishments and appraisal from others, competitiveness, weak interpersonal boundaries, putting needs of others above one's own, and exaggerated sense of general and/or specific responsibility** are just some of the characteristics that can lead to over-exhaustion. It is therefore not surprising that individuals who are prone to burnout are usually highly able and above averagely successful – that is, before they start

losing their efficacy due to burnout (Pšeničný, 2008).

This is something educators should consider also from the perspective of **values we convey through educational systems**: putting emphasis on high accomplishment and satisfying the needs of others (instead of one's own) can lead to unhealthy patterns of work behaviour later on. It is important to teach students – and ourselves – to be aware of our own needs as well and to take responsibility for sustaining balance in our lifestyles with enough self-care.

Leading a healthy lifestyle is crucial for successful stress management – **healthy physical habits** (balanced diet, regular sleep, sport activities, etc.) and **interpersonal relationships with well-set boundaries** in combination with **quality leisure time** seem to be a good recipe for a balanced life even for people who are highly engaged in their work. The nature of the job and individual's work satisfaction are of course important and will be discussed later on, but personal traits and general lifestyle choices are vital for stress-resilience even in suboptimal working conditions.

For relieving stress one can intentionally practise mindfulness, meditation or



yoga, relax through the enjoyment or creation of art (music, painting, dance, etc.), or just enjoy nature and/or ensure time with as few artificial stimuli as possible. Different individuals will find different activities that help them cope with daily stress. Nevertheless, some sort of **moderate physical exercise** seems to be uniformly recognised as a successful coping strategy (Austin and Shah, 2006) and so is **focus on something other than work** and/or other responsibilities.

Nothing new, really – indeed one could almost call these guidelines common sense. Nevertheless, many people lose this perspective and fall into the pit of over-exhaustion regardless of their knowledge of how a balanced life “should” look. A simple trap: if we do not take care of our physical and emotional needs, we are probably going to be more tired after taking care of everything else than we would be if we took care of ourselves first. This is especially true for people who always have unrealistically many goals on their “to-do” lists. They may use up a lot of energy to cross off as many tasks as possible and stop only when they are too tired to continue – possibly still with some unfinished business. Being tired, of course, they naturally decrease the number of set tasks... and if taking care of themselves is

among the last bullets on their priority list, it will probably be one of the first to be struck off. And so the vicious circle is closed. At least until one makes a conscious decision to reopen it.

If you find yourself repeating non-constructive patterns of stress management, the chances are that it has to do with deeply rooted beliefs about yourself, other people and/or life in general, and you could benefit from seeking professional support (Pšeničny, 2008). Professional support seems to be the most efficient way to facilitate necessary changes in your life – if you are in fact ready to make any. Sometimes, simple changes like developing assertive communication or just new skills for time-management make all the difference. In other cases, the cause of unsuccessful coping strategies is deeper and the healing takes more time.

In any case, the sooner you find help, if necessary, the better. And preferably this should be during the first phase of burnout, before the stage of entrapment takes place.

Sources of teacher stress and possible school management solutions

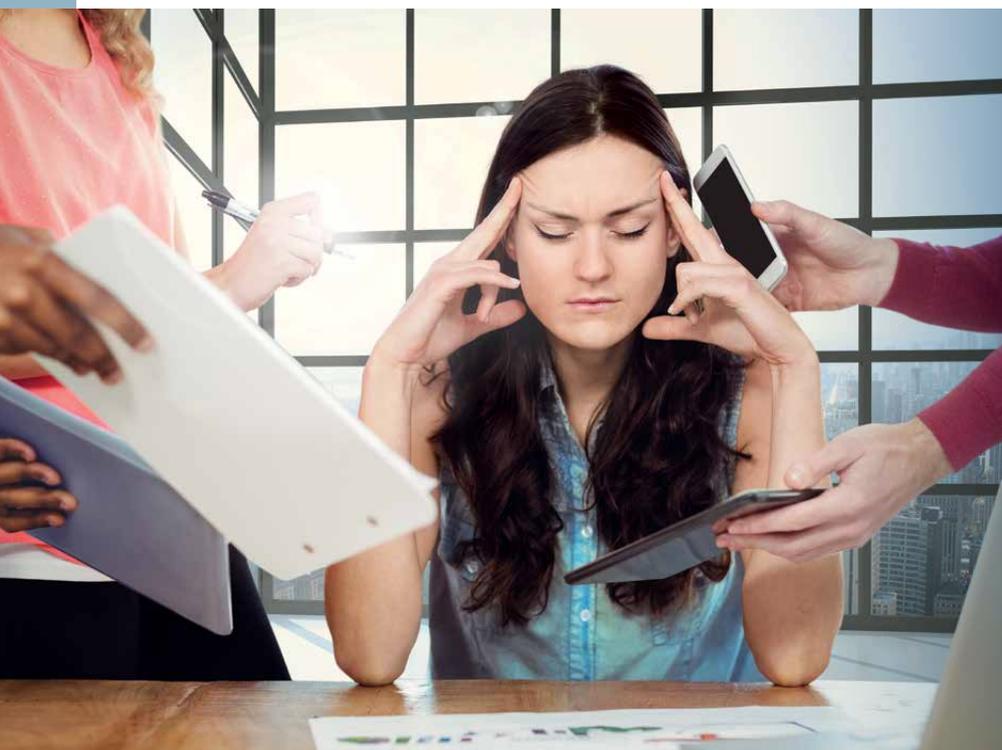
One could say that stress-induced health issues are an occupational hazard for teachers, since educators lead in

having more symptoms of stress-related diseases than other traditional work sectors in Europe (Drobnič Vidic, 2014). Teachers in Europe most commonly mention quantity of work demands, work overload, the number of students and inappropriate behaviour of students as the most stressful parts of their jobs, and Slovenian teachers seem to experience far more verbal insults from students compared to teachers from other countries (Drobnič Vidic, 2014).

Dealing with teacher stress systematically seems especially important for teachers in Slovenia, since Slovenian teachers rate their stress exposure relatively high – almost half of them report being under severe stress and suffering various consequences because of it (Slivar, 2009).

Out of ten stress indicators, Slovenian teachers rated below the European average in only three – headaches/migraines, coronary artery disease and fear of job loss. Occurrence of the rest (burnout/depression, absenteeism, insomnia, interpersonal conflicts, high blood pressure, indigestion problems, and resorting to smoking, alcohol and drugs) was rated well above average (Drobnič Vidic, 2014).

It is also worth noting that the “lack” of fear of losing a teaching position may not be only positive in terms of burnout development, since it can function as a double-edged sword. Slovenian teachers rarely change jobs after many years of employment at a specific school, and while this is beneficial from the perspective of social security, it also forms an obstacle to possible career changes and may even contribute to feelings of entrapment. A burning-out teacher may feel very dissatisfied in their current employment yet find career change inconceivable or even explicitly fear it. Constant exhaustion has an especially bad prognosis when an overworked professional operates under the presumption that he or she has no other choice. Since burnout usually leads to cynicism and suboptimal working relationships, one may potentially develop a reputation as an unwanted employee in a relatively small educational market and will then have to face objective obstacles to changing jobs. Entrapment, in this case, ceases to be purely psycho-



logical and is more difficult to overcome with only counselling support.

In terms of burnout prevention, it is therefore very important for teachers with steady employment to engage in lifelong learning, intentionally change their working routines and nourish a growth-oriented mind-set. This can empower a teacher and raise confidence about a potential job change, even if it never actually occurs. School management can help in this area through enabling teachers to engage in different sorts of training or even organising staff exchanges between schools.

It is important to emphasise that for the prevention of unnecessary stress, teachers should be appropriately educated for their job in general – if they lack certain skills, employers should thus provide them with appropriate training. Focusing on individuals at risk is of course necessary, but it seems to have less benefit in terms of stress management than introducing changes to the organisational context. Environment factors of stress simply have a stronger impact on individuals than vice versa.

High exposure to stress seems to be inevitable in some jobs, but stress can be somewhat reduced if organisations are well managed. First, it is wise that management makes a stress-risk analysis on at least three levels: the organisation as a whole, specific working positions and the vulnerability of individual employees (Pšeničny, 2008).

School management can mainly contribute to stress prevention through creating a supportive organisational culture. Emphasis should be on cooperative relationships between employees in similar positions and also between organisational subsystems – employees that have very different responsibilities. This can be achieved with a clear organisational structure and open communication processes. This is not an easy task, however, especially in environments where most of the employees have worked together for many years and possibly intertwined their personal and professional lives. Professional roles and expectations should therefore be as clear as possible, including detailed job descriptions and protocols in case of



transgressions. Research shows that this transparency is negatively correlated to teacher stress and therefore necessary for successful stress management at the school level (Drobnič Vidic, 2014).

Another important and manageable characteristic of the working environment that can significantly reduce teacher stress is noise. Noise and vocal cord overuse are very specific stress factors for teachers and they positively correlate with cognitive symptoms of stress, burnout and general health issues (Drobnič Vidic, 2014). Decreasing noise levels is partially a challenge of physical environment design, but mostly it has to do with joint efforts of leadership and staff to establish an orderly culture of communication with and among students in school facilities, impossible as that may seem at first glance. Both teachers and students benefit from such a culture, not only because of reduced stress, but also from the point of having a safe educational environment that facilitates learning.

In order to manage stress successfully, school management should primarily pay attention to the issue in terms of communication on the topic (Pšeničny, 2008). It is also very important that the school leadership recognises troubled individuals and shows care for teachers

who find themselves in any of the burn-out phases. Not only might it provide individual counselling for afflicted individuals, but it might also organise support groups, stress-management training or other activities that contribute to stress reduction for many employees. Some activities could even be possible with existing resources – perhaps a gym teacher could organise a yoga class, a school counsellor could be in charge of a mutual support group, peer coaching for teachers could be organised, etc. – while other measures of course demand outsourcing and might require extra funds.

Perhaps therein lies the reason that the implementation of prevention measures is obviously not effectively keeping pace with the increasing difficulties of the teaching profession. And at least in part, the latter can also be attributed to the delay in the effective addressing of these same issues. Inappropriate management, lack of constructive coping strategies and years of stress-related consequences accumulating among active professionals have created in many schools a cynical atmosphere that can be very resistant to changes in organisational culture.

This can be especially problematic from a successorship point of view. Successful – and stress-resilient – professional socialisation of beginner teachers can

be severely damaged in such working environments. It is especially harmful if the problems of exhaustion, lack of motivation and cynicism on the part of older teachers are resolved by overburdening beginners. Lacking protection from the profession/work environment on the one hand and being overworked on the other, they are likely to develop stress-related problems even faster than the older generation did.

It is therefore of vital importance not only to support exhausted professionals, but also to teach newcomers how to tackle job stress. Teachers should not only listen to their own needs and take care of themselves, but also understand stress-related phenomena in schools and ways to cope with arising issues proactively. Easier said than done, one might say. But there are many sources of information on how to approach the subject – the American Psychological Association, for example, even prepared a short educational module for new teachers with an educational video, a list of useful and accessible literature with explanations and tips, and even a brochure for friends and family members (APA Teacher Stress Module).

Conclusion

It seems that societal changes have had an enormous impact on increasing

teacher stress. But even though the consequences of stressful working conditions are undoubtedly present, they are difficult to research quantitatively and cross-culturally, since the phenomena involved are complex and dependent on both individual and contextual factors. Most research designs are based on retrospective self-reporting, and we are (still) missing more causal models of teacher stress (Guglielmi and Tatrow, 1998) that could help us support teacher health in practice.

Nevertheless, some facts about teacher stress are beyond scientific doubt. Teaching as a profession has changed during recent decades all around the globe. These days constant exhaustion among professionals is no longer reserved for a few especially exposed individuals, especially in Slovenia. We also know that some protective measures can be provided within the working environment. School management can contribute not only by offering support for the most troubled individuals, but also by nurturing a healthy organisational culture. In addition, schools can offer preventative activities for groups of employees or even all of them. The cost of such activities can actually be seen as an investment in improved teaching/learning outcomes and decreasing (at least) staff absentee-

ism. Let's not forget – every time a teacher is missing because of stress-induced reasons, another teacher gets an extra workload, perhaps even an overload that might lead to over-exhaustion.

Thus the consequences of passivity in the field of supporting teacher development are likely to worsen on an exponential scale over time and are potentially devastating for individuals and the functioning of specific schools or even a school system in general. And even though school management plays a crucial role in preventing negative consequences, it is important also to consider their own high exposure to stress and the need for support. It seems that only policymakers can ensure the much-needed changes for stressed-out educators.

Tackling job-related stress in education therefore remains an important challenge for school policy makers and school management. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, taking care of one's own needs, sustaining a healthy lifestyle and nurturing a growth-oriented mind-set is still largely up to the individual teacher.

Literature

- APA Teacher Stress Module (n.y.). Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/education/k12/teacher-stress.aspx>
- Austin V. and Shah, S. (2006). Teacher stress and coping strategies used to reduce stress. *Occupational Therapy International*, 12(2), 63–80.
- Brenninkmeyer, V. (2001). Burnout and depression are not identical twins: Is decline of superiority a distinguishing feature?. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 30(5), 873–880.
- Drobnič Vidic, A. (2014). Specifični stresorji pri poklicu učitelja. *Delo in varnost*, 6, 41–48.
- Friedman, I. A. (2006). Classroom management and teacher stress and burnout. In C. M. Evertson and C. S. Weinstein (eds.), *Handbook of Classroom Management: Research, Practice and Contemporary Issues* (pp. 925–944). New York: Routledge.
- Guglielmi, R. S. and Tatrow, K. (1998). Occupational stress, burnout, and health in teachers: A methodological and theoretical analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 68(1), 61–99.
- Pšeničny, A. (2008). Prepoznavanje in preprečevanje izgojeneosti. *Didakta*, 5, 18–23.
- Slivar, B. (2009). Stres pri učiteljih – kako preživeti. *Didakta*, 128, 10–14.



Successful Foreign Language Learners and Use of Learning Strategies: A Theoretical Overview

by **Urška Petrevčič**

Introduction

Ever since teachers' focus started shifting from *what* students learn or acquire to *how* students gain the knowledge so that the process of learning and acquisition can actually occur, there has been a growing interest in language learning strategies.

Although there are also other factors that influence language learners, an appropriate and effective use of strategies can help greatly towards success in language learning.

Language Learning Strategies

O'Malley *et al.* (1985), Oxford (1990) and other experts in the field have studied successful language learners and their use of strategies in order to find a way to teach or even train unsuccessful language learners to adopt learning strategies and approach the study of a foreign language in a more meaningful and productive way.

Willing's Language Learning Strategies

Willing (1989) classifies language learning strategies into two groups, as illustrated below.

LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES	
I Managing the Learning Processes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Having an understanding of your own language learning 2 Making learning plans 3 Managing communicative situations for learning purposes 4 Practising 5 Monitoring or evaluating
II Managing Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Selectively attending 2 Associating 3 Categorising 4 Pattern-learning 5 Inferencing

Figure 1 *Language Learning Strategies* (Willing 1989: 6–138)

The first group of language learning strategies ("managing the learning processes") are the ones that help learners become aware of the nature of language and language learning as well as help them realise what their own preferences, strengths and weakness as language learners are. In order to be successful in their language learning, learners have to take some responsibility for their learning. The first two steps towards successful management of the learning processes are understanding their own language learning and making learning plans. In order to truly understand their own language learning, learners also need to be aware of their attitudes towards language learning and the ways they like or dislike learning languages (*ibid.*: 6–53).

The learner's main goal should be to get acquainted with various language learning skills that make tackling language learning easier and more effective and to overcome situations in which they feel stuck or need to clarify their lack of understanding. These might include asking for repetition or clarification, seeking explicit explanations of vocabulary or grammatical points, paraphrasing, or finding ways to get the message across in any way possible. As for the practice of the language, learners need to be active in seeking opportunities to practise and make the best use of each opportunity (*ibid.*: 55–73).

Important components in the management of the learning process also include monitoring and evaluating. The major

aim here is to encourage learners to reflect on their production of language so that they can become more independent as learners (*ibid.*: 75–82).

Most information-managing strategies include a range of cognitive strategies of information-processing that help learners learn how to learn a language and learn it effectively. The strategies also aspire at encouraging language learners to take more responsibility for planning and evaluating their own learning (*ibid.*).

During the course of using the language, learners need to direct their attention to a specific function (for instance to a certain piece of information, to the main idea of the message, to a verb tense or to particular expressions) to reduce the information input to manageable amounts (*ibid.*). The aim of such a strategy is to help learners develop their abilities to locate the desired features and thus gradually develop confidence in using authentic materials such as newspapers, books, and TV or radio news (*ibid.*: 83–91).

The most basic level of cognitive processing is associating. By association, various pieces of information are taken in and merged with something that has already been internalised, while new networks of meaning are created and the information is placed under the control of the learner. Revising is crucial. The primary function of the strategy of associating

is that of storage broadening and of ensuring higher retrievability or recall of the acquired knowledge. The strategy works particularly well when supported by the use of mnemonic techniques (*ibid.*).

When describing a profile of a good language learner, Naiman *et al.* (1978) noted that one of the characteristics of good language learners is that they always look for patterns in the language they are learning. Willing (1989: 115–124), meanwhile, argues that pattern-learning is based on the mental process of inferencing, the strategy of “discovering a solution by deriving it from what is already known” (*ibid.*: 126). This means that in the process of inferencing, a learner applies all their knowledge, rules, meanings, patterns, feel for the language, background knowledge and ability to use the four skills, plus general non-linguistic knowledge (for instance the learner’s knowledge of the world) and strategies (such as using non-verbal clues) relevant

to the situation. Inferencing is important for the learners’ ability to familiarise their present knowledge with new informational intake. However, the learners have to be exposed to the language, notice common elements, observe the patterns and compare them so that they can detect the rule. They have to selectively attend to certain aspects and categorise particular items of the language exposed to them. They have to experiment with the language and to test the rules and their borders. If necessary, the learners may have to refine the rules (*ibid.*: 125–138).

Oxford’s Direct and Indirect Language Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990) first divided language learning strategies into two major classes, “direct” and “indirect”, though noting that the distinction between the two is not very strict, as direct and indirect strategies support each other and can both connect with and support any other strategy group.

LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES: CLASSIFICATION	
Direct Strategies	I Memory Strategies
	II Cognitive Strategies
	III Compensation Strategies
Indirect Strategies	I Metacognitive Strategies
	II Affective Strategies
	III Social Strategies

Figure 2 Language Learning Strategies: Classification (Oxford 1990: 16)



Direct Language Learning Strategies

These strategies are applied in a variety of ways and for different purposes, although they all require mental processing of the target language (*ibid.*).

Direct Language Learning Strategies: Classification Overview



DIRECT LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES: DETAILED CLASSIFICATION		
I Memory Strategies	A Creating mental linkages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Grouping 2 Associating/elaborating 3 Placing new words into context
	B Applying images and sounds	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Using imagery 2 Semantic mapping 3 Using keywords 4 Representing sounds in memory
	C Reviewing well	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Structured reviewing
	D Employing action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Using physical response or sensation 2 Using mechanical techniques
II Cognitive Strategies	A Practising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Repeating 2 Formally practising with sounds and writing systems 3 Recognising and using formulas and patterns 4 Recombining 5 Practising naturalistically
	B Receiving and sending messages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Getting the idea quickly 2 Using resources for receiving and sending messages
	C Analysing and reasoning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Reasoning deductively 2 Analysing expressions 3 Analysing contrastively (across languages) 4 Translating 5 Transferring
	D Creating structure for input and output	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Taking notes 2 Summarising 3 Highlighting
III Compensation Strategies	A Guessing intelligently	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Using linguistic clues 2 Using other clues
	B Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Switching to the mother tongue 2 Getting help 3 Using mime or gesture 4 Avoiding communication partially or completely 5 Selecting the topic 6 Adjusting or approximating the message 7 Coining words 8 Using a circumlocution or synonym

Figure 3 *Direct Language Learning Strategies: Detailed Classification* (Oxford 1990: 37–51)

Indirect Language Learning Strategies

The second major group of strategies according to Oxford (1990: 135) is the group of “indirect” strategies, which support and manage language learning but do not directly involve the new language (*ibid.*). These strategies are applicable to all four skills and work best when used together with direct strategies.

*Indirect Language Learning Strategies:
Classification Overview*

INDIRECT LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES: DETAILED CLASSIFICATION		
I Metacognitive Strategies	A Centring your learning	1 Overviewing and linking with already known material 2 Paying attention 3 Delaying speech production to focus on listening
	B Arranging and planning your learning	1 Finding out about language learning 2 Organising 3 Setting goals and objectives 4 Identifying the purpose of a language task (purposeful listening/reading/speaking/writing) 5 Planning for a language task 6 Seeking practice opportunities
	C Evaluating your learning	1 Self-monitoring 2 Self-evaluating
II Affective Strategies	A Lowering your anxiety	1 Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing or meditation 2 Using music 3 Using laughter
	B Encouraging yourself	1 Making positive statements 2 Taking risks wisely 3 Rewarding yourself
	C Taking your emotional temperature	1 Listening to your body 2 Using a checklist 3 Writing a language learning diary 4 Discussing your feelings with someone else
III Social Strategies	A Asking questions	1 Asking for clarification or verification 2 Asking for correction
	B Cooperating with others	1 Cooperating with peers 2 Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
	C Empathising with others	1 Developing cultural understanding 2 Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

Figure 4 *Indirect Language Learning Strategies: Detailed Classification* (Oxford 1990: 16, 17, 20 & 21)

The Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning by Chamot et al. (1999)

The Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning is composed of strategies that effective learners use, and which have been proved to be useful and applicable to a wide range of learning tasks. These strategies can be used to work through challenging language tasks or can be transferred to other subject areas and real-life situations.

In the model, the strategies are organised according to the four metacognitive processes: planning, monitoring, problem solving and evaluating. The model is of a recursive nature, which means that the four strategic processes do not need to follow a particular order, but are to be used according to the nature and demands of a specific task that a learner needs to accomplish.

Planning

Planning is a crucial first step in dealing with a specific task (*ibid.*). It is foremost about setting the objectives and goals (which means that learners have to understand the task and its demands), choosing the right strategies for dealing with the task, focusing on a specific task, and ignoring all other distractions (*ibid.*).

Monitoring

After they have prepared a plan on how to deal with a specific task, good language learners use monitoring strategies to check on how well they are doing with the task and how effective they are in completing it. The monitoring stage has two vital components: measuring the very process of dealing with a task and its success and adapting the previously-made plan if necessary. Understanding of the task is essential: to represent the information in a clear and meaningful way, learners can write down the key concepts, create visual images, or even act it out all in order to facilitate their own learning. (*ibid.*).

Problem Solving

Problems are an inevitable part of any challenging situation, learning a language being no exception. It is therefore essential for learners to find out about problem-solving strategies and to learn to use them successfully. There are various ways to do this and a range of different resources that learners can use: their knowledge, reference materials, or other people who can help them.

Evaluating

Evaluating strategies can be used both after completing a particular task or after completing only a part of it. Good language learners reflect on their successful (or unsuccessful) accomplishment of the task. If their predictions and strategies were suitable and useful for completing the task successfully, they know that they can apply them again. If not, good language learners will learn from this, make improvements and think about what they can do differently next time (*ibid.*).

The Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning by Chamot et al.: Classification Overview

THE METACOGNITIVE MODEL OF STRATEGIC LEARNING: CLASSIFICATION OVERVIEW

I Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Setting goals2 Directed attention3 Activating background knowledge4 Predicting5 Organisational planning6 Self-management
II Monitoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Asking if it makes sense2 Selectively attending3 Deduction/induction4 Personalising/contextualising5 Taking notes6 Using imagery7 Manipulating/acting out8 Talking yourself through it (self-talk)9 Cooperating
III Problem Solving	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Inferencing2 Substituting3 Asking questions to clarify4 Using resources
IV Evaluating	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Verifying predictions and guesses2 Summarising3 Checking goals4 Evaluating yourself5 Evaluating your strategies

Figure 5 *The Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning: Classification Overview* (Chamot et al. 1999: 10–29)

CONCLUSION

If we take the two extremes, we can divide learners of a foreign language into two groups (although of course there are also a lot who are somewhere in between): “successful” and “unsuccessful” language learners. This means that there are many learners who enjoy learning foreign languages and meanwhile also experience various benefits of mastering a foreign language, but that there are also those who find language learning frustrating or even impossible to undertake. I believe that knowing how to study languages and which techniques and strategies to use can help reduce or even avoid a great deal of frustration and failure and can help one become a successful learner regardless of previous experience or aptitude.

Bibliography

- Chamot, A. U., S. Barnhardt, P. B. El-Dinary and J. Robbins 1999. *The Learning Strategies Handbook*. Harlow: Pearson Education; Longman.
- Naiman, N., M. Fröhlich, H. Stern and A. Todesco 1978. *The Good Language Learner*. Research Series in Education, 7. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- O'Malley, J. M., A. U. Chamot, G. Stewner-Manzanares, L. Kupper and R. P. Russo 1985a. Learning strategies used by beginning and intermediate ESL students. *Language Learning*, 35 (1): 21–46.
- O'Malley, J. M., A. U. Chamot, G. Stewner-Manzanares, L. Kupper and R. P. Russo 1985b. Learning strategy application with students of English as a second language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19 (3): 557–584.
- Oxford, R. L. 1990. *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Willing, K. 1989. *Teaching How to Learn: Learning Strategies in ESL. A Teachers' Guide*. Sydney: National Centre for English Language and Research, Macquarie University.

The English Book Club at the Ljubljana City Library.

Why Read and Talk About It with Others?

by **Leonora Flis**



Leonora Flis is an Associate Professor of Literature and an English lecturer. Apart from her academic work, she also translates and writes book reviews, essays and short stories. She is the author of the scholarly monograph *Factual Fictions: Contemporary American Documentary Novel* and the collection of short stories *Upogib časa*. She loves travelling, reading, writing and eating delicious food. She is also keen on yoga.

Thinking back to 2013, when I approached the Ljubljana City Library with a proposal for collaboration, I don't think I felt short on possibilities to use my voice for literary purposes, to share and exchange words on books, writers and literature as such. Nor was I deprived of contact with the English language. At that point, I had been teaching for a good 15 years, first English at language schools in Ljubljana and later English and Literature at universities. It is safe to say that engaging in discussing, sharing thoughts and opinions, in particular about literature – as was and still is my

main area of research – had not been an alien concept and experience to me when we kicked off our club meetings. Moreover, my parallel translating path had helped me stay in constant touch with the English language throughout the years. And yet, at that time, I felt a need to reach out to people in a less formal but no less stimulating setting, to discuss exciting new and classic books and their creators with people beyond the circles of my family, friends and students. The main goal was to give myself and potential visitors all possible space and freedom for our evaluations and observations outside the sometimes quite tangible confines of academia and the educational system in general. I also wanted to do something for the community, as "American" as that may sound. The City Library was keen on my literary volunteerism right away and so our monthly meetings began.

In the beginning we would inform people about the next book on the agenda a couple of months in advance, but as we proceeded over the years, we have constructed a much better plan: I now, in collaboration with the club participants and the library, come up with a list of all the books we want to cover in the following year and we publish that in advance. The way I choose the books is simply by picking the ones I have read and loved or

was recommended to read by people I trust to be knowledgeable about quality books. In addition, I have been pretty lucky when it comes to one of my favourite ways of using life experience in a valuable and productive way – i.e. travelling –, and it is precisely during my travels abroad that I get acquainted with interesting reads by visiting bookstores and by talking to people I come in contact with (writers and academics but also random people I meet in cafes and bookshops). Of course, I also consult the lists that literary and other magazines and papers advertise. Furthermore, I pay attention to literary prize nominees and winners, not that that is always a reliable source or proof of the highest quality. Then I collect proposals from our book club members and ask the library to chip in with ideas. The club being a monthly activity, we try not to pick books that are too thick, but we have done some epic ones (length-wise), for sure. Since 2013, we have read and discussed over 50 books written in English by authors from Great Britain, the US, Canada, Australia and other parts of the globe. To mention just a few names on our menu so far, we have read works by Walt Whitman, Truman Capote, Art Spiegelman, Jhumpa Lahiri, Marjane Satrapi, Cormac McCarthy, Donald Barthelme and William Shakespeare. We swing from Romanticism to Postmodernism, back to Elizabe-

than England and into present-day New York. The only condition is that the book originally appears in English. In terms of forms and genres, we have been remarkably versatile: we have read plays, poetry, short story collections, novels, essays, memoirs and graphic novels. On occasion, we even explore the film adaptations of some books, when the library can provide the DVDs, that is.

I am pleased to say that the club has a good few permanent attendees, now familiar faces to me and to each other, which is always enjoyable, but there are also many people who drop in for a session or two. We always welcome our drop-ins, especially when they have actually read the book that is on the list for the chosen month. Then we have those who just come in browsing, so to speak, without having read the book, the onlookers, the silent spectators. We welcome them too, even though it is highly recommended (as well as fair to the group, frankly) that one comes prepared (i.e. that the book has been read and stored in the memory database) or at least has some idea about the chosen text. We have all grown accustomed to those kind of drop-in visits though, and none of us are bothered by them really. Most libraries function as public spaces, and ours is just that at its very core, so the club's mission is to keep its doors open to everyone with an interest in books and reading. Also, the themes that our books depict and unveil are usually so all-encompassing and embedded in our daily lives that one can always have a word or two to say about a certain topic, regardless of whether or not one has actually read the book.

The Ljubljana City Library continues to kindly offer the space for our sessions; they also advertise our club in their monthly events newsletter and their designer has been creating posters for us with key information points for each meeting. Moreover, they purchase several copies of the selected books, so the library members can check them out. I would particularly like to mention Ms Veronika Vurnik Škrabec from the City Library, who has been extremely helpful throughout the entire span of our club sessions. Miro Tržan was instrumental in the early stages of the club creation too. And, of course, thanks to the library's management, who have been supporting us from the start.

In essence, what keeps the club going are great books and keen readers. What has been particularly rewarding to observe and participate in are discussions that develop between people of different ages or even different nationalities, people with different backgrounds and world views. Occasionally, we get a foreign visitor, someone passing through Ljubljana (and noticing the club invite by chance, I assume), or someone from abroad who actually makes their living in our part of the world. We also get visits from Slovenes who live or lived outside Slovenia. All in all, we tend to be a rather diverse group. When it comes to interesting debates, on occasion we have the – probably to a degree predictable – male vs. female perspective “confrontations”, and it can get quite intense, but all in a good way. In the end, we all feel amused and enlightened, I feel.

The club is a space of freedom, of choosing what we want to read and how we want to conduct our sessions. It is also a platform for connecting with people who are interested in discussing books and indeed life in general. It is extremely rewarding to gain new perspectives on things, to see how other people think and react, to compare views and to align them or identify divergence, and to accept our differences. Most importantly, though, the club is essentially about connecting and talking to each other and being in a space where one is not constantly staring down at one's cell phone or some other electronic device but rather looks into other people's faces and openly shares his or her views on a selected fragment of life, as captured in a specific book. People are invited to express whatever they wish to about a chosen book. There is a premise I attempt to follow: I do structure the sessions in advance a bit, meaning I prepare a set of themes and questions that I would like to see discussed, and I normally say a few words about the author as well, but the floor is completely open to any kind of improvisation. The discussion sometimes veers in a completely different direction from what I anticipated, but that is the point of it all, the gist – the freedom and creativity we get to experience during our meetings. Entering the magical world of books and then having the opportunity to share your experiences with others must be one of the best things this life can offer. We just need to make such opportunities happen. We are starting our 6th season this fall and I can't wait for our sessions to reconvene. All are welcome to join, so happy reading!



Pancakes in your lesson?

Hands-on activities for children

by Barbara Bujtás

After nearly two decades outside of the school system, I know that my young and teenage learners don't want to learn English. What they want to do is things like making pancakes, the fastest paper plane, ninja balls, slime, etc.

But if they see the chance to accomplish these stimulating, short-term missions, they are quite ready to do things that help them acquire some English.

Kids these days

Many teachers complain about their younger learners, who are unable to concentrate, get distracted easily, don't respect the teacher or others, give up easily, are too attached to their devices... and other similar concerns.

The kids we teach these days are different. They'll never know the struggle of:

- opening the supermarket door by pushing it with their hands
- standing up to switch channels (between the three available ones)
- rewinding audio cassettes, storing CDs (let alone VHS cassettes)
- waiting to have your photos developed
- not being able to access your favourite cartoons anytime
- not being the target of multiple marketing campaigns and the child entertainment industry
- not having high seats for children in restaurants
- going to your friend's home if you want to connect
- and so on.

Kids these days are growing up with user-friendly design (automatic glass doors vs push/pull signs and handles); they are used and entertained by marketers; they are given smart devices at an early age. These devices have apps that get them hooked by sophisticated methods that trigger feel-good hormones, all because of the harsh competition. And then, in this dopamine economy, we want them to be engaged by the daily routine of a random teen from Edinburgh? (An example from a widely used coursebook.) Really? Are we really so disappointed because not all of them like the Taylor Swift song we built our lesson on? Curious why they aren't motivated by cortisol-producing exams when they otherwise bathe in endorphins in their own lives?

Personally, I have concluded that if I want to make a living as a small-town private teacher, I should be aware of and listen to what my young and teen learners are exposed to in their everyday lives, what catches their attention, and then make a compromise. The key is using tangible and inspiring topics, bite-size challenges and instant gratification, keeping in mind **what is good in it for them**, and right now that is not a specific grammatical structure, but rather something that triggers a good feeling. This age of transition forces us to make compromises that fit our own teaching context.

So here's my recipe (which roots in DOGME, project-based and experiential learning) shown through a "pancake art" project:

1. Find something the mention of which causes an instant rush of dopamine in your learners' brain (=good feeling); don't mention tests (=bad feeling). My example? PANCAKES!
2. Once you have the good-feeling word, understand that the goal for them now is to MAKE pancakes. You may choose to make pancakes in an English class or not – it doesn't matter once they are hooked.
3. Make sure you can give them INPUT (written text or video: receptive skills) and LANGUAGE PROCESSING activities like text manipulation or reconstruction (I never use out-of-context activities) and provide opportunities for them to create OUTPUT (written or spoken language: productive skills).

Warm up:

I use a short quiz with the pancake project:

How often do you eat pancakes?

- a) Every day.
- b) Every week.
- c) At weekends.
- d) Once a month.
- e) Never.
- f) Other: _____

Where do you eat them?

- a) At home in the dining room/kitchen/my room/the living room/the garden
- b) In the school canteen.
- c) At the beach.
- d) In a restaurant.
- e) At my grandma's place.
- f) Other: _____

Who makes your pancakes?

- a) My mom/dad/brother/sister/granny.
- b) I make pancakes myself.
- c) At chef at the restaurant/canteen.
- d) Other: _____

What do you eat them with?

- a) Jam
- b) Nutella.
- c) Syrup.
- d) Cottage cheese.
- e) Chocolate.
- f) Other: _____

What are the ideal pancakes like?

- | | |
|--------|-------|
| big | small |
| thick | thin |
| crispy | soft |
| light | dark |
| dry | oily |

- f) Other: _____

I then show them the Ramsay version and ask them to read the script.

Then I ask a few questions:

- Would you like it or dislike it on YouTube?
- What comment would you add?

We watch a video about how pancake art is done. <https://youtu.be/Lq2vwGzhVmA>



I tell them they are going to see a Gordon Ramsay video, but before that, they have a challenge: to order the lines of a traditional pancake/crepe recipe.

- a) Remove the pancake when the other side is nice and brown too.
- b) When one side is nice and brown, flip your pancake.
- c) Pour the batter in the pan or on the griddle. Fry the pancake for about a minute.
- d) Mix flour, sugar, salt, milk, eggs in a blender. If you want fluffy pancakes, you can add baking powder. The mixture is called batter.
- e) Put some oil in a pan or spread some on a tabletop griddle and heat it.

1 - d

2 - ...

3 - ...

4 - ...

5 - ...

They can just do the quiz to get in the mood, or a level-up might be to share "pancake monologues", based on the quiz, with others in pairs or small groups.

Input:

I show them a short pancake art video or let them find one on Instagram.

Once they have an idea, I ask them if

- they like it,
 - they could make pancake art,
 - they want to try it.
- (The answer is always yes!)

An example video:

https://youtu.be/60iwenuj_0U





Processing:

Vocabulary:

Authentic texts (videos) are always a challenge, so I usually collect unknown vocabulary in Quizlet and later they can play with the words. You could always pre-teach some words and phrases based on your students' level, of course.

Structure:

I turn the texts into

- disappearing text (memorizenow.com)
- a cloze activity
- scrambled letters or words (<http://www.altastic.com/scramblinator/>)

We don't go further than manipulating and reconstructing the given text.

Output:

In the example of the pancake art project, the handiest output is making a (show and tell) cooking video. If you want to do it in class, you need squeeze bottles (or alternatively zip-lock bags with a corner cut) and a tabletop griddle. You could also ask them to make their videos at home.

Monster challenge:

Make three piles of cards, one group describing eyes, one noses, one mouths. A learner or group picks a card from each pile and draws a pancake monster according to the descriptions.

Magic pancake design:

Ask people (the students in class, their parents or other teachers) to order magic pancakes from you. These pancakes are magical because they can make dreams come true. The "designers" only need to know what dream the "customer" wants and what their colour preferences are.

Your learners then make a video or write the instructions of how to make the pancake they have designed for a specific "customer" to make their dream come true.

Shifting from the "I'm going to teach you English; you just do what I say" approach to the "believe me, it's going to be fun" type of lesson has led to measurable results in my practice.

My learners *want* to come to the English class. Having clear and short-term objectives using relevant topics makes it easier for them to make the necessary effort to pick up language in our digital-infused modern world.

Critical thinking at a glance (2)

Case Study: Letter Boxes or Litter Bins?

Nada Đukić

One can find critical thinking at work in any human interaction. Let's take a look at a recent incident connected to a 'slip of the tongue' by a UK Member of Parliament, for example. He claimed that women in burkas made him think of letter boxes or bank robbers. After he turned up in a light sweater with the inscription 'Xchanging' and floral shorts to offer tea to journalists who wanted him to give a statement regarding his previous claim, he did not make a comment. But they did by making captions with questions such as whether he should be allowed to walk around looking like a litter bin!

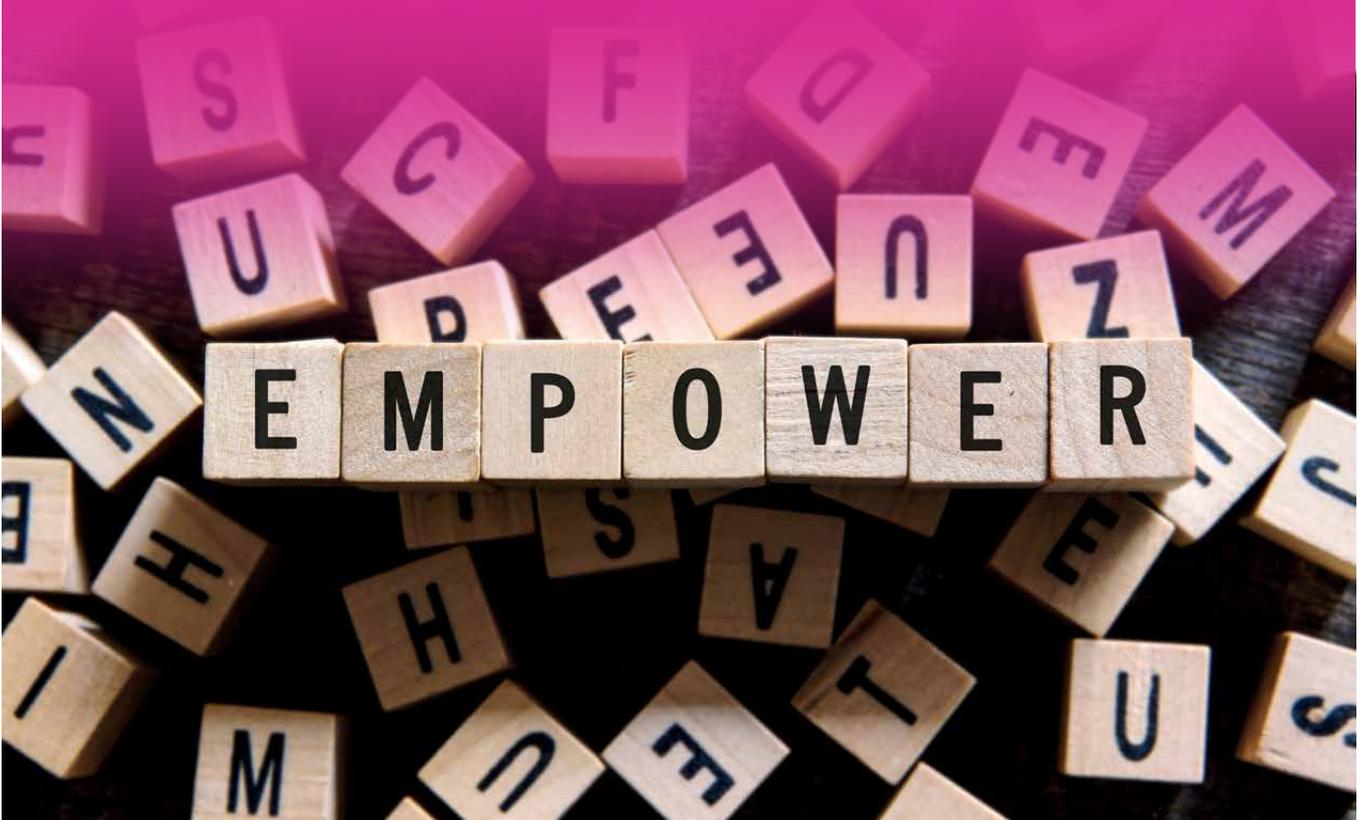
26th

International *IATEFL Slovenia* Conference 2019

#empowerED

Our next conference aims to empower everybody in education, but especially women. Therefore, we bring you an all-female selection of fantastic plenary speakers.

With Lynda Steyne, Sophia Mavridi, Mojca Belak and others to be confirmed.



The internship exchange student – More than just a language assistant

by **Andreja Wastl Petrič**, prof. ang., OŠ Cvetko Golar, Škofja Loka

Born in Črna na Koroškem on 30 November 1952. Andreja completed elementary school (1967) and high school (1971) in Škofja Loka. She graduated from the University of Ljubljana, Department of Architecture and Engineering in 1977. After finishing PIAOŠ, she graduated from the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, in English Language and Literature (2008). She worked for 10 years as an architect with renowned Slovenian architect Savin Sever, and also worked for graphic and architectural design company Chanic Design in Nicosia, Cyprus. She also taught adults for two years.

A couple of years ago our school (Cvetko Golar elementary school in Škofja Loka) had its first international exchange organised by AIESEC – the International Platform for Young People to Explore and Develop Their Leadership Potentials – through its branch in Kranj. Our contact there was Ms Helena Nevisić, Vice-President of Incoming Exchange.

The procedure was not exactly straightforward, because at first we wanted an exchange student who would preferably be a native speaker of English to offer as much language authenticity to our children as possible. None of the available students were, which meant the placement at our school had not gone through in the previous year.

After careful consideration and going through all applicants' credentials the following year, we decided on Mr Othmane Saoudi, a Master's student of English and English literature at the State University of Tunisia. He was to come to our school for seven weeks and I was to be his mentor.

We were told that he is a Muslim and I found it brilliant that my students would have a chance to meet somebody from an entirely different religious background and find out first-hand that being of different religious belief does not automatically mean you are an enemy or a terrorist.

Our school is located in a rather conservative environment, Catholic in overwhelming majority, and some of my colleagues strongly advised me against inviting him. "We could have a negative reaction from the parents and the community in general. It is not the right thing to do. Muslims are, you know, rather..." would be a typical comment.

But I believe that we are not only teachers of school subjects: we are more than that – we are educators. And the most we can do for our pupils in these precarious times when intolerance, social discrimination, impatience towards immigrants and lack of empathy are growing at an alarming rate day by day is to help them to come to know „the different“, to learn to coexist with it, tolerate it and grow to accept it, so I was really exhilarated when Othmane decided to join us.

This was the first time that our school had decided to work with a foreign stu-

dent, and we were not quite sure what to expect. I was designated to make his stay at our school a pleasant one, to lay out a plan for his first week and to help him manage the rest of the time he was supposed to stay with us. There are five English teachers at our school, and together we decided that he would mostly be present at our English lessons. He would also have to prepare a few lessons for 8th and 9th graders himself, to gradually shift his thinking from the focus of being an English student into becoming a successful future English teacher.

Othmane was to have most of his lessons with the older students at first. For a start, we agreed on him covering a brief history of Tunisia, its famous tourist destinations and a bit of geography. Later he talked about Islam as the primary religion in Tunisia (where it is practised by 98% of the population). In the following lessons we addressed stereotypes about Africans, typical food of his country, a typical day in a Tunisian family, the status of women in Tunisian society (which was explicitly asked by my students), his views on marriage, realistic possibilities for his sister's career (she is a student of Interpretation of Quran Suras), and how he perceives the future of his country. He speaks French, Arabic and English and, much to the students' delight, wrote something in Arabic to each of them.

His country is very different to what our students are familiar with, so it was extremely interesting for them to discuss these topics with him, especially because Tunisia was very active in the "Arab Spring" a few years prior.

We also managed to organise some really appealing lessons for younger students, who by the end of his stay practically fought for his presence in their classrooms. He showed a great deal of understanding and skill to adjust to the constantly changing classroom situations, and I believe that he benefited from this experience, which will surely help him in his future teaching career. He would also help out with various sports and even went to Planica with them and saw snow for the first time! The enthusiasm of working together, I believe, was mutual.

AIESEC also organised the project "Global Village" at our school, in which five internship exchange students – Othmane and four others from Japan, Russia, Chile and Brazil – prepared captivating presentations about themselves and their respective countries to our 8th and 9th graders, who could then participate in a debate.

The idea behind the exchange was giving our students a chance to communicate with somebody who has no knowledge of their own language and to see how much they have learned so far. It's important for them to understand that for successful interaction you do not have to know every single word: you have to develop strategies to learn how to get the gist of what a foreigner is trying to convey to you. By giving our students the opportunity to meet people from other countries, we give them a chance to grow into future intellectuals who will respect and cherish their own background while at the same time accepting people who might not share their views or ideas. Be pluralistic, be tolerant, be secular... I think Othmane's visit was a nice starting point on our path to achieving that.

Othmane fulfilled all our expectations and more. He fitted into our environment beautifully and proved all my colleagues wrong. Eventually, when his stay in Slovenia came to a close, we were all a little bit sad that our ways had to part.

This is his letter to me:

Hello Andreja,
I am really glad to hear from you again, and I will never forget what you did for me when I was in Slovenia so I will never get bothered when we discuss any kind of topics.

Of course it's highly recommended for our kids to meet different people from all walks of life and from different cultural and religious background, I believe that being aware of these diverse ways of thinking gives our kids and teenagers a sense of multiculturalism and immunity against radicalism. As you may have noticed all those teenagers who have been brainwashed by different radical groups regardless of their religious belonging were first of all victims of the lack of plurality in their lives. They were convinced that they should not deal and coexist with the different other, and that the other is a source of threat and not of enrichment.

Thus, I think that the peaceful coexistence can be achieved only if we really know each other and discover our differences and learn how to live with it. I noticed that you are doing such a great job in order to accomplish this goal in Slovenia, and I was amazed how your kids are respectful and polite even when it comes to things that do not interest them, they always show respect and behave with manners. I am not saying this because I am talking to you dear Andreja; I've been saying it from the moment I come back to Tunisia.

My experience in Slovenia is by all means an unforgettable trip, it changed my perception of many things; my perception of myself, my capacities and my dreams as well. It altered the way I viewed Eastern Europe in general, because we, as Arab world, we tend to think that Europe is the western part and the other countries are blind flowers, now I no longer think so.

Looking forward to hearing from you, dear Andreja;
from Tunisia with Love, dear Sister ;)



Quran booklet that Othmane got from his father and which he gave me as a token of his appreciation. How lovely was that!

Advanced NLP Course at Pilgrims

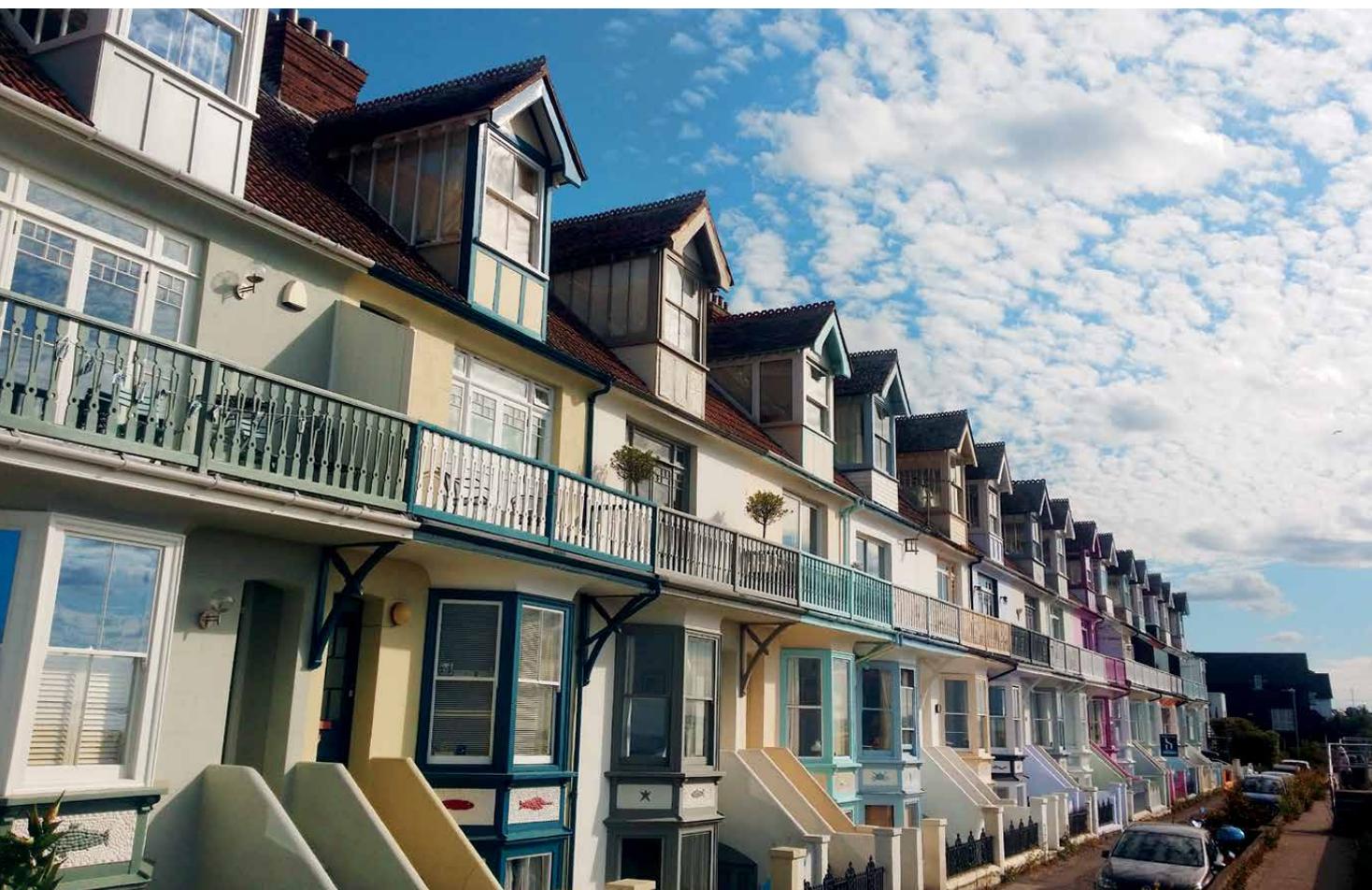
by **Mojca Šterk**, OŠ Cerklje ob Krki

On 5 August I stepped into the classroom at Northwallis North West University to meet my teacher Mike Shreeve and my new schoolfriends. Choosing the Advanced NLP course was probably one of the best decisions of my life, and Mike is probably the best teacher I've ever met. We started every session with music of our choice, with dancing and chatting. We learned a lot about how to achieve our inner potentials through motivation, determination, hard work and changing perceptions. NLP is basically deprogramming the brain through a certain set of skills and attitude. It's all about trial

and error. We studied the coaching model in detail: establishing rapport, getting the diagnosis, changing the state and follow-up action. We practised a number of techniques which help us in the process: the metamodel, "clean language", an inner voice technique, a self-rapport technique, a Disney plan, high-performance games and many more. We even learned to listen to our unconscious mind. At the end of our two-week course we also coached fellow teachers from the other group, and this went pretty well. Coaching, in a nutshell, is mainly listening and encouraging the coachee, being support-

ive and non-judgmental, but not giving any suggestions, which is not always easy.

The best learning technique is modelling (learning from the best), so our teacher Mike took us for a tennis lesson, where we learned some basics, we learned some Tai chi and a Bollywood dance from a professional dancer, plus we hosted two professional NLP coaches from England and France. But having Mario Rinvoluceri in session was probably the most memorable thing, as he's widely regarded as one of the best English teachers ever, and rightfully so. We



discussed his techniques in detail, and I'll definitely be using some of his methods in my classes.

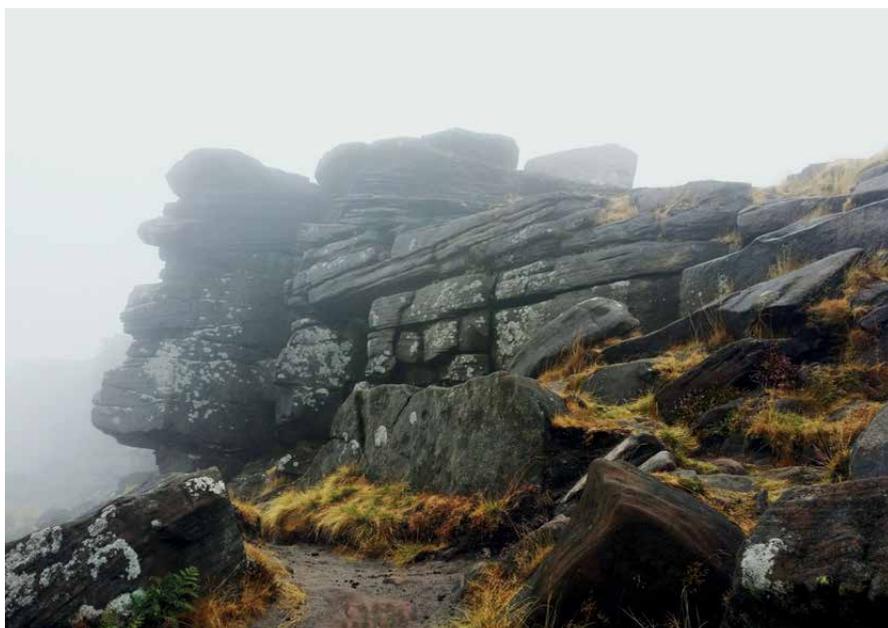
Many of the techniques I learned can be used in every area of life, both professional and personal. I've already decided to start every lesson with a song and an alphabet game to get the pupils into a high-performance state so they can learn more. But equally valuable is using the techniques in personal relationships with a difficult colleague/boss, for example. Now I definitely feel empowered to go with the flow of real life, with more inner peace, strength, wisdom and gratitude.

Apart from learning a lot in class, we also became great friends, not just in our group but with many others who were also staying in the Parkwood residence, where we hung out together or from where we could stroll downtown to the centre of Canterbury. I also enjoyed our trips to the beach at Whitstable, where we also had our final dinner while watching the sunset. We really got to know the teachers too: they were all so approachable and supportive, especially Mike. He's one of a kind, and we all had tears in our eyes on our last session.

I used the weekend off for a trip to the Midlands, where I met an old friend and did some hiking in the Peak District, walking around Jane Austen country, breathing in every single experience. I met a great new friend on the way, too. Of course, I started and finished my trip in London, where I met up with another old friend. Let's just say that my heart is full of happiness and gratitude for this magical time in England.

So, IATEFL Slovenia, thank you for enabling me the most wonderful experience of my life. I would highly recommend the Pilgrims course to everyone who wants to grow both professionally and personally, the two being strongly intertwined at Pilgrims.

Just remember to write down your thoughts, clear your mind daily, draw energy from your anchors (whether they be nature, music or whatever), and be grateful for everything you have and for who you are. If you don't like something about yourself, why not change it? Everything is possible!



Using eTwinning in KA2 School-To-School Partnerships

by **Zorica Kozelj**, prof. ang.
OŠ Cvetko Golar, Škofja Loka

eTwinning is part of Erasmus+, the European programme for education, training, youth and sport. Its aim is to promote and facilitate contact, exchange of ideas and collaborative work between teachers and students of the countries participating in eTwinning, this through ICTs.

Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, defines eTwinning as the world's biggest teachers' network, with approximately 450,000 members across the European Union and a mission to run joint projects and link teachers and pupils from different countries and backgrounds.

From 29 August to 1 September 2018, I attended the contact seminar in Prague titled "Using eTwinning in KA2 School-To-School Partnerships" (my travel

costs were covered by the Slovenian national agency CMEPIUS). The working language for the 50 participants from 18 European countries was English. The target group of participants was teachers in secondary education (age of pupils 12–19). All the participants should be interested in learning about eTwinning and pre-existing knowledge was not necessary, though the teachers had to be registered on the eTwinning platform.

The contact seminar was hosted by the Czech National Agency and its main goals were to promote synergies between Erasmus+ and eTwinning, inspire teachers into using the portal for communication and collaboration in Erasmus+ KA2 projects, and help create networks among teachers involved in international projects.

During the seminars eTwinning as a portal for communication and collaboration in E+ School Exchange Partnerships projects was introduced to the participants and they were offered the opportunity to meet with eTwinning users. Meanwhile the eTwinning participants were given the opportunity to learn about the Erasmus+ programme, especially about possibilities in the KA2 School Exchange Partnerships projects. We took an active part in the seminar, became familiar with eTwinning and its possibilities in KA2 projects, and made contacts with teachers from other countries in order to find partners for KA2 project with the help of eTwinning.

We were introduced to practical examples of cooperation and starting new projects following some **Golden Rules**:

KISS – Keep it short and simple

Exchange as many addresses as possible. This way, you have a lot of ways to get and stay in touch with your partner.

Always reply to messages!

Silence is fatal for collaborative project work. You'll always ask yourself if a message has been received by your partner or not. So even if you don't have time enough to respond in detail, at least reply to say that you've received the message and that you'll reply in full as soon as possible.

Be aware of cultural differences

Even though we all live in Europe, there are still differences between countries, especially cultural differences.

Erasmus+ and/or eTwinning?

29. 8. 2018

Using eTwinning in Erasmus+ KA2 Projects



Netiquette

Bear in mind that written messages can have a different impact on readers than spoken words. Your partner cannot see you or your body language and cannot hear the tone of your voice. If you're puzzled about a message, or in some cases even offended, don't react right away. Sleep on it and look at it again the next day with a fresh pair of eyes to avoid a possible misunderstanding.

Set deadlines and keep to them

Trust must grow and that takes time. So take your time, but also be trustworthy. Set feasible deadlines and stick to them. If you foresee that you cannot meet a deadline, inform the other(s) about this as soon as possible.

Agree on the tools to be used

This is also part of being as clear as possible with your partner to avoid mi-

sunderstandings and frustrations. For example, there's no use trying to set up a web conference if your partner doesn't have webcams and/or a suitable internet connection.

Invest time and energy to understand each other

As stated above, you need time to get to know each other. Trust and mutual understanding must grow. Sometimes this happens easily, other times it takes time, but in the end it is always worthwhile. Mutual trust is the basis of your cooperation.

Don't be afraid to ask!

As we often tell our pupils, "there are no stupid questions". So if you are not sure about something, just ask. Questions provide answers. Answers make for understanding.

One of the most valuable experiences for me was being introduced to how to create and use My TwinSpace in the framework of eTwinning.

TwinSpace is a platform for schools to work together on their projects. Each project has its own private TwinSpace. TwinSpace offers a number of tools for collaboration and communication, including a private chat room, a mailbox, forums and a calendar. The project can also store materials in folders and other filing systems and use TwinSpace to exchange information between teachers and pupils. Project partners are automatically TwinSpace administrators, while pupils, teachers and colleagues can then be invited to become members of the TwinSpace group.

Participants from different countries were asked to create and present a model project on the My TwinSpace portal using various tools as an example of potential future collaboration between European schools.



Senses – Good for the SO(u)L

Experiences of a teacher training course with Fiona Mauchline and Mark Andrews in Devon, August 2018

by Irena Sonc

My story: In winter 2018 my mother passed away. She was the one who encouraged me the most to become a teacher despite the fact that a teacher's wage does not provide for a family easily. It's the noblest profession and it keeps you young, she would say. So, despite the grief, I went to the annual IATEFL conference in Topolšica. As all five times before, I bought my raffle tickets, but this time honestly hoping I'd finally get the first prize – a teacher training course in Devon. And I did. **Lesson number one:** be careful what you wish for.

The course: SOL is a non-profit organisation and registered UK charity set up in 1991 by Grenville Yeo. Their headquarters are in Barnstaple, Devon, but they also run courses for students and teachers in Bideford and Tiverton and in many Central and Eastern European countries, which are the main focus of the organisation's mission.

The teacher training course in Devon started this year on 5 August and its full title was "ELT Language Sights, Sounds and Stories – A Real Taste of Devon". The course was led by Mark Andrews and Fiona Mauchline. The executive director and the two teacher trainers met 38 teachers from 15 countries at the Heathrow terminal on Sunday at noon. We boarded a coach and drove for a

good five hours to Barnstaple, where we met our host families. For the next five days we mostly travelled around: exploring Barnstaple in groups, then coach trips to Woolacombe and Ilfracombe beaches (day 1), the Tarka Trail Walk and the alms houses in Barnstaple (day 2), walking or strolling in Croyde Bay or Bideford and the maritime village of Appledore (day 3), CLIL day in Lynton and Lynmouth and the Valley of Rocks (day 4), a visit to the private village of Clovelly and a concert in Westward Ho! (day 5). We spent less than three hours in the classroom listening to the theoretical background of the course. And on the sixth day we were on our own.

The idea: On the fifth day, after a wonderful concert by a local guitarist and a Polish flautist in Westward Ho!, we were instructed to make groups of 6–7 people from different countries. Each group was given money for three days of travelling on their own with the tasks of 1) collecting ideas and materials for three classroom activities the group has come up with and agreed on and 2) observing and discussing the group dynamics in order to self-evaluate the learning experience.

Fortunately, our group of English teachers was quite diverse in age, so the youngest quickly created our SOL group



Day 3 - Bideford (rain made us sit in a cafe and from across the street I could see Slovenian products sold on a street with SOL CEO's name and our teacher trainer Mark)

on social media so we could not only communicate outside scheduled course time about what we were doing and which museums were closed, but our trainers could also fill us in on the literature and strategies behind this kind of course, and, most importantly, we could share stories, reflections, pictures and strategies. And keep in touch we did!

The titles Mark Andrews shared in our social media group as the inspiration behind the SOL teacher training course tell the story of the courses themselves: *Classroom Decision-Making Negotiation and Process Syllabuses in Practice*, edited by Michael P. Breen and Andrew Littlejohn, CUP; *Learning Outside the Classroom: Theory and Guidelines for Practice* by Simon Beanes, Peter Higgins and Robbie Nicol, Routledge; *Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom* by Zoltán Dörnyei and Tim Murphey, CUP; and *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* by Donald A. Schön.

I suppose I'll have to read them all to be able to decide whether learning from reflecting on experience works better for me than learning from books (like we teach our students).

So how did we do?

We needed to decide as a group on how we were going to spend the next three days. Where could we go to find materials for our classes, to find the inspiration for activities and to observe and reflect upon our group decisions? We decided pretty quickly to stay in Barnstaple for a day and made a reservation at the local escape room "Down the Rabbit Hole" for some team-building. After we'd escaped, we had one of the best discussions on our group dynamics. We compared our enthusiasm the day before, when we'd first worked as a group with the rainy experience of a morning walk around Barnstaple's pannier market and the local pop-up museum, collecting materials accompanied by Fiona Mauchline, and the success of escaping at the "Down the Rabbit Hole". We decided to spend the next group work day in Exeter, the closest university city, where we could collect more pictures, jokes and experiences, and then on the last day we stayed in our (by then already almost)

PUNCH THE JOKER

LEVEL: B1 - C2
OBJECTIVE: to raise cultural awareness; to raise awareness of different UK accents/dialects
PROCEDURE:
 * tell the Ss they are going to listen to a joke and ask them if they know any jokes in English or L1; Ss tell their jokes
 * preteach the vocabulary
 * play the first part of the joke (set-up) and pause before the end (punchline)
 * ask the Ss for their ideas about the punchline
 * play the punchline so that Ss can compare

FOLLOW-UP:
 Ask the Ss to translate the joke

KNOCK, KNOCK

LEVEL: A1 - C2
OBJECTIVE: develop/improve visual literacy and speaking/writing skills, to provide the opportunity for critical thinking
PROCEDURE:
 * start with a knock-knock joke, then ask your Ss to describe their own door (of the house/room)
 * tell Ss they will look at some typical British doors and discuss them
 * put the Ss into pairs and give them the photos faced down; each pair chooses one
 * explain they need to describe the photo and imagine and discuss who are the people living inside and/or what the interior is like
 * Ss present their ideas to the class

FOLLOW-UP/ACTIVITY: ask the Ss to write the description for homework

WHAT IF... ?

LEVEL: A2 - B2
OBJECTIVE: to provide opportunity for critical thinking and creativity
PROCEDURE: * divide Ss into groups and give them a flipchart paper; explain they need to come up with a 'what if' question they want to explore, e.g. 'What if we had no senses?' 'What if we change into an animal for a day?'
 * the groups write a question in the middle of the paper and then WRITE/DRAW their ideas
 * each group presents its poster

NOTE: You can use this activity to revise/practice a range of grammar forms (if-clauses; Present Simple, Past Simple, Future...)

hometown and prepared our reflections and posters for our presentation.

On the last day of the course each group had a ten-minute presentation of their suggestions for activities and group-dynamics observations. Then the last ac-

tivity Fiona and Mark asked us to do was to paste a piece of paper on everybody's back and let everyone write on your back about the best traits they'd got to see in you in the past 12 days. Intense and fun and surely a take-away activity for a variety of classes.

We were given another gift after we'd all settled in back home: Fiona sent us each a copy of the book of poems she'd created from our lines of poetry inspired by the walks in North Devon that we'd had to write as homework one day. A treasure to keep and a springboard for more reflection.

Experiential learning – What did I learn?

The random bits of wisdom taken from my course journal include:

- Reflection takes time – our group spent half the time discussing what we did and I don't regret a minute of it.
- Do not presume people are following you when it's raining.
- Humour enables us to relate to strangers (at least in England).
- Cream tea is not like "The Lemon Next to the Pie" (the actual name of the cafe where we sat with the group on our first day in Barnstaple and an intriguing surfing expression taken from the 1978 movie *The Big Wednesday*, meaning something bigger is coming next).
- In Devon, when the relentless sunshine gets replaced by "mizzle", everybody is calm – mizzle is a compound of "drizzle" and "mist".

Learning from each other, away from a traditional lecture setting, can take place in all sorts of places – pubs, streets, trails, cliffs, beaches... And my sincerest hope is that wherever the learning starts, it always ends in our becoming better people. Do my lectures make my students better people? That makes me wonder.

So I am very grateful to IATEFL Slovenia for organising the raffle, and I hope one day I'll be able to thank SOL for immersing me in experiential learning. Maybe I could even take a group of students to one of their courses, that is if I persist in a state school setting, which, after the experience in Devon, I have to admit feels even more constraining, hence the first lesson: "be careful what you wish for".



Day 5 - Westward Ho! - the real work begins



Day 6 - team building



Day 10 - Fiona's Using images in classroom

SOL observational course

by Maja Štekovič

Saturday evening in Topolšica. There was an air of excitement before the raffle, yet I felt strangely calm. Probably because of the massage I'd had after my afternoon presentation! My head was almost clear, except for the thought "don't expect anything, be ready for everything" that occasionally crossed my mind. We were ready to roll. The Tesla tablet goes to... Maja Štekovič. A crazy idea popped into my head: "Wouldn't it be nice to go to England now that I have won the tablet and have a perfect chance to use it?" Only a few seconds later, Grenville and Sandra called my name again! I'd won an observational course in Devon aimed at learning about culture and methodology, observing foreign students' English classes, and exploring possibilities for future cooperation with SOL.

I spent ten amazing days in Bideford, a small town in Devon. The classes normally started at 8.45 and ran till 12.15, after which the group of Hungarian students went on their daily excursions. Both teachers, Paul and Ali, demonstrated an insurmountable level of energy and enthusiasm during their lessons. It took them only a couple of days to learn all 29 Hungarian names, which definitely contributed to more personalised lessons. Most of the Hungarian students had never travelled to the UK before, but they needed only a few lessons before they'd immersed themselves into the English culture, happily using the target language with the British people they met on numerous excursions (the ones to Tintagel, Torbay, Woolacombe and Ilfracombe, and Lynton and Lynmouth are especially recommended!). I noticed that the students were soon radiating their newfound confidence. Even though they'd

come to Devon as a monolingual group, staying with English families and taking part in various activities had provided them with plenty of opportunity to actively engage with the local inhabitants.

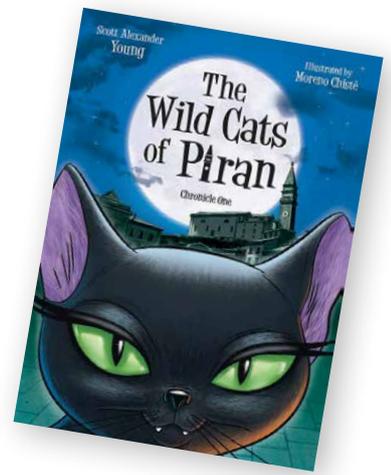
The beauty of attending SOL courses lies in the director's and team's willingness and flexibility to offer tailor-made courses that cater to the language needs of students attending vocational education and training. As an English teacher working at a vocational school, I'd been struggling to find a suitable language course at a reasonable price that would be appealing to our students. But having the privilege to observe lessons at SOL and to attend the above-mentioned excursions made me think more optimistically about the possibility of taking Slovenian VET students to the UK: both director Grenville Yeo and course manager Kirsty seemed enthusiastic about the idea of incorporating ESP in their future courses and giving over parts of lessons to focusing on the students' subject area. VET students, as much as others or even more so, need a sound knowledge of the English language to be able to follow global changes in the sector and to start considering the possibility of entering the foreign market at a young age.

My stay in Devon was not my first visit to the UK, but attending SOL's observational course and learning about the region's geography and culture was definitely the most English experience I have ever had! So, fellow English teachers, take your students, especially those enrolled in vocational secondary schools, to Devon and see their confidence grow when it comes to using the English language.



The Wild Cats of Piran

by Scott Alexander Young,
Illustrated by Moreno Chisté,
Young Europe Books, 2014



by Mojca Belak

I found it in the library in Lucija, a tiny book of 117 pages written by a native speaker of English. I was quite flattered to see Piran become the setting of a cat book for young Europeans. But that was only until I started reading it. On page 9 I got pretty cross, on page 28 I wanted to stop reading altogether because it was just too annoying. But I read on, or else I wouldn't have been able to write about it.

New Europe Books is a series that, as the text on their website says, “seeks books that speak to global concerns, expand cross-cultural understanding, and explore history in new ways”. There is more: “**New Europe Books** authors come from Europe (whether natives or expats) and beyond. What matters is that they write authoritatively, absorbingly, and beautifully about Europe or through a European lens in a way that engages readers globally” (<https://www.neweuropebooks.com/about-us/>). Well, not quite.

Piran is introduced as “a sleepy town on the coastline of Istria, which is possibly a place you have never heard of”, and, according to the author, not knowing Piran is “perfectly all right”. After all, it lies within Slovenia, “another place you might not be very familiar with”. Just to draw a comparison, not many people have heard of Whitstable either, but this doesn't mean that the English seaside resort in north Kent would be introduced anywhere as a place it's

okay not to know. But then Whitstable is in the UK, and Piran is not. There are other European towns and cities mentioned in the book, but no other has this don't-worry-if-you-don't-know-it attitude attached to it.

The main heroes are five stray cats that live in Piran. Felicia, their leader, comes from Italy. Her friend, guard and helper is Dragan, a large and muscular Slovenian cat. You guessed he was Slovenian straight away, didn't you. The next feline hero is Magyar. Now, “as you may know, *Magyar* is simply another way of saying *Hungarian*”, explains the author and then gives something close to the pronunciation of the name. Dragan, by comparison, was given neither the explanation nor the pronunciation of his Serbian/Croatian name. Beautiful white kitten Beyza is a Turkish Angora cat with a corresponding Turkish name. The last cat, the one who is supposed to be a snob, is Leopold. He comes from Vienna and, apart from Cat, speaks a few human languages as well as Dog and Rat. Quite a useful chap is Leopold, particularly when cats have to understand rats in order to avoid a major battle. Unlike Young, the author, Leopold would be entitled to celebrate the European Day of Languages: when he says something in German (*Guten morgen*), this is promptly translated as “good morning”. Similarly, when Felicia speaks Italian – her Italian sentences or phrases are scattered all over the text – this, too, is translated into English. The author main-

ly gets it right, apart from claiming that *Che bravo* means “how beautiful”. It doesn't. There's also a Slovenian word in the book, something that Dragan the Slovenian cat says, and this is *Dobry!*, which, according to the author, in Human Slovenian means “great”. *Dobry*, a Slovenian word? Has the letter Y been added to the Slovenian alphabet while I was not looking? A quick check on Google Translate shows that *Dobry* means “good”, not “great”, and that the language is Slovak, not Slovenian. But then the language the author mentioned is one of those Slovene-Slovak-Slavonic languages that a young European reader may not be aware exist, which is probably also all right. Never mind us Slovenians. We apologise for existing and spoiling the flow of narration with our funny language. Funny? Read on.

Besides cats, rats and a dog, there are a few people who appear or are mentioned in the book, among them three Slovenians: Fisko, a sadistic teenage animal torturer, his kind sister Ivana and Katya Marinovic (yes, spelt with a Y and a C), a girl Fisko has a crush on. Apart from Fisko, another animal killer is a French cook called Gaston, who sometimes throws a rat in his *ratatouille*, while Fortuna, an Italian woman, is a cat lover, and Zach and Niki are two young cat-loving Londoners. It seems as if a pattern is beginning to emerge here. But don't get alarmed just yet, my good Slovenian reader: the book has much more in store for us.

The movements of the cats, rats and humans around Piran are, geographically speaking, nitpickingly correct. They needn't have been, but they are. The street names, however, are a different matter. It all starts with *Piazza Tartini*, which could easily be called Tartini Square if *Tartinijev trg* might grate too much on young European ears, ignorant of Slovenian. Later something happens in *May 1 Piazza*. We call it *Trg 1. maja*, but, as I have already said, never mind us Slovenians. Despite all the struggle to keep our mother tongue alive during the not so ancient history of the Slovenian coastal region, almost all the streets and squares in a Slovenian town mentioned in this book are referred to in their Italian versions. It is true, of course, that Piran is located in an area which is bilingual, but surely this does not mean that the language of the country that Piran belongs to should be ignored. Well, it isn't completely ignored, to be fair: it is either twisted beyond recognition or it is laughed at. On page 30, for example, the author mentions Rozmanova Lane and Gorianova Lane (*Rozmanova ulica* and *Gortanova ulica*, so possibly Rozman and Gortan – not Gorian – Lanes), and mockingly adds in brackets: "Yes, aren't they marvellous names?" Maybe they really do present a mouthful for the author, who is a New Zealander, but how come that when the Hungarian cat exclaims Üdvözöljük! ("Welcome!"), Scott Alexander Young doesn't bat an eye? In the book there's no indication that Hungarian words could also be mockingly "marvellous" in the sense that the author describes Slovenian. There is also not much knowledge about how Slovenian place names are translated into English. Whenever the author mentions Slovenian, the language is dealt with superficially, as if it didn't matter much. One more example? At some point in the book Felicia runs away in the direction of Ribiski (Fish) Lane. *Ribiski* what? *Ribiška*, not *ribiški*, and not at all Fish Lane, *Ribja ulica*. Why isn't this one in Italian then? *Via dei pescatori*, anyone? If the author couldn't find out from its Slovenian name that the lane is dedicated to fishermen, not fish, he could have checked the Italian version. After all, he seems to be quite fond of Italian, or else he wouldn't have used it so much in the book. Having said all this, I can therefore conclude that imagination may well be

one of Young's strong points, but consistency isn't. Neither is respect for the language and history of a nation that is proud to call Piran its own.

Come to think of it, I guess we should be grateful that Piran is used in its Slovenian version at all, because there's one more seaside town mentioned in the book, with its Slovenian name completely ignored: *Portorose*. Portorož would probably give the reader a headache with its Ž at the end. No, nothing should upset reading and learning about the diversity of the old continent. Still, when I got to page 67, I was delighted to finally find *Benečanka*, the well-known house on Tartinijev trg, built in Venetian style, written in Slovenian, and with the letter Č, too. I'd had to wait long enough for it, though

By now I have mentioned that Scott Alexander Young, who claims to visit Piran at least once a year, insulted Slovenians by representing us by the cruellest character in the book, by giving Slovenians names that are not really Slovenian (Dragan, Katya Marinovic), by using Italian names for the streets of a Slovenian town, and by twisting our geographical names and laughing at them. So what's still missing? An attack on a national hero would do nicely, wouldn't it? Even here the author of *The Wild Cats of Piran* does not disappoint and dedicates a few paragraphs to "Martin Kirpan", a Slovenian national hero. *Kirpan* and not *Krpan*? Does it look better written down with the letter I squeezed between the first two consonants, making it a marginally more pronounceable to a non-Slovenian? The eager reader learns that Kirpan's strength is all in his muscles, while his brains are not mentioned at all. That bit would probably not sit well with the author's idea of Slovenians.

So, what is *The Wild Cats of Piran* actually about? It's a book about cats that young Slovenian readers who have not yet been told what national pride is may find interesting. All others should avert their eyes if they ever come across it.

Note:

The picture of the book's front cover was taken from <https://www.neweuropebooks.com/young-europe-books-1/>

Teacher Reading Corner

Half of a Yellow Sun

by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

C. N. Adichie brings to her pages what we are always seeking in fiction but only find in the best of it. She melds horror and beauty in an epic story about love and betrayal, belonging and exclusion, forgiveness and reconciliation that will haunt the mind forever.

Dr. Alenka Tratnik

Dear Ijeawe, or A Feminist Manifesto in 15 Suggestions

by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

A beautiful set of rules to live by. Things your mother could not teach you, because the world we live in is still too patriarchal. If you ever thought a woman from Nigeria might have nothing to teach you, you were so, so wrong. A perfect book to read aloud to girls so they become strong independent women.

Sandra Vida

I Am, I Am, I Am: Seventeen Brushes with Death

by Maggie O'Farrell

This is a book about extraordinary courage, an exceptional will to live and also the extreme tests that life throws at us. O'Farrell manages to create a unique collection of short pieces that one can re-read several times. Without being overly emotional, she manages to capture the depths and the highs of life, each time brushing shoulders with death in one way or another. In the end, life gloriously wins.

Dr Leonora Flis

Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine

by Gail Honeyman

Romance novel for all the unromantic souls. Also, I am not completely fine after reading this book. You won't be either, it will punch you in the plexus and probably eat your soul. A must-read.

Lea Koler



TWin odlični izleti!

Turistična agencija TWIN se s kulturno-izobraževalnimi potovanji ukvarja že 20. leto. Ker v Veliko Britanijo potujemo pogosteje kot večina ostalih slovenskih organizatorjev potovanj, ponujamo odlično in preverjeno izvedbo. Naše cene tudi že vključujejo javni prevoz in obvezne vstopnine. Cene so odvisne predvsem od termina odhoda in vaše fleksibilnosti pri prihodu.

1995 - 2015



Zemljemerska ulica 12
1000 Ljubljana
Tel.: 01 280 28 20,
040 187 830
e-pošta: info@twintur.com
www.twintur.com

Zakaj s Twin-om v London:

- 1 Pogosti in redni, zagotovljeni odhodi v London.** Twin organizira šolska potovanja v London že 20 let, v povprečju imamo na mesec vsaj 3 zagotovljene odhode v London.
- 2 Odlično vodstvo.** Pri Twinu se zavedamo, da je odlično poznavanje običajev in turističnih znamenitosti Londončanov le prvi korak k odlični izvedbi. Naši vodniki imajo dolgoletne izkušnje pri vodenju šolske mladine, zato odlično poznajo vse sestavine programa, saj jih sami pripravljajo. Tudi zato je vodenje/izvedba toliko bolj fleksibilna glede na želje skupine. Naj še omenimo, da boste v Sloveniji težko našli vodnike, ki v London vodijo tako pogosto kot Twinovi vodniki.
- 3 Nastanitev, ki presega običajno turistično kategorijo.** Pri Twinu se zavedamo, da je dober spanec pomembna sestavina izleta. Vsi naši hoteli so hoteli s 3* in pri večini udeležencev presežejo njihova pričakovanja. Kot specialist za London lahko zagotovimo vsaj en bogat angleški zajtrk (običajnih zajtrki v Londonu so skromni kontinentalni).
- 4 Nikoli naknadno ne spreminjamo pogojev.** Naša cena je vedno znana že ob prijavi in se nikoli ne spremeni zaradi spremembe cen dobaviteljev, goriva oz letalskega prevoznika.
- 5 Vedno ponudimo kakšno dodatno storitev – brezplačno.** S program zagotavljamo minimalni obseg storitev oz. ogledov, vendar nikoli ne izvedemo samo minimalnega obsega – vedno, pri vsaki skupini dodamo nekaj posebnega, kar ni zapisano v programu. Prav tako v naših programih nikoli ne zapišemo "če bo čas dopuščal", kajti vse naše programe vedno v celoti izvedemo. In ker si London zelo pogosto ogledujemo, poznamo tudi optimalno zaporedje ogledov brez nepotrebnega hitenja.
- 6 Vsaj 183 osnovnih in srednjih šol je že potovalo z nami. Z nami zelo malo šol potuje samo enkrat.** Če želite neobvezujoče vzpostaviti stik z organizatorjem na eni od šol, ki je že potovala z nami, vam bomo z veseljem posredovali kontakt.
- 7 Ponujamo 3-dnevni program, kjer za izvedbo ni potrebno delovnika.**

Več informacij na www.twintur.com ali na 040 187 830 ali v poslovalnici na Zemljemski ulici 12 v Ljubljani.

Osmisliti učenje je osnovna naloga vsakega učitelja in ni boljšega načina, kako priljubiti angleščino, od tega, da učence popelješ po svetu. V današnjih časih to ni enostavno. Šole in učitelji se bojijo odgovornosti, mnogi starši pa ne zmorejo ali znajo otrok odpeljati sami. Ni bilo lahko pred 15 leti prvič sestiti na avtobus in se podati z agencijo, o kateri nismo vedeli ničesar, na večdnevno potovanje v Veliko Britanijo. Bilo nas je strah pred odhodom, a takoj ko smo se podali na pot, smo vedeli, da je bila odločitev prava.

Po tistem, ko smo prvič potovali s TWinom, smo vedeli, da nas ne bo več strah. Lani smo že deseti odkrivali Evropo in vsakič smo se vrnili ne samo zadovoljni, ampak tudi hvaležni za TWinovo strokovnost, prijaznost, ustrežljivost ... Hvaležni smo celotni ekipi in nikoli ne bi izbrala druge agencije, saj sem prepričana, da niti cenovno niti strokovno potovanja ne bi mogla biti ugodnejše in bolj izpeljana.

Ta ekskurzija je postala stalna praksa naše šole in učenci komaj čakajo, da bodo dovolj stari, da se je bodo lahko udeležili. Nam, spremljevalcem, pa je v neizmerno veselje, ko jih opazujemo, kako polni vtisov in lepih doživetij še dolgo pripovedujejo o potovanju.

Ksenija Tripkovič, OŠ Selnica ob Dravi