

**Using the short story “The Lottery”
by Shirley Jackson to achieve
interpersonal, intercultural,
social and civic competences
in the classroom**

Nika Fujs

**Brain breaks
20 tried and tested ways
to get your students
focused and relaxed**

Špela Casagrande

False friends

Irena Demšar

**A student-centred
approach to EFL reading**

Maja Medja Vidic

The art of being a teacher

Sanja Nose

Critical thinking at a glance (10)

Case Study: What does a (freedom) movement mean anyway?

Nada Đukić

It would be definitely possible to track any real, genuine or authentic movement from its step one to its final massive impact when its momentum is, so to say, unstoppable. The human nature is such that it can detect when the intention is sincere, for the highest good of humanity in general, and when it leads to the liberation of the "humiliated and insulted", and to the alleviation of the human suffering anywhere in the world. And then, there is still another force in the human nature that makes it impossible for the humanity to proceed in the direction of prosperity for everyone and anyone due to the human greed, ego(tism) and inherent destructiveness.



Contents

- 4** Using the short story "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson to achieve interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competences in the classroom
Nika Fujs
- 7** Brain breaks
20 tried and tested ways to get your students focused and relaxed
Špela Casagrande
- 10** False friends
Irena Demšar
- 12** A student-centred approach to EFL reading
Maja Medja Vidic
- 13** Using WebQuests in EFL: Focus on overcoming challenges
Sabina A. Nowak
- 16** 4in1: How to combine all four skills within one project
Davorka Nekić
- 22** STEAM+E: Teaching English through STEAM
Konstantina Karamouta
- 24** The art of being a teacher
Sanja Nose
- 25** Empowering reading skills: Interaction between primary and secondary schools
Tajana Bundara
- 30** Media Literacy in the ESL Classroom
Žiga Krajnc
- 31** Winter I spy game
- 32** The beautiful Belfast conference
Polona Šivec
- 33** Are face-to-face conferences still worth going to?
Danny Singh
- 36** 28th International IATEFL Slovenia Conference TEACHING Only for the brave
- 37** An interview with ...
Sandra Vida, IATEFL Slovenia Vice President
- 38** Lesson idea
The eccentric diner
- 39** Learning activities
- 40** Reading for pleasure
- 41** Poets' corner
- 42** Between the covers



IATEFL Slovenia Magazine
Vol. 18, No 1
Winter issue 2023

Editor

Alenka Tratnik
E-mail: alenka.tratnik@iatefl.si

Designed by

Petra Turk

Printed by

HCOMP-group grafične storitve
Henrik Klembas s. p.

Published by

Slovensko društvo učiteljev
angleškega jezika IATEFL Slovenia

E-mail: info@iatefl.si

Website: <http://www.iatefl.si/>

IATEFL Slovenia Board Members

Barbara Lukač Patařec |
Secondary School | President

Sandra Vida |
Seminars and conferences |
Vice President

Alenka Tratnik | IN Editor

Patricija Frlež | Primary School

Špela Skubic | Public Relations

Images

www.freepik.com



Editorial

A colleague who teaches English at an elementary school recently asked me if I could help her find a part-time English teacher, since the school has been looking for one since mid-September. She said that the school already had trouble finding a math and chemistry teacher last year, and since they couldn't find suitable staff, senior students (who still teach there) helped out. The same goes for teachers and principals at other Slovenian schools, who have been warning for some time that there simply aren't any teachers left with certain profiles. It's estimated that there is already a shortage of 2,000 to 4,000 teachers, forcing schools to hire students or teachers who don't have the necessary qualifications to teach. In addition, according to some estimates, an average of 5 to 10% of the teachers who teach in our schools don't have the appropriate training.

The fact that one-third of Slovenian primary school teachers and half of secondary school teachers are over 50 years old shows that the recruitment situation in education is worrying, if not alarming. They'll need to be replaced in 15 years at the latest, but there are almost no teachers younger than 30. As many colleagues complain, schools already have to make do with either students or teachers from other fields or there is an increased workload placed on tenured teachers, who have to work up to an additional 10 hours a week.

What are the main reasons for the teacher shortage? First and foremost, it's teacher pay. If you can earn €1,400 in retail, why would a university graduate want to pursue a job in education, where a beginner teacher gets around €900? It's becoming increasingly worrying who will still be willing to work in education if so many graduates don't decide on a teaching profession after graduation. Other reasons for the shortage of teachers include the poor public image of teachers, excessive stress, too much red tape, low student motivation, the pressure exerted on teachers by parents who expect only the best grades, and the like.

And what can be done? The Ministry of Education should be the first to address the problem systematically, with appropriate incentives such as scholarships, an internship programme, a new salary point system, and a revised teacher evaluation model. Every four years the new Minister of Education makes promises, but sadly, no government seems to be truly and sufficiently aware of the importance of education for this and future generations.

I hope that despite the many burdens of school work and daily pressures, you somehow manage to "march on," as Sanja Nose says in her article about the art of being a teacher these days. In this issue, you'll find articles on different aspects of teaching English, why it's still worth going to face-to-face conferences, an idea for a food-themed lesson, a light-hearted read, book recommendations, a poem, and a dose of inspirational sayings to get you through the winter months and boost your teacher motivation.

Alenka Tratnik
Editor

Source

- Kuralt, Š. (2022). Po ocenah ravnateljcev primanjkuje do 4000 učiteljev. Accessed 4 January 2023, from <https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/po-ocenah-ravnateljcev-primanjkuje-do-4000-uciteljev/>

Using the short story “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson to achieve interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competences in the classroom

Nika Fujs



Nika Fujs was studying Pedagogy and English Language at Faculty of Arts. Different languages were part of her life since early childhood. She was growing up in a bilingual environment. Her interest in English language started while watching cartoons on Cartoon Network. She always knew that teaching is her calling and now her job is being a teacher. She loves how she can make an impact on her students' lives and how she gets to inspire them.

In Slovenian curriculum for high schools, we can find general objectives and competences related to the English language that are meant to be achieved in teaching. They include interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competences, and teachers have the autonomy to choose their preferred way of achieving them. In this essay, I would like to present one such option – the use of a short story.

By reading a short story and later discussing its content, one can open up a number of discussions, including those pertaining to our culture, tradition and values. There is one specific short story, “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, that gives a lot of opportunity to start a conversation about the topics that can help to achieve the abovementioned competences. “The Lottery” was published in *The New Yorker* on 28th June in 1948 but this is, sadly, a story that conveys a message we still need to hear in 2022. The response to it was mostly negative and some described it as a horror tale. The readers did not like its content. The writer wrote about a brutal traditional ritual practiced in New England, a small village with about 300 villagers. By opening up a discussion in the classroom, a teacher can gather feedback from students and give them an opportunity to think about their culture and the way it has shaped them, to share their views and perspectives, gradually leading them to reassess their values. Since the story is full of symbols, we can use the latter as a starting point for a discussion. The symbols used in this story tend to be easily recognizable given that they are connected either to Christianity or things/concepts that are also part of the Slovenian culture.

The beginning of the story does not indicate what is going to happen and that is why the end comes as a shock. The writer starts by describing a scene which is rather cheerful and does not make the reader suspect what is going to happen. The concept of lottery has a positive connotation, especially if you are focusing on the possibility of winning something or, at the very least, not losing much by taking part in it. None of the readers would see it as an event where one loses something, especially not one's own life. This cheerful mood at the beginning of the story creates a certain kind of anticipation, but towards the end of the plot there is a twist, which has a significant contrasting effect. However, the twist itself is justified – if the reader was able to predict what is going to happen, they would fail to think about the content and its message, and this would be yet another horror story, which “The Lottery” certainly is not.

The critic Robert Heilman wrote that the readers have been tricked and that such shocking ending detracts from the realization of the author's intent in telling the story (Bogert, 1985). Considering the reaction of the readers at the time, I must agree. The readers' reaction was mostly negative and they described the piece as a horror story which they did not want their kids to read. The realization and understanding of a message requires a certain level of maturity or aid offered by someone who can guide readers, in our case students, through the story. Why the original readers did not see the real purpose of the story is a good question and can be a topic of debate, touching upon the culture, values and general knowledge typical for the 1950's US compared with our modern times. At the end of the day, all of that most certainly shapes our opinions, providing us with a specific point of view and defining our reactions.

Needless to say, the author was actually disappointed because the readers had failed to understand her intent. Her purpose was to encourage them to think about the unnecessary violence and inhumanity apparent at the time. To draw a parallel, the current situation in the world (the war and the ongoing violence against minorities, to say the least) is no better. This is one of the reasons why “The Lottery” should be included in the curriculum. The author herself gave a statement for *San Francisco Chronicle*: “Explaining just what I had hoped the story to say is very difficult. I suppose, I hoped, by setting a particularly brutal

ancient rite in the present and in my own village to shock the story's readers with a graphic dramatization of the pointless violence and general inhumanity in their own lives.” (Kosenko, 1985: p. 27)

The pointless ritual Shirley Jackson was referring to, as described in the short story, takes place every year, being a tradition which every villager participates in. Each of them draws their own lottery ticket and only one of the tickets has a black mark on it. The one who gets that particular ticket is brutally stoned to death by the other members of the village. First, the villagers choose a family and then one of the family members. As this is lottery, all the villagers have the same chance to be selected for sacrifice. They perceive it as fair and democratic, even though the reader does not see it that way. What is more, since the number of members varies in each family, certain individuals are given a greater chance to receive the black mark. Arguably, the ritual-organized this way is most certainly not fair. In his article, *A Critique of the Sampling Plan Used in Shirley Jackson's “The Lottery”*, Richard H. Williams (Williams, 1979) talks about the unfairness of this sampling plan. He also argues that the lottery would be fair if the family was not selected first. In that case, every villager would have the same chance to be selected. In this context, one can see the opportunity to encourage student readers to think about democracy as it is today – what is possible to define as democratic and what is not, where are the limits of democracy, etc.

As the story shows, there is no other reason to do the ritual rather than the tradition itself. It is cruel and brutal to take a human life for any kind of reason, and it is even more brutal to take it just because of a tradition. However, the fact that this ritual murder takes place annually and is a long-known tradition, gives the villagers enough justification to do it. They do not question doing it, they just do it, oddly returning to their everyday life as if nothing has happened. What is more, in the process, their own family and friends turn against the selected individual, who might even be a child, as shocking as this is. As children are not exempt from the brutal tradition, they also have a chance to get killed. We can draw parallels between this story and the present. All the participants in the ritual are chosen for no special reason, one they have no control of. Similarly, many people today are getting killed or being harmed in other ways for being of a different nationality, race, religion or sexual orientation. They are being forced to pay for either something they cannot change about themselves or a choice they have made without ever really endangering anyone by it. This is as unfair as this tradition because of which the innocent Mrs. Hutchinson is killed. Tradition is strongly embedded in our lives. Sometimes we blindly follow it, sometimes we question it. As circumstances change all the time, it is reasonable to question what has been passed down to us. This part of the story offers an opportunity to start a debate about traditions and their value in our culture.

To take this a bit further, our everyday life is full of symbols and so is this short story. Starting with the lottery – it is a symbol which represents everything that has been passed down from one generation to another. In most cases, the things that are passed down have a good enough reason to be preserved (or at least, that is how it should be) – they are useful because they make our lives easier and safer. The story's traditional lottery is nothing but a pointless annual event that the villagers of New England blindly follow without questioning its purpose.

Another thing that has been passed down to the villagers is the black box which holds the lottery tickets on the day of the event. Similarly, the box is part of the tradition and, naturally, they do not want to replace it. However, the color of the box indicates its ominous character. In our culture, the color black is commonly associated with death and evil. Why the villagers do not want to replace the black box is not revealed, and yet it is interesting to note that they have changed or forgotten some other parts of the ritual. This is yet another example of blind adherence to a tradition without knowing the reason why.

Another symbol in the story are the stones, which represent the human barbaric nature. As a race, we want to believe we are civilized and enlightened creatures. If this were true, we would not witness all kinds of barbaric, unreasonable acts of violence. Back in the 1950s, when the short story was published, the readers were as shocked as anyone would be today – sadly, both the pres-

A New Contributor

Censorship and “The Lottery”

Edna Bogert

For over two generations, high school and college students have been reading Shirley Jackson's short story “The Lottery.” This deceptively simple horror tale, first published thirty-five years ago, has been included in anthologies at least since 1950. Its initial publication in *The New Yorker* magazine on June 28, 1948, precipitated more responses from readers than any other fiction ever before published by that magazine. Of the three-hundred letters that were received by the author herself that summer, only thirteen of them could have been considered kind.¹ Most letter writers had taken the story literally. They thought that the fiction was based on fact and wanted to know the details of where, when, and to whom the events described had happened.

While the letters were almost wholly negative, none suggested that the story should not be available to the public. Up until 1982 it was only a character in fiction who suggested “The Lottery” be removed from a school's curriculum, a candidate for school board in Elizabeth Peter's 1977 novel, *Dear My Care*, who says people do not “want their children to read a book that shows kids stoning their mothers to death.”

Although in six separate nationwide surveys conducted between 1965 and 1981 “The Lottery” was not among the most frequently challenged works in American high schools, a 1982 survey sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English found “The Lottery” to be among the forty-eight works most frequently challenged by local censorship groups as unsuitable for high school students.² This could, of course, be partially due to the increase in the number of groups

currently trying to limit the choice of materials available in high schools. However, since “The Lottery” has remained almost unchallenged for over a third of a century, it may not be just the increased number of would-be censors but what the story actually says.

On the literal level, “The Lottery” is almost pastoral in its simplicity, at least until the last few paragraphs. The setting is a small farming village of about 300 people. It's a clear June morning, and the people of the village gradually leave their farms, kitchens, and shops for an important civic event, a lottery which has taken place annually for as long as any of them can remember. The children feel restless, only recently out of school for the summer. Neighbors greet each other, chat, and joke quietly while preparations for the lottery are made by Mr. Summers, the town's most civic-minded citizen. Just as it is about to begin, the last resident to arrive, Mrs. Hutchinson, comes running to join her husband and three children. Mr. Summers calls the names in alphabetical order, and heads of families go forward to receive a piece of paper, exchanging small pleasantries with Mr. Summers on the way. When all of the family heads have received their slips, they look to see who has the slip with the black mark. It is the Hutchinson family. Tessie Hutchinson complains that the drawing was not conducted fairly. A second drawing takes place, and we learn that it is she who has the black mark.

The ritualistic end follows. Children and grownups pick up pebbles, stones, and rocks and begin to stone Mrs. Hutchinson who screams, “It isn't fair, it isn't right.”

January 1985 45

ent and the past carry this burden. The senseless murder in the story and all the senseless murders nowadays show us that deep inside some of us there is still an instinct we follow. Is it inherited through genes or is it a learnt behavior? Possibly both? This might be another great topic for a discussion with the students.

Another important symbol in the story is the tree-legged stool. The reader can see its significance, comparing it with the Christian trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Tradition is an enormous part of any religion and requires the followers to adhere to it. Christianity has the most worshippers in our culture and students can most certainly start interesting debates on this topic.

Furthermore, there is also symbolism in the names of the characters. Normally, one would associate the family name of the most powerful man of New England, Mr. Summer, with the hot, sunny and cheerful part of the year. Ironically, in the story he is the one in charge of the lottery, the brutal event that is far from cheerful. Another name to examine is that of Mr. Graves, the postmaster. His family name is an obvious allusion to a grave. In "The Lottery" Mr. Graves is in charge of the black box, the symbolism of which has already been described above as having to do with death and dying. Mr. Graves is actually the oldest man in the village. He knows the most about the tradition. His function in the story is to warn the young generations not to abandon the tradition. We are used to saying that the older we get, the wiser we become, but in this case Warner's "wisdom" is the one impeding the development of the community. The reader knows that some other

towns and villages have already given up the tradition in question, but New England remains stuck in the past. Here we can ask our students about any real-life traditions that seem "outdated".

As stated previously, the short story "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson gives a lot of opportunity to start a debate or to encourage discussions about different topics, thereby achieving interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competences. Finally, besides the abovementioned examples, each teacher can surely identify a number of new ones and at the same time find a connection between this story and perhaps another one, making a similar point and reaching the same classroom goal.

References

- Bogert, E. (1985). Censorship and "The Lottery". *The English Journal*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (Jan., 1985), pp. 45-47. Retrieved 25 August, 2022, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/816508>
- Kosenko, P. (1985). A reading of Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery". *New Orleans Review*. Retrieved 25 August, 2022, from www.neworleansreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/12_1.pdf
- Nebeker, H. E. (1974). "The Lottery": Symbolic Tour de Force. *American Literature*, 46(1), 100–108. Retrieved 25 August, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.2307/2924129>
- Williams, R. H. (1979). A Critique of the Sampling Plan Used in Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery". *Journal of Modern Literature*, September, Vol. 7, Iss. 3. Retrieved 25 August, 2022, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3831296>

Picture prompt

Use the image as a bank of possibilities to ...

- 1 Create a short story with as few as 5 words.
- 2 Write a short story about decisions.
- 3 Guess what happened just before a photograph was taken.
- 4 Suggest ideas for what might be happening just outside the frame of an image.
- 5 Write down the questions an image brings to mind.



Brain breaks 20 tried and tested ways to get your students focused and relaxed

Špela Casagrande



I have always felt that being a teacher was my cup of tea. Now, after more than two decades of teaching, I must say that my passion for this profession has not diminished one bit since then. Having had the opportunity to teach in adult and vocational programmes, elementary and secondary schools, as well as centres for refugees, my mission always stays the same – to make learning a fun activity, and not a dreaded chore. Fascinated by new approaches to lecturing, I am always open to new ideas, while I aim to share my well-tested tips and tricks with other educators.

As a teacher, I have always been struggling with students' attention. It is a part of our job, isn't it? Out of curiosity, and perhaps boredom on my part since I got tired of their unrest I started to introduce some easy exercises during the lessons that had nothing to do with the topic we were working on. It turned out that these pauses worked brilliantly and also that academia had a name for it – a brain break.

It is common knowledge that a break is an underrated commodity, especially in the world of education. Whenever teachers don't follow their plan, they always feel a strong urge to hurry, work harder, and push themselves and the students to their limits.

However, according to experts, taking a break from cognitive activity, can help us increase efficiency and performance in the classroom. Taking time to reset improves brain functions, affect brain structures, and increase certain brain networks. Breaks help students focus and be more productive. They also reduce stress and help them feel more confident.

The times we live in have changed the students' ability to concentrate. Keeping the students focused has become increasingly challenging. No matter how well prepared your lesson is, sooner or later stu-

dents lose interest and you see blank stares and sighs of frustration. Brain breaks seem to be a great solution to this problem. When we notice that our students have lost focus and have started feeling tired, brain breaks are an excellent tool to overcome the situation and help them focus. They are valuable for teachers as well. It is wonderful to free oneself from a routine.

So what are brain breaks? They are quick, structured breaks. They never last more than a couple of minutes and can include physical movement, sensory activities, or mindfulness practice. It is good to use different activities depending on what your students need at the time.

It is crucial to know that different kinds of brain need different kinds of breaks. It may seem counterintuitive, but practice has shown that students who suffer from hyperactivity and lack of focus need more energizing breaks, whereas others may need quiet and mindful ways to reset.

It is also important to adapt the brain breaks to the students' ages. Finally, use brain breaks that you personally like. If you enjoy them, you will benefit from them as well.



Incorporate things that help you reduce stress - movement, music, humour... The good vibes will spread from you into the classroom and make everything more satisfying.

Here's a stock of cool brain breaks to have up your sleeve.

Movement breaks

They include physical activities, stretching, yoga poses, anything that breaks the routine and feels good to your body. Besides increasing the level of oxygen in their bloodstream which leads to improved concentration, physical brain breaks also help students change the level of alertness and support sensory regulation. The purpose is to help students either increase or decrease their alertness so that they can participate in their learning.

● PICK UP SOME APPLES

If you want to spend on the break just minute, tell your students to stand up, stand on their toes and stretch as high as they can, imagining that they're picking apples on very high branches of a tree.

● ANIMAL POSES

Introduce either some yoga postures (cat, eagle...) or just have fun imitating animals (fly like a bird, hop like a frog...).

● SELF MASSAGE

Ear massage reduces stress and enhances the feeling of happiness. Have students start massaging at the bottom of their ears, pulling them gently way from their head and moving slowly up to the top. They can also massage the temples and back of the head, or their palms and fingers. Teach them to enjoy the touch and sense what's happening during the massage.

● THE ATOM GAME

Have student to move like aliens, dinosaurs, very old people..., whatever comes to mind. Then call out a number with the word "atom" (e.g., Atom four!) and have students quickly form groups of four.

● SILENT BALL

Every teacher loves to have a silent and engaged classroom. Tell students to grab a spot for themselves around the classroom. Then get a soft, medium-sized ball and tell them to constantly pass the ball around the classroom in silence without using words or sounds. It is not as easy as it seems!

● CLASSROOM FITNESS

They can do wall push-ups, run on the spot, cross crawls (touch elbow to opposite knee).

Mindfulness brain breaks

In my experience, it is rather difficult to introduce mindfulness practice in the classroom, but it is worth trying since such exercises also help students to become able to soothe themselves. The ability to calm yourself down is an important step towards greater self-awareness and resilience which is an important skill to learn. Try to make your students realize this is a skill that develops with practice and brings many benefits.

Some activities you can use:

● BALOON BREATHING

Tell students to sit in a comfortable position. They breathe in slowly through their nose, filling their belly with air like a balloon, and breathe out slowly. Have students practice this technique for a minute or two.

● STARFISH BREATHING

Tell students to hold out one hand with their fingers wide like a starfish. They use their other hand to trace the "starfish" around the fingers. They inhale through their nose during the whole upward tracing movement, starting from the wrist to the top of the thumb, and breath out through the mouth tracing the downward movement. They continue breathing and tracing the whole "starfish".

● SQUARE BREATHING

Have students sit up straight, relax and close their eyes. They start focusing on their breathing. The students imagine breathing in a square: you count to four to breathe in, another four to hold, another four to breathe out and again four to hold. They breathe through the nose and repeat the square 3 to 4 times.

● HUG YOURSELF

Have students close their eyes, hug themselves and whisper to themselves something nice and encouraging. Stay in silence for a minute and enjoy the moment.

● ROCK (in a chair)

A very soothing activity. Close your eyes and gently rock or sway to soft music.

● 5-4-3-2-1

This mindfulness technique helps students focus more on what is happening around them and less on any anxious thoughts they might be having. They should take a deep breath and focus on what is around them. Tell them to notice and name:

- 5 things they can see, like a desk or a clock or a water stain on the ceiling. It doesn't matter how large or small.
- 4 things they can feel or touch, like the pencil they are holding, their shirt, or the ground under their feet.
- 3 things they can hear, like the tick of the clock, the buzz of an overhead light, or the sound of your own breathing.
- 2 things they can smell. They could sniff their hands for a whiff of soap or hand sanitizer or smell the air.
- 1 thing they can taste. Perhaps they remember the last thing they ate or recall the taste of something they really like to eat.

Fun brain breaks

You can do practically anything that makes you laugh. Good vibes never fail. You can also use techniques that harmonize left and right side of the brain, which is always fun to do.

● SIMON SAYS

A classic we should not forget, in which the players must obey all commands that begin with the words "Simon says". You (or one of the students) are the leader and you call out the actions the class should perform. The students must follow the lead but only when Simon says so. For example, you say: "Simon says: wiggle your fingers" and everyone must wiggle their fingers. It gets complicated when you keep calling out actions but you don't say "Simon says". If someone follows such instructions, they are out of the game. Things get more difficult by speeding up the pace of calling out the actions.

It is also a good idea that you perform all those actions, even the "wrong" ones, so they must concentrate harder on the instructions you say and not on what they see you doing. I enjoy confusing them and it is always fun for all of us.

● NAME SCRIBBLE

Have students write their names with both hands simultaneously and then continue writing with the hand that is not dominant for a minute. Discuss how it felt.

● FUNNY TALK

Tell students to loosely touch the roof of their mouth with their tongue and begin to speak. It is good to create a class chant or a dialogue with other students.

● TONGUE STRECH

Tongue stretching relaxes the throat, palate, upper neck and brain stem. Tell students to stretch their tongue as far as they can, try to touch the tip of their noses or the bottom of the chin. It will provoke laughter for sure!

● WOULD YOU RATHER

You need a little preparation for this break if you want to include the movement. Write cards with Would you rather---? questions on opposite sides of the classroom. Read them and tell the students to go to the side of the classroom that holds true for them. Would you rather have superpower of reading people's minds or invisibility? Would you rather talk all the time or never speak again? Be creative!

● HUM

Humming releases stress and blockages in the brain stem. Tell someone to hum a song and students should guess what it is. Whoever guesses starts humming along until everyone eventually joins in.

● LINES UP

Have students line up in complete silence in order of their birthdays or their shoe sizes or whatever idea you might have.

● SLEEPY LIONS

It is a popular break activity in which students remain perfectly still and quiet while one student (or you, the teacher!) peruse the room, trying to catch any movement as the guard or zookeeper.

Now you have no excuse. Whenever you are experiencing an overload, choose to log out for a minute. After trying and testing all these methods myself, I can ensure you that my students are much better performing after just a few minutes of those. While some work better with older kids, others make my youngest students calm and relaxed in no time. Hope you have found some useful tips to make your life easier. Happy brain breaks!



False friends

Irena Demšar



Irena Demšar is an English teacher at Primary School Vodice. She studied English and French at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. In her third- and fourth-year of studies she enrolled in the translation study programme where contrastive lexicology was one of the major courses. She is a co-author of *False Friends, Slovenско-angleški slovar lažnih prijateljev* which was published in 2004 by Cankarjeva založba. In 2021, the authors revised the dictionary and published it on Termania.

This article deals with a topic of false friendship which belongs to the area of contrastive linguistics, namely contrastive lexicology. Contrastive lexicology is a branch of linguistics which studies words, their nature and meaning, words' elements, relations between the words, words groups and the whole lexicon. with the purpose is to show the differences and similarities in the structure of at least two languages. The goal of contrastive analysis is to predict linguistic difficulties in the acquisition of a second language. The linguist dealing with contrastive lexicology compares the vocabulary of two or more languages and examines whether and to what extents the words of one language can be said to be »translational equivalents« of the words in another language. The topic requires a certain degree of linguistic knowledge and is therefore appropriate for the upper-intermediate and advanced learners and translators. Nevertheless, it is important to make all students aware of the interlingual lexical problems which are a source of various difficulties in learning and teaching a foreign language as well as in translating.

False friends are pairs of foreign-sounding words in two or more languages which are etymologically related, resemble each other in form and/or pronunciation, but which express partly or wholly different meaning. The etymology criterion has to be taken into consideration to avoid instances of incidental homonymy (e.g., EN sir, 'men's title' : SL sir, 'cheese').

False friends can be analysed in various ways. Some authors look for false relationships only on the semantic level, whether others consider this problem to be much more complex, taking into consideration that falseness can be found in orthography, lexical morphology, syntax, phraseology, pragmatics, and pronunciation. False friends, then, are all those pairs of lexical items in two languages that display a problem of meaning of whatever kind, based on actual or assumed surface similarity.

Regarding the form and the meaning of false friends we distinguish:

1. Semantic false friends

We have to distinguish **total** and **partial** false friends. Total false friends have no sense in common (SL *aktualen* : EN *actual*). Partial false friends have at least one shared sense. They tend to cause more problems than total false friends because we mistakenly assume that a shared sense automatically signifies total correspondence of meaning. There are three subtypes of partial false friends:

- partial false friends where the L1 item has a narrower meaning than its L2 friend (SL *organ* 'body part' : EN *organ* 'body part'; 'musical instrument')
- partial false friends where the L1 item has a broader meaning than its L2 friend (SL *professor* 'secondary school teacher'; 'university teacher' : EN *professor* 'university teacher')
- partial false friends where the L1 item has a narrower as well as broader meaning than its L2 equivalent (SL *akcija* : EN *action*).

Two false friends can have the same referential meaning and yet differ from a collocative point of view, showing a greater predilection for certain words or groups of words than for other, from a connotative point of view, that is to say in the associations which they call up, and from a stylistic point of view, in that they belong to different registers of language.

2. Morphological false friends

Morphological false friends are those pairs of lexical items which have the same meaning but their morphological structure differs. There are several sub-classes of morphological false friends:

- Pairs of words which have different affixes:
 - prefix (SL *hiperprodukcija* : EN *overproduction*)
 - suffix (SL *investicija* : EN *investment*)
- Pairs of words which have an affix in L1:
 - prefix (SL *rekonvalescent* : EN *convalescent*)
 - suffix (SL *anulirati* : EN *annul*)
- pairs of words which have an affix in L2:
 - prefix (SL *municija* : EN *ammunition*)
 - suffix (SL *fizik* : EN *physicist*)

3. Orthographical false friends

Orthographical false friends are those pairs of similar words which differ in the way they are spelled (SL *faraon* : EN *pharaoh*).

4. Phonological false friends

These can differ in form and pronunciation (SL *papirus* /'papi:rus/ : EN *papyrus* /pa'pajrəs/), or in pronunciation only (SL *Orion* /'orion/ : EN *Orion* /o'raɪən/).

5. Zero-equivalent false friends

These are L1 words of foreign origin that look or sound as if they were foreign, and we therefore mistakenly assume that they are the same in L2 (SL *kalij* : EN *potassium*).

It is the task of the bilingual dictionary, to which the non-native speaker quite naturally turns for guidance, to make clear the extremely restricted nature of these combinations. The bilingual dictionary should alert the user to the (stylistic) restrictions attached to the false friends by means of adequate system of labelling. However, in view of the complex nature of the contrasts between pairs of false friends, it is obvious that general dictionaries are unable, in the limited space that is available, to do them full justice. False friends are best treated in a specialized dictionary which has the space to be far more explicit and detailed.

The most frequently occurring false friends should be listed, categorized and explained by means of contrastive comparisons. It is only by this sort of analysis that advanced learners can be sensitized to the difficulty of translating such innocuous-looking pairs of similar words and be helped to avoid some of the more frequent lexical errors caused by false L1/L2 analogy.

There have been a few attempts to cover Slovene and English false friends: *Glosar slovensko-angleških nepravilnih prijateljev* (author Marjan Golobič), *Angleško-slovenski glosar lažnih prijateljev* (author David Limon), *Slovensko-angleški slovar lažnih prijateljev* (authors Alenka Benedik ... [et al.]).



Slovensko-angleški slovar lažnih prijateljev was published by Cankarjeva založba in 2004. It is an abridged version of a joint B.A. dissertation project undertaken in 1996-98 by the advanced translation-option students of English at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. As all good dictionaries evolve the dictionary of False Friends was revised in 2021 and published on Termania, a freely available online dictionary portal that enables

its users not only to browse through dictionary collections, but also to edit both collections and dictionary entries. The simple search option provides users with a quick and simple way to browse through dictionaries without the use of additional search criteria. It provides the most relevant search results and is tailored to fit the average user.

False friends can be especially problematic for students learning a new language, because students are likely to infer the meaning of the word based on a similar word in their native language, resulting in incorrect knowledge or usage.

Before discussing false friends, it's important for students to understand what false friends are. One way to introduce the concept is to present reading passages/sentences that contain numerous words that are beyond their vocabulary level which includes false friends. The teacher could ask the students to figure out the meaning. For example:

- He was released when the judge ruled there was no evidence against him.
- The car won't start—the battery's flat.
- The actual cost was higher than we expected.
- The two countries agreed to exchange intelligence information to fight against terrorism.

To help students understand false friends properly, the teacher should compile a table of some examples that appear between Slovene and English. There is a list of false friends included in students' coursebook *Touchstone 9*, by Janez Skela.

Learners usually enjoy doing simple translations of sentences containing false friends, and this can result in amusing mistranslations, which help learners focus on the correct version.

Dealing with false friends can help remove a major source of common mistakes for a group of learners. It is useful for a teacher to be aware of the common false friends in L1 and to anticipate problems when looking at materials for lessons.

To sum up, there is room for teachers' action concerning false friends. EFL learners have serious problems when using these lexical items and teachers should deal with this issue so that learners' lexical competence expands and potential misunderstandings can be avoided.

References

- Prispelki k tehniki prevajanja iz slovenščine v angleščino: teorija in praksa slovensko-angleške kontrastivne analize, uredil Stanko Klinar, Radovljica: Didakta, 1996, str. 9-60.
- False friends, Slovensko-angleški slovar lažnih prijateljev. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2004.
- Leban, K. Towards a Slovene-English False Friends Dictionary; Symposium on Lexicography X. Retrieved 18 August, 2022 from <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110933192.185>
- Granger, S. and Swallow, H. (1988). False Friends: a kaleidoscope of translation difficulties. *Language et l'Homme*, 23 (2): 108-120.
- <https://www.dicconbewes.com/2015/11/19/fun-with-false-friends/>



A student-centred approach to EFL reading

Maja Medja Vidic



My name is Maja Medja Vidic and I am a teacher of English. I have always loved reading and as a teacher have made it a bit of a mission to encourage my students to read too. I graduated in English at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana and Political Science at the Faculty of Social Studies, Ljubljana. Before becoming a teacher, I had a career in the private sector (in the area of education). I have been teaching English for 4 years now and enjoy working with students. I am teaching English in grades 7, 8 and 9 this year.

I believe that we teachers of English are privileged and have an advantage over teachers of other subjects as there is an indefinite amount of »material« that we can use in our classes. I adapt my materials so as to better match the students' interests – using a meme, a song from a Tik Tok video, a pop song, an article on current matters and affairs, etc. In some ways, it shocks the students that I know of a certain song, meme, or joke, and it has proven to be a valuable tool of gaining their attention and opening up a discussion.

One source of teaching/learning that I strongly promote is reading. There is no doubt of the benefits that reading in a foreign language has on language learning – if we only think of the fact that one needs to first learn how to read a word before they can write it. There are different types of ESL reading, and one that I promote the most, and which is somewhat neglected in primary school language learning, is reading for pleasure.

In my class, I encourage students to read – by bringing magazines in English language (I am not talking about ESL magazines, but authentic magazines), by printing out jokes and riddles and hanging them on the notice board, by exploring and searching the internet when a student has a question that can be on any given topic (this is where we venture into cross-curricular learning), by checking the world

news, and so on. However, the reading activity that I encourage most is the English reading badge.

My approach to the English reading badge is not that of working with publishing houses and then enrolling the students into the competitions that we all know. I have been trying out a different approach that gives greater autonomy to students when it comes to the material they wish to read.

The English reading badge is organized as an extra-curricular activity and at the beginning of the year I invite students to enrol and participate. Once a student has finished reading a book, we meet and discuss the book. The main difference with the »classic« reading badges is in the following – although I provide students with a proposed list of books, I allow them to choose their own material. There is a prescribed number of books that the students are required to read (varies depending on the class they are in). In my opinion, it is important to allow students to choose at least some of the books themselves for the following reasons:

- Some students are exceptional readers and have developed their own taste in foreign language literature/ authors. Limiting them to a prescribed list of books would probably not result in them reading less, but I would miss the chance to discuss the books with them. These are usually the best students, who not only enjoy reading, but also enjoy discussing the books and sharing their opinions.



- Some of the weaker students feel intimidated by the lists and prefer to choose books that they have read in L1 already (for example R. Dahl's Matilda) - this gives them a sense of security and makes understanding the content of the book easier.
- English language students of the same class differ immensely in their level of knowledge they have, I don't think it is possible to create a list of material that would fit all. It takes knowing the students (which we teachers do) and listening to their wishes, to find works that are both manageable and challenging.
- An added value of allowing the students to choose their own books is that they get familiar with the foreign language department of the libraries because they have the chance to explore and search for the books they like. There are a number of criteria of how the students chose their books, either by the thickness of the book, the cover, the title, familiarity with the author, or the work itself. Regardless, it increases the chances of them finding something they like and again, getting rid of the fear of foreign language reading.

Although I allow students to choose most of their own books, I insist on them reading one book from the suggested list of books. My reasoning for this is the following – as part of general education, I believe the ESL students need to be familiar with certain works and authors, either only by hearing about them in class or even better, getting to know them first-hand, by reading certain works. This year, for example, I joined the topics of Charles Dickens, Christmas, and current affairs by introducing the book A Christmas Carol and watching the Aldi Christmas ad that was a version of the story featuring the English footballer Marcus Rashford.

Reading for pleasure and reading books have an impact on vocabulary development, reading comprehension, grammar, but most importantly on the motivation. My observations from the past years of taking such an approach to the reading badge are as follows: I am in awe of some of the students and the works they chose to read (for example Wuthering Heights, which I would never dare to put on a prescribed list of books due to the complexity of it), while on the other hand, I am delighted to hear the weaker students explain how they feel proud to have completed a book and how "it wasn't too difficult."

As it has become a mantra recently – teachers need to be facilitators and the students should become more active and responsible for their own learning. This is easier said than done in many cases, but as I have hopefully illustrated, there are areas where we can give more autonomy to the students, listen to their wishes, hear them out, and be the facilitators. The English reading badge as an extra-curricular activity has a lower number of students that enables the teacher to develop a relationship, get to know the students even better and really become a facilitator and a mentor. As I pointed out at the beginning, the amount of material for English language teaching is endless as it is when it comes to reading, we should use it.

Using WebQuests in EFL: Focus on overcoming challenges

Sabina A. Nowak



Sabina A. Nowak is an assistant professor at the Institute of English Studies at the Pedagogical University of Cracow, Poland. She works in the Department of English Language Education, where she teaches Didactics, Assessment, ICT for Teachers, and lectures on CLIL. She holds Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics (English Philology) and M.A. in Tourism. Her current interests stem from a deep belief in the importance of developing teachers' competences in the area of action-oriented learning, alternative assessment and learner-centred pedagogy.

WebQuests are mini projects during which learners search for information on the Internet (Dudeny & Hockly, 2007). What distinguishes WebQuests from any other classroom task is that they involve collecting information from the web to complete a task. Another difference is that they have their own structure, and they usually cover a longer period than one lesson unit. Students can learn a lot of interesting things from them as there are many areas of life students may wish to investigate and explore. This type of inquiry-based learning teaches them how to do their own research in the future.

WebQuests demand that students not only find information from the net but also that they apply it with the use of higher order thinking, such as comparing, contrasting, analysing, and evaluating data. Having the students search for the pages by themselves may additionally develop their critical thinking. The point is to grasp information quickly, uncover facts or solve problems with the use of the Internet. To accomplish the task, the teacher should suggest the web pages the learners are to visit. In the process of choosing a website, the following criteria should be taken into consideration: 1) accessibility, 2) language level, and 3) age appropriacy (Lewis, 2017). The first one indicates how quickly and easily the webpages can be found. The second involves comprehensibility of language for the learners, whereas the third concerns adjustment of the content to the cognitive development of the students.

Stages of a WebQuest

There are generally 5 basic stages of a WebQuest (Dudney & Hockly, 2007). Lewis (2017) elaborates on the stages and refers to mainstream first language education WebQuests as following the specified procedure.

1. *Introduction* is when some pieces of data are given to students with background information on the way the task is to be achieved. This stage generally starts with some opening phrase like, "The aim of the WebQuest is to..." or "You are a group of.... who wish to learn more about..." The teacher introduces the context or scenario by means of a hand-out or by referring to a website.
2. The *task*. In this stage the questions or exercises are explained, and sometimes the key vocabulary is presented. The students' task is generally to visit many websites in order to quickly and accurately find some pieces of information that will be used in a class project. The teacher may suggest questions the students are to answer.
3. *Process* is when students are given web links to get the information they need. Note, however, that the teacher pre-determines the websites students are supposed to use to avoid unnecessary hustling and busting in the class.
4. *Product* is when students display the outcomes or results of their activities online. These may be in the form of Power Point presentations, reports prepared in Word, scrapbooks, blog posts, magazine articles or research findings.
5. The *evaluation stage* is when the teacher and the students evaluate what they have learnt. Both the process and the product should be assessed.

The topic of a WebQuest

The teacher should decide on the topic of a WebQuest. It should refer to something more elaborate than simply a description of a place, thing, tradition or custom. The idea is to present a more extensive subject of an investigation to involve learners wholeheartedly. Students may prepare a history mission (e.g., for 50th anniversary of a school, football club, etc.) or an itinerary (i.e., planning a trip to a destination) or create some Fact Files about a famous person or celebrity. For more advanced groups, a WebQuest can refer to types of crime, healthy eating, protecting the environment, distinguishing the Top Ten (books, movies, pop artists), similarities and differences. The teacher should find a topic students can learn a lot from or about. It should be something that they did not even know existed. Some examples of WebQuest described by Lewis (2017, p. 36) are represented by the titles:

1. *Restaurateur* expects the learners to find the best location for a restaurant which they want to open in a city of their choice, the reasons for selecting the place, the potential clients, the type of restaurant, the menu, and the prices of dishes.
2. *Relocation* demands from the students anticipating all the criteria to be considered in moving to a new house or to a different place with the justification of their choices. These would involve the area, the landscape, the facilities available in the new area, the type of house or flat and the budget available.
3. *The greatest team ever* consists in the decisions taken by a coach to create a team of their dreams. As in all the other WebQuests, the justification is needed for all the searched players and potential strategies applied

to compile the group of sportsmen and the techniques of training them.

4. *The greatest invention ever* will demand from the learners surveying various inventions throughout the ages and prioritising which of them was the most influential for civilization. Alternatively, there may be a WebQuest suggested on "The worst invention ever."

The know-how of a WebQuest

The teacher may come up with many different tasks and questions within the WebQuest. These may range from finding answers to simple questions to more complex assignments. It is important to create open-ended questions that will demonstrate the competences of the students more exclusively. The idea is to challenge learners cognitively to perform various mental activities. Skimming some texts to find the missing information, finding the cheapest hotel near the city centre on www.booking.com or calculating something using easy software are only a few examples of such undertakings. It is up to the teacher what skills they would like to develop, still, the idea is that the teacher should integrate different skills in one task.

The teacher should prepare the WebQuest in advance. The Internet has many different sites full of information, but the teacher selects and chooses only the ones that contain useful information and reliable data. There is a great benefit in supplying the WebQuest with pre-made materials (URLs or QR codes to various websites) instead of asking the students to search for data on thousands of results in Google (unless the teacher asks learners to use Google advanced search). When identical sources are provided for the whole group, students have the same chances of winning the WebQuest (if an element of competition is included in the task). Thanks to visual aids (images or videos), students will memorise things better than just reading about various concepts from books. Providing students with time limit is a vital component of this kind of activity. Students need to be instructed to devote only a particular amount of their time to each of the questions, otherwise they may have the tendency to spend too much time online. Restricting students with some time frames will serve as a good reminder for keeping the deadline. This will also prevent them from being distracted by other things they see on the Internet.

How can problems be avoided when teaching and learning with WebQuests?

Above all, the teacher should identify some anticipated problems that may occur. Obviously, the lack of availability of a computer lab or tablets might be challenging. However, smartphones would still make it possible to introduce WebQuest as a stage while working on the task in the class. Even though some parts of WebQuest can be carried out by the learners at home, ideally, they are to be done in pairs or groups in the classroom. Probably the most difficult part of any WebQuest would be to complete the task due to the lack of ICT skills. If students do not know how to cut and paste the content (using Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V) or save images, the task can be a real burden. Therefore, the teacher should prepare the students in advance by introducing elements of technology "know-how" in the classroom. Also, providing them with similar tasks (URLs) and helping them to overcome technological challenges will prove useful. There are also many dangers which need

to be recognised beforehand. Students need to focus on sites to look for information rather than search the net with no aim. Without the teacher input provided, there is the danger of seeing the content that is not safe or irrelevant for learners. Another risk is that they will lose track of time when they surf the Net for too long. Therefore, the teacher should place the responsibility for time management within the groups. One of the cognitive challenges in the process of accessing data on the Internet is the authenticity of language, which requires guessing the meaning from the context, as well as critical thinking as to which information is relevant and applicable to the task. However, even though students face a lot of challenges, they will overcome the problems with the help of the peers or the teacher. The transversal skills they acquire may be used later in real life. The idea is to let the students practice the skills needed, especially how to find and share information, how to work in pairs or small groups, how to share duties, how to manage their online time, how to apply analytical skills and problem-solving, and finally, how to integrate technology in their life-long education.

APPENDIX Exemplary WebQuest

WebQuest

"A place where magic happens"

DATE: CLASS:

INTRODUCTION:

The aim of the WebQuest is to find as many useful pieces of information available about **Rovaniemi** as it is possible.

TASK:

Imagine you are going on a school trip to Rovaniemi. You will stay there for the period of 4 days. The city you will go to is a remote place and you need to know something about its history and culture, as well as places where to sleep and eat before you go there.

Be ready to present your findings (as a final product) in class in front of the peers and your teacher. It can be a report, self-made movie, Power Point Presentation with photos/songs, etc.

PROCESS:

1. Spend no more than 10 minutes to each of the questions below on searching the NET (see below: **INFORMATION RESOURCES**)
2. Write down the answers and the most important pieces of information in a Word document or Power Point Presentation.
3. Use your own words wherever possible. Do NOT "cut and paste" the information only.
4. Write down the source of the photo, song, book, etc.

INFORMATION RESOURCES:

1. Where is Rovaniemi? What information would you like to remember? How far is it from the capital city of your country? How to get there? (by train, bus, plane?)

Finding inspiration when developing a WebQuest

1. Do the Internet search to find a suitable WebQuest for your group of learners (e.g., <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/studentquest.pdf>) or see an exemplary WebQuest in the **Appendix** (below). Analyse the stages of the WebQuests. Think whether you could use them as models for your own WebQuest. Why/not? Some other useful ideas on the themes of Web Quest and how to exploit them can be found at www.webquest.org.
2. Design a **WebQuest** for your students. Use the lesson plan template and the evaluation grid from the website: <http://webquest.org/sdsu/templates/lesson-template1.htm>.
3. Share your WebQuests on <http://webquest.org> to collect feedback from other teachers.

References

- Dudney, G. & Hockly, N. (2007). *How to Teach English with Technology*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- Lewis, G. (2017). *Learning Technology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<http://www.lappi.fi/lapinliitto/en> or https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lapland_%28Finland%29

2. What is the temperature in Rovaniemi now? What are the main tourist attractions? <https://santaclausvillage.info/arctic-circle-live-video-webcam-rovaniemi/>
<https://www.planetware.com/finland/top-rated-things-to-do-in-rovaniemi-sf-1-2.htm>
3. Who is the most important person in Rovaniemi? Where does he live? What interesting facts can you tell us about the person? <https://santaclausvillage.info>
4. What is his address? Why is it important? <https://santaclausvillage.info/santa-claus/santa-claus-main-post-office/>
5. What are the names of the reindeers? Which of them is special? What makes him different from other reindeers? <https://chartcons.com/reindeer-names/>
6. Where would you stay? Who will you travel with? How much would you pay for a (single/double) room? With or without breakfast? <https://www.booking.com/en>
7. Which of the restaurants would you choose? How much would you pay for dinner? <https://santaclausvillage.info/restaurant-and-bars/>

EVALUATION:

Share your thoughts about the WebQuest activity by writing down 100 words on the experience. Here are some questions that may help you in writing it:

- 1) What was the most interesting part of the WebQuest? (Say exactly what it was)
- 2) What have you learnt from the WebQuest? (Mention the things you did not know before)
- 3) What was it like to learn with other students? (Who helped you most - in what? Who had the best ideas?)
- 4) What was the most difficult part of the WebQuest? What problem(s) did you have?
- 5) What else would you like to say? (Use your own words)

CONCLUSION

Write down what you have learnt from other students/the WebQuest. Where would you like to go next time?

4in1: How to combine all four skills within one project

Davorka Nekić



Davorka Nekić is a Croatian and English language and literature teacher who has taught English to primary school pupils for over 15 years. She enriches her teaching by using different interactive tools, making her teaching process more pupil friendly and exciting. She is a genuine project lover and tries to do as many exciting projects with her pupils as possible. She started a book reading club, *Little Bookworms*, at her school and is in charge of the school magazine in English, *The School Bell*. She believes that, as Helen Keller says, alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much. Therefore, she is the happiest when surrounded by her pupils doing what they like best – projects.

At the end of the school year, our students tend to become impatient waiting for the year to end to start their holidays. But there's at least a month or even a month and a half till the end. Hence, teachers need to figure out which entertaining and student-based activities they can do to make the students involved in the learning process.

My students dislike grammar. What a shock! They are not much into learning a bunch of new words. They tolerate listening, and they are not too keen on reading. And they still haven't made friends with writing. They do it all because they have to, but they would rather sit on their chairs and relax. That can't work in English!

This school year was a bit different because it involved a project based entirely on their original and authentic pieces of work. The reading and listening comprehension, as well as speaking activity, was wholly based on that. It was 4in1 – 4 skills in 1 project. But what a project that was!

Since Nikola Tesla branch school, Moravice is a small village school with approximately 40 students, only eight students are in Class 8. As in any other class, their abilities are different, so the teacher divided them into two groups of 4, putting different-ability students in the group.

The project was carried out in 5 stages:

- Stage 1: writing an original story of the free topic using the given set of words
- Stage 2: writing a different ending to the other group's story and discussion
- Stage 3: writing the questions regarding the story, which the other group answers
- Stage 4: recording the audio file with the story and doing the listening comprehension
- Stage 5: making a comic using a digital tool of your choice

Stage 1

Each group got a list of words they had to use in their stories in any way they wanted. There were nine nouns, nine verbs, and nine adjectives. After writing a story, they had to mark the words from the list and circle the ones they didn't use. It wasn't easy to come up with the story when they had only 27 words.

Group A

NOUNS	VERBS	ADJECTIVES
a fairy tale	to make	dried
legend	to dream	stone
a castle	to attack	faithful
a warrior	to conquer	old
a lady	to fight	brave
enemies	to become	peaceful
a messenger	to create	revengeful
walls	to knock	long
leaves	to invade	fierce

Group B

NOUNS	VERBS	ADJECTIVES
a science fiction	to fall	heavy
mystery	to land	unknown
rain	to conquer	terrifying
a planet	to shine	enchanted
Moon	to leave	influential
footsteps	to compose	intergalactic
music	to hear	main
troopers	to locate	long
mission	to reduce	vertical

The list of words used in the story

They worked hard, making several drafts before the final version was ready. They had to illustrate it so the reader could guess what the story was about by just seeing the pictures.



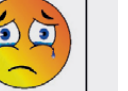


Groups A & B and their stories

After completing Stage 1, they did a self-evaluation for which they used the rubrics they helped their teacher design.

	3	2	1
Use of vocabulary	Mostly the given words (nouns, verbs & adjectives) are used in the story. The given model of writing is used (3 paragraphs). The student added many new elements to the story.	Some of the given words (nouns, verbs & adjectives) are used in the story. The given model of writing is used (3 paragraphs). The student added some new elements to the story.	A few of the given words (nouns, verbs & adjectives) are used in the story. The given model of writing is partially used (not all 3 paragraphs). The student didn't add any new elements to the story.
Spelling & punctuation & capital letters	Most of the words are spelled correctly and there are only a few mistakes in punctuation and capital letters.	Some of the words are misspelled and there are some mistakes in punctuation and capital letters.	Most of the words are misspelled and there are many mistakes in punctuation and capital letters.
Grammar (present, past & future tenses)	The tenses are mostly formed and used correctly.	There are some mistakes in the formation and usage of the tenses.	There are many mistakes in the formation and usage of the tenses.
Structure	The structure of the story is clear. In the story, the tenses are used in the given order (1 st paragraph – present, 2 nd paragraph – past, 3 rd paragraph – future).	The structure of the story is partly clear. In the story, the tenses are partially used in the given order (1 st paragraph – present, 2 nd paragraph – past, 3 rd paragraph – future).	A precise and clear structure is missing. In the story, the tenses are not used in the given order (1 st paragraph – present, 2 nd paragraph – past, 3 rd paragraph – future).
Originality & creativity	The given words are used in an original way to form a creative story. There are no repetitions of sentences or parts of the story. The story is visually appealing with its cover and illustrations.	The given words are partially used in an original way to form a creative story. There are some repetitions of sentences or parts of the story. The story is visually appealing with its cover and illustrations.	The given words are not used in an original way to form a creative story. There are many repetitions of sentences or parts of the story. There is no cover, and the illustrations are not included in the story.

SELF-EVALUATION SHEET: The story

Student's name: _____			
I participated in writing a story equally as all the other members.			
My group used all the words from the list.			
The structure of the story is clear. In our story the tenses are used in the given order (1 st paragraph – present, 2 nd paragraph – past, 3 rd paragraph – future).			
We used the correct spelling, punctuation and capital letters.			
We used all the tenses correctly (both in terms of formation and usage).			
We made the story visually appealing. The drawings were connected to the topic of the story.			



Assessment rubrics & Self-evaluation sheet: The story

Stage 2

After finishing the stories, the groups switched the papers. Each group read the other group's story and had to write a completely different ending and use the words from the list if the original group didn't use them.



Writing the different ending

After finishing writing the different endings, they gave back stories to each other, and the groups read them. Afterward, they discussed it, expressing their opinion – some liked the other group's end, some didn't, and some would keep parts of it. In contrast, others would change the rest and adjust it to the story better. It was a lively and productive discussion. The evaluation that followed the debate was also based on the teacher's rubrics done in collaboration with the students.



Assessment rubrics – Writing a different ending of the original story



	3	2	1
Use of vocabulary	All the unused words (that the original group didn't use) are used.	Two to three of the unused words (that the original group didn't use) are used.	Only one of the unused words (that the original group didn't use) is used.
Spelling & punctuation & capital letters	Most of the words are spelled correctly and there are only a few mistakes in punctuation and capital letters.	Some of the words are misspelled and there are some mistakes in punctuation and capital letters.	Most of the words are misspelled and there are many mistakes in punctuation and capital letters.
Grammar	The ending of the story is written in the future tense. The tense is correctly formed and used.	The ending of the story is written in the future tense. The tense is partially correctly formed and used.	The ending of the story is not written in the future tense.
Structure	The structure of the ending is clear.	The structure of the ending is somewhat clear.	A precise and clear structure of the ending is missing.
Originality & creativity	The idea of the ending is original and written in a creative way combining all the unused words creating a happy end.	The idea of the ending is somewhat original and written in a creative way combining only some of the unused words creating a happy end.	The idea of the ending is original, but it lacks creativity. It doesn't combine all the unused words nor there's a happy ending.

Grading scale: 15-14 = excellent
13 - 12 = very good
11-10 = good
9-8 = sufficient
< 8 = insufficient



Assessment rubrics: Writing a different ending to the original story

Notes

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Stage 3

The group leaders read their stories aloud to remind the members about the plot and the details. They used reading dice to develop the comprehension questions related to their compositions, and then they switched the stories again. The other group had to re-read the story and answer the questions using complete and correct sentences. They had to be attentive regarding vocabulary, grammar, spelling...all their favourite things!



Roll the dice



Afterward came the evaluation for which they used the following rubrics:

Assessment rubrics – Roll the dice & answer the questions

	3	2	1
Number of questions & quality of answers	All 6 questions are answered. The student answered in complete and detailed sentences. The student used correct spelling, punctuation & capital letters.	Some questions (4-5) are answered. The student partially answered in complete and detailed sentences. The student partially used correct spelling, punctuation & capital letters.	A few questions (1-3) are answered. The student rarely answered in complete and detailed sentences. The student rarely used correct spelling, punctuation & capital letters.
Originality & creativity	The questions are answered creatively and imaginatively.	The answers are very basic with no imagination in them.	The questions are answered as short as possible.

Grading scale: 5 – 6 = excellent
4 = very good
3 = good
2 = sufficient
0 - 1 = insufficient

Assessment rubrics: Roll the dice & answer the questions

Stage 4

After writing and reading comprehension, it was time to test their listening skills. How was it done? Each group recorded their story as an audio file using either a voice recorder on their mobile phones or Vocaroo. After recording it, they sent the file to the teacher, who made the listening tasks based on both stories. They listened to the recordings twice and tested their knowledge. Although the teacher expected that they would get all the answers correct regarding their story, some surprised her and did better with the other group's story.

Name: _____ Class: 7

Points: ___ / 15 Mark: _____ ()

Listening

Legend of the warrior and the woman

- 1 Listen to the story and write T / F / DS.
 - 1 Skye is reading a letter when someone knocks on the door. ____
 - 2 The soldiers attacked the castle several times in the past. ____
 - 3 Paden took part in the battle several years ago. ____
 - 4 The dragon beheaded Skye and Paden's enemies. ____
 - 5 Skye used some dried leaves to heal Paden's chest wound. ____

2 Listen to the story and write **circle** the correct answer.

Our little science fiction

- 1 The story takes place...
 - a) 16 years in the future
 - b) 15 years in the future
 - c) 17 years in the future
- 2 6000 tons is mostly...
 - a) the engine
 - b) the fuel
 - c) the radio tower
- 3 The orbit around the Earth lasted for...
 - a) 8 minutes
 - b) 3 hours
 - c) 6 months
- 4 6 months after the launch they were next to...
 - a) the Moon
 - b) Jupiter
 - c) Mars
- 5 They are going to spend ... on the asteroid.
 - a) 6 months
 - b) 3 months
 - c) 9 months

Listening comprehension tasks

Stage 5

The end of the project involved the most complex task, which included not only English but also finding your way with the digital tools. They had to choose the most suitable means to create a comic based on their stories. Some even combined two because they couldn't find some accessories they needed for their stories in the first tool they chose. So, they dug deeper into the IT world and found the solution. Clever them!

Legend of the warrior and the woman

The comic and the Self-evaluation sheet

SELF-EVALUATION SHEET: The comic book

Student's name:			
I participated in making a comic book equally as all the other members.			
We used one of the suggested online comic book tools.			
My group a required number of panels.			
All the panels relate to the story.			
The structure of the comic book is clear, and the comic book relates to the story.			
Landscapes and props are directly related to the theme and enhance the understanding of the scenes.			
We used the correct spelling, punctuation, and grammatical structures.			
We achieved a high level of creativity in making the comic book.			

Assessment rubrics: The comic book

	3	2	1
Theme	All panels relate to the story.	Some panels relate to the story.	1-2 panels relate to the story.
Characters, actions & dialogues	The main characters/things are identified, and their actions and dialogues are well-matched to each other.	The main characters are identified but not well developed and their actions and dialogues are too general.	It is hard to tell who the main characters/things are and whether their actions and dialogues are matched to each other.
Number of panels	The comic book has the required number of panels.	The comic book has little less than a required number of panels.	The comic book has only half of the required number of panels.
Landscapes & props	Landscapes and props are directly related to the theme and enhance the understanding of the scenes.	Landscapes and props are generally related to the theme and enhance the understanding of the scenes.	Landscapes and props seem to be randomly selected or distract the reader.
Spelling, punctuation & grammar	There are 1-3 spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors.	There are 4-5 spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors.	There are more than 5 spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors.
Creativity	Most pictures reflect a high level of student's creativity.	Half of the pictures reflect a medium level of student's creativity.	Less than half of the pictures reflect a high level of student's creativity.
Group work – cooperation and acceptance of each other's ideas & suggestions	The group members worked together on the comic book accepting each other's ideas and suggestions. The comic book is a result of their mutual effort.	Only half of the group members worked together on the comic book accepting each other's ideas and suggestions. The comic book is a result of the mutual effort of only half members of the group.	Less than half of the group members worked together on the comic book accepting each other's ideas and suggestions. The comic book is a result of the mutual effort of less than a half member of the group.

Assessment rubrics: The comic book

The evaluation followed the rubrics the students and the teacher created together.



The last month and a half passed quickly because the students were engaged and occupied with the project-based tasks. The project was time-consuming and combined all four skills. The final result was remarkable: two exciting stories with different endings, a lively discussion, records and listening tasks, and comics. All of which can be used with the generations to come. Also, it is an excellent example of what School for life should look like – students working together, coming up with original ideas, creating authentic pieces of work, expressing their opinion, trying out new technologies, and combining different fields of study to achieve the goal, supporting each other, and having fun while doing all that.

STEAM+E: Teaching English through STEAM

Konstantina Karamouta



Konstantina Karamouta holds a BA in English Language and English Language Teaching (University of Greenwich) and she is currently studying her Diploma in TESOL. She is a teacher and director of studies in her family's English school in Kavala, Greece. Konstantina loves innovation, alternative and unconventional thinking and she is constantly trying to find new methods and approaches to implement into her teaching. She is the founder of the STEAM Network and the designer of the English language programme 'Steps Into The World', a holistic approach promoting learning through STEAM to young learners. She strongly believes that we can change the world through Education.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) has become a broadly recognized method of teaching all over the globe. There are many schools and organizations that are involved with it and they adopt it into their teaching. TEFL community in Greece has become more and more creative over the last years and tries to perform new, innovative methods in their curriculum to improve their teaching skills.

In this paper, there will be discussed some of the benefits of STEAM not in education in general but in the field of TEFL. Although STEAM has been used as a supplementary way of teaching across the units, as additional activities in lessons or even as a final step of a unit in course-books, it hasn't been seen as the basic curriculum yet. But the truth is that vocabulary, grammar and all of the four skills can be taught all based on STEAM. For instance, instead of doing a color experiment as a final step when the learners have learnt the colors, do an experiment for the students to learn the colors. The most common experiment is the volcanic eruption. Take 4 jars and put 2 or 3 drops of food coloring inside them. (1st jar: yellow food coloring, 2nd jar: red food coloring, 3rd jar: blue food coloring, 4th jar: mix blue and yellow food coloring so as to create green). Add 5 tablespoons of vinegar and squeeze some liquid soap. Mix them together and add 2 tablespoons of soda. There will be an eruption in the jars. You can use this experiment to teach colours to your primary students at the beginning of the lesson.

Teaching young and very young learners demands effort, lots of lesson planning and new and innovative ideas all the time. I have started making lesson plans and building materials based on STEAM for the last two years and I have incorporated it into my curriculum for young learners.

At first, I was terrified of how to manage all the demanding outcomes that the young learners should have, but by working on it over and over again I managed to have outstanding lesson materials and outstanding results-more than I could ever imagine. Young learners are curious learners, they want to explore, to have enthusiasm, to become creative and so much more that STEAM can offer. By using STEAM into the curriculum, learners become engineers, scientists, artists, photographers, actors/actresses, mathematicians, they develop their cognitive skills, their critical thinking, their creativity! Since young learners have a natural disposition toward science with their sense of curiosity and creativity, STEAM offers them great opportunities to dive into these two.

A STEAM approach helps teachers to create experiences into their teaching and this is what we are looking for in the field of education in the 21st century. "STEAM is important because it helps teachers to incorporate multiple disciplines at the same time and promotes learning experiences that allow children to explore, question, research, discover and exercise innovative building skills" (Colker and Simon, 2014). STEAM provides young learners a natural environment in which they can collaborate, communicate and explore all together. My favorite example is when I first started implementing STEAM in my curriculum, a student came and told me "Do you know the magic with the carpet and the lamp?" and of course I didn't know what he was talking about. Our learners are exposed to constant input through visuals and online feed and they learn so many things that they want to test out all the time and that makes them more eager to the process that follows.

STEM became STEAM the last years and that was the greatest discovery in this section. Art is a vast section for me and for my school as well and it is very crucial that it has been a part of STEM. The right part of our brain functions with the help of arts, creativity and emotions. In the section of arts there are the visual arts which include drawing, painting and photography, there are the literary arts such as drama and poetry, there are the performing arts as dance, music and theatre as well. Art experiences help teachers improve their teaching and learners to gain more knowledge and broaden their horizons. It helps both sides to investigate their inner self and appreciate the world around them. Arts help students become more fluent speakers through their creativity and willing to continue their learning process. It has been seen globally that many educators are teaching through arts with marvelous results. My favorite example is when our students created a piece of art when NASA released an image on social media. Our students recreated the image and they managed to have a masterpiece by gaining knowledge and search-

ing information about what exactly was their inspirational image. They received great feedback from the official NASA account after they sent them an email with their creation.

STEAM has everything we need to make our learners ready for the years that follow. It is very common nowadays for students to lack a sense of will, not want to attend courses, avoid searching for new interests and be surrounded by people who suffer from COVID-19 and financial crisis. We, as educators, should shine their way to education, we should stand for them and be with them and we have to be prepared to make them interested in reading, research, critical thinking and creativity. It is our chance to change past habits and bring "awesomeness" back to life. The world is changing and we should change with it, not tomorrow but today.



References

- Colker, L. J. and Simon, F. (2014). Cooking with STEAM. Teaching Young Children, 8(1), 10-13.

The art of being a teacher

Sanja Nose



Sanja Nose knew she will work with children when she was in the fifth grade, now she has been teaching Slovene and English for a decade. She made a big rainbow on the back wall of her classroom because she is optimistic and wants her pupils in primary school to know that there will always come better times even if there are stormy days. She believes that everything is easier with a smile.

Since the fifth grade, I was inspired to become an English teacher. I wanted to empower myself and take one more study, choosing between teaching Slovene or journalism. Well, I chose education, so I have been teaching English and Slovene for 11 years now. I married a journalist 7 years ago, so I actually got everything I wanted. I am also a mother of two lovely and lively boys.

The teacher through pupil's eyes ...

I work at the same primary school which I attended as a pupil and where I got inspired. But in my educational journey I didn't see only good examples of the art of teaching, which is normal. I gathered the pieces of what kind of teacher I would like to be and some characteristics or attitudes which should be avoided at all costs. All this includes the teacher's behaviour, professional knowledge (I have always assumed that a teacher knows everything, like a walking dictionary or something), even clothing, shoes, and haircut.

Formal education

After finishing the Faculty of Arts I had the luck to immediately get a job at another primary school and then the learning process really began. The theory (or better one third which was actually useful) from my formal education had to be brought to life and after a decade I still consider myself a beginner. In the meantime, I became a mother and now, when my boys are at school, I have a much more realistic view of our education system – the positive and negative sides. Looking only from the teacher's desk is not all that should be seen. After becoming the class teacher, I realised there is much more than only the knowledge and skills that we should pass to our pupils ...

Back to learning

I felt weak in many ways when educating children. I will not mention the paperwork, which is still my nightmare. My pupils had different learning problems, disabilities I had never heard of when studying to be a teacher but still I was in the position to help them. How? Back to learning ... I must admit I was mostly learning from pupils as well as digging the theoretical background, we were swimming together and made it, at least I hope so. I am thankful that my headmistress always gave me the green light to enrol various programmes, some I did on my own. After two horrible years of distance learning, I lost most of my pedagogical fire, and I paid myself a Slovene programme called A teacher who can do it differently. We

have two meetings a month via a videoconference and I have met some really inspiring people – that's what I needed. There is also some homework, which again is one of my weaknesses. But still, the show must go on. At my school, we are also included in the Formative Assessment project – Creating safe and encouraging learning environment of the 21st century. In this context I went to the Conference of Formative Assessment (FA) in Practice in March where they presented at least 40 examples of FA in the marketplace, the Visible Learning School presentation, workshops, networking, and so on. That's what a teacher needs, to go out there and just absorb what is carefully given to us.

Jump ... and fly

The best thing that happened this year in connection to my professional growth was the Erasmus+ programme which took me to Bologna at the beginning of April. There I was in the Italian capital of education since they have the oldest university in the world. This was something totally new for me. The topic of the seminar was Soft Skills and Emotional Intelligence for teachers and education staff. I went there for a week with a college from Tolmin which I hadn't known before but it felt as I knew her since forever. I could easily say that while chatting to her (she is a headmistress and taught at different schools) I learnt a lot about practical teaching and life dilemmas. We were a group of teachers from France, Spain, Portugal, Latvia and Italy and this week was relaxing, funny and fulfilling in more ways. We had lessons every morning till 2 p.m., did a lot of group work, sharing our experience and good practise. One of the topics was also public speaking and on the last day we had to prepare an instant speech for 3 minutes. Mine was about the »eureka« I discovered that week – teachers should always stay learners, especially language teachers should travel, make foreign friends and communicate – all that I tell to my pupils but don't do it myself.

Not only happy memories

April 2022 brought not only good memories, but also some scary ones. My school became the most famous one in Slovenia on 26th April. My pupil brought a gun to school, thinking it wasn't real, trying to appear cool in front of his peers. During the break some boys were pushing over with the gun with no bad intention but it ended with a shot which brushed up one boy's leg. This unfortunate occurrence had a happy ending, we were extremely lucky and I still get goose pimples thinking about it. I had never imagined that such an American story could happen at our rural school. Since that day, we have collaborated with the police, having parents' meeting and workshops for children to make them aware of all the dark sides of the real and virtual world.

Keep marching on

Yes, I am a teacher and sometimes I feel worn out, pessimistic about the today's youth and the system. I was also thinking about changing my job. But then I realised, leaving is the easy way out ... But we are no quitters, we are doing a good job and we will keep marching on, as learners and teachers.

Empowering reading skills: Interaction between primary and secondary schools

Tajana Bundara



Tajana has been teaching English and German for more than 2 decades. She works at Ivan Lucić High School in Trogir, Croatia. She enjoys working on different projects and creating teaching materials. As a member of the National Expert Working Group for English, she contributed with educational video lessons supporting the 'i-nastava' national project during the lockdown. So far, she has created more than 40 video lessons that can be seen on the web pages of the Ministry of Education. She has been awarded four times for her work by the Ministry of Education as one of 513 accomplished teachers in the Republic of Croatia.

Her work is her passion, and her motto – Change is the only constant in life (Heraclitus).

'Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.'
Joseph Addison

Inspired by the workshop 'Kome danas trebaju knjige i čitanje?' ('Who needs books and reading nowadays?') delivered by Prof. Anita Peti-Stantić, Ph.D., Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb, I came up with this mini project engaging and connecting secondary and primary education level, aiming at enhancing reading and digital literacy. Ultimately, it grew into a current international eTwinning project – Mixed Minds.

Why is reading important?

This digital, fast-paced world changes our habits, ways of thinking, and minds. Younger generations tend to spend more time in front of their digital gadgets, leaving little space for the valuable activity of reading, especially printed stories, books, and novels, which require enduring concentration, keeping kids away from all distractions. Such deep concentration brings deeper comprehension of the text; it stimulates imagination and awakens curiosity, and sometimes encourages us to look up some words in the dictionary (Peti-Stantić, 2019; Kovač, 2021)

However, when the reading activity takes place in a foreign language, the benefits multiply – it enriches our vocabulary in the foreign language, helps absorb phrases and grammatical structures intuitively, resulting in more eloquent and confident speakers. Consequently, this activity leads towards building a highly communicative person with a deeper understanding of life and society, enhanced

critical thinking skills, and intercultural competence (Stewart, 2005).

Materials

The selected stories are from two books, "Buda za laku noć" (Croatian version) and "Buddha at Bedtime" (English version), and contain significant moral teachings (see Nagaraja 2008, 2010, 2016). The messages of these stories emphasize peace, compassion, and mindfulness and offer teachings on how to cope with the challenges that children face while growing up. Each story ends with a moral, opening the starting gate for various discussions, forging critical thinking skills and creativity. By providing students with bilingual stories the aim was to motivate them to read, not to feel intimidated by the lexis and morphosyntax, but also to provide them with intuitive insight in how to express certain thoughts, ideas in a foreign language (Iluz-Cohen & Walters, 2012).

A teaching strategy to boost reading comprehension

The teaching aim of this mini project was to promote reading literacy, strengthen students' reading comprehension, create a network of different age group students to enhance students' intercultural competence, boost their social and emotional skills, critical thinking skills and creativity, and finally enrich their digital competences.

With my secondary students (2nd graders) I used summarizing as a strategy to boost reading comprehension (Khatayut & Karavi, 2014). With a focus on building a reading network of different peer levels, I invited my primary school colleagues, Sanja Božinović, Snježana Omazić and Lidija Šaravanja to join me. Each peer group was appointed with tasks aligned with their English proficiency level, i.e., the curriculum outcomes were adapted to class levels. The reading collaboration took place via videoconferences, where seniors read to juniors checking their reading comprehension and offering them online vocabulary games. The entire activity spanned over three months.

Work process

The work process in this teaching model started with 16-year-old secondary students. The seniors were assigned stories in English with Croatian equivalents to improve their bilingualism and promote an interest in reading. Since their English proficiency level is mixed, facilitating the acquisition of the second language through bilingual stories supports their literacy and boosts their ability to transfer knowledge and skills between languages, resulting in improved vocabulary and fluency in both languages (Iluz-Cohen & Walters, 2012). Keeping in mind that

the selected stories are too complex for sixth and seventh grade primary students, the seniors' first task was to read the stories (2-4 pages, more than 500 words) and summarize them using the past tenses (200-word-summaries), making them understandable and approachable for younger students. The tasks inside the groups were assigned to them according to their language abilities and skills. The groups consisted of four students: the summary writer (although all group members contributed to this task), the narrator (who was responsible for reading the summary during the videoconference), the comprehension checker (who wrote the comprehension check questions that were to be answered after the reading), and one IT person (who covered the pre-reading task with online vocabulary games).

Mindful of the fact that different learner styles exist in the classroom and some teenagers get frustrated in case activities are time-consuming, meaning not all the seniors would read the stories in Croatian to check the reading comprehension, as an option, they were offered a free online software to simplify complex texts, reduce frustration, save time, and meet the learning outcome – rewordify.com.

Summarizing means employing writing skills, which can be a 'terrifying' activity for some students, and this can be the moment when digital tools benefit writing. To make it less intimidating for the students and help them tackle the challenges of writing skills and/or improve their writing skills, I offered them two AI helpers – Wordtune, an AI Google Chrome extension to improve students' writing, and Quillbot, a paraphrasing online tool featuring multi-functions.

The next phase included reading summaries to younger students via an online platform with a pre-reading task (vocabulary game), and a post-reading task (questions checking the comprehension). Each group member performed his/her role during the conference, the IT-person ran the online vocabulary game task, the narrator read the summary, and the comprehension checker assessed comprehension. Another important point was the moral of each story, an important topic discussed at the end of each story summary empowering students' critical thinking skills.

Having finished the collaborative digital reading activity, each education level committed to performing digital reading comprehension tasks. The students were designing bookmarkers, book covers, book trailers at all educational levels. All their products were summoned on Google slides presentation accessible to all the teachers in this network. We also recorded the students' voices while reading, which influenced their motivation for pronunciation accuracy.



Image 2a

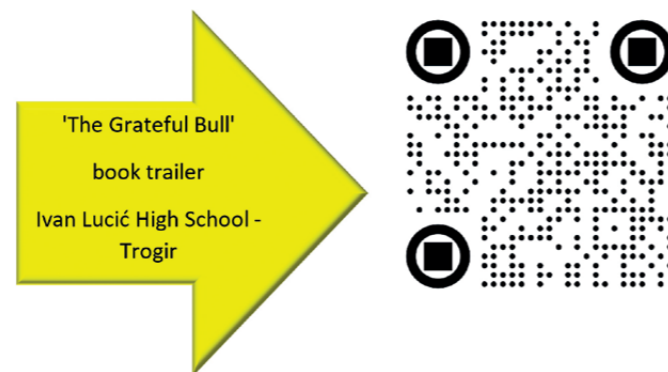


Image 2b

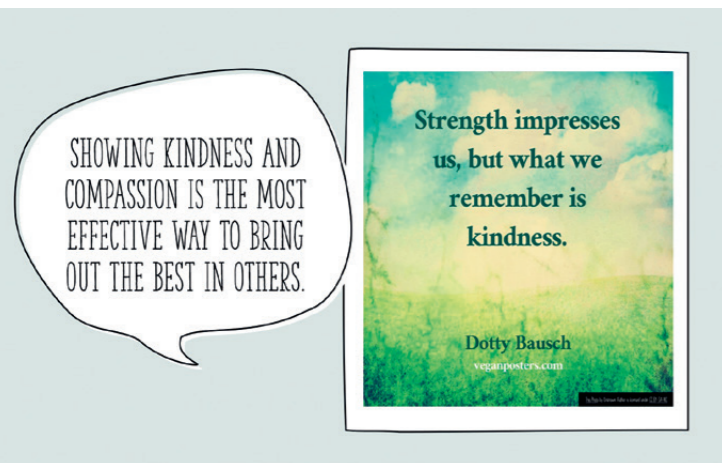


Image 1



Image 3

Nikola Hribar Primary School with their teacher Sanja Božinović prepared a presentation containing all the students' works and invited the secondary school students to attend another video-session showcasing their products. These elementary pupils also prepared a live reading session of the story The Brave Little Parrot using FlipGrid.

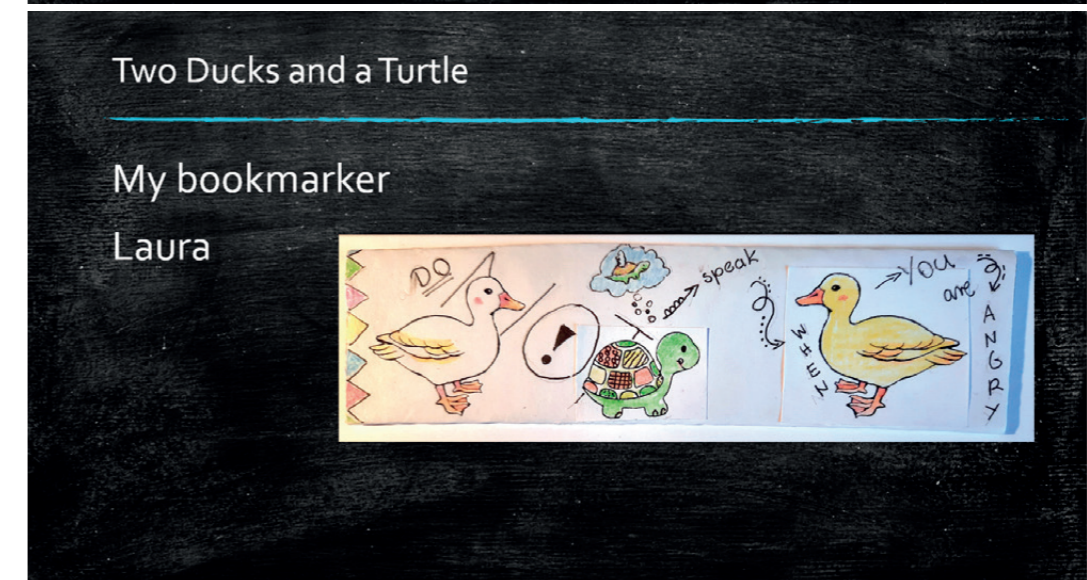
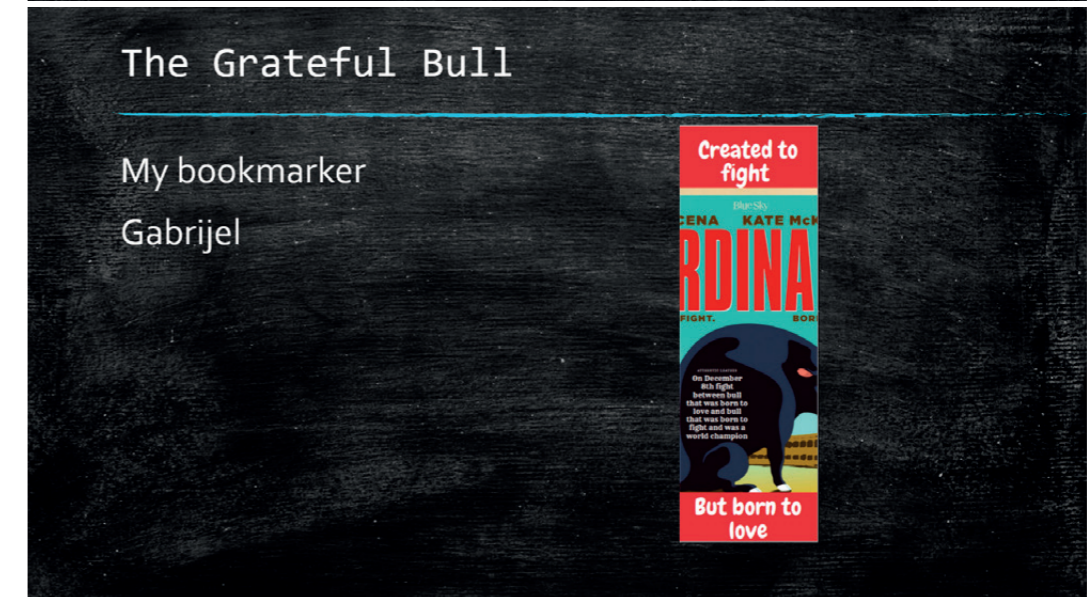
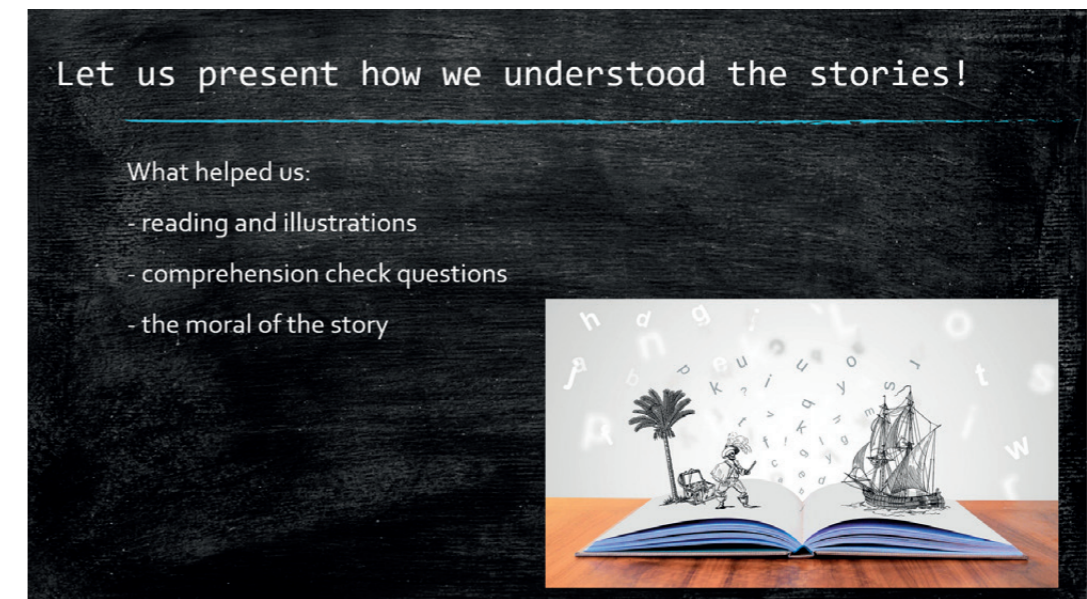


Image 4

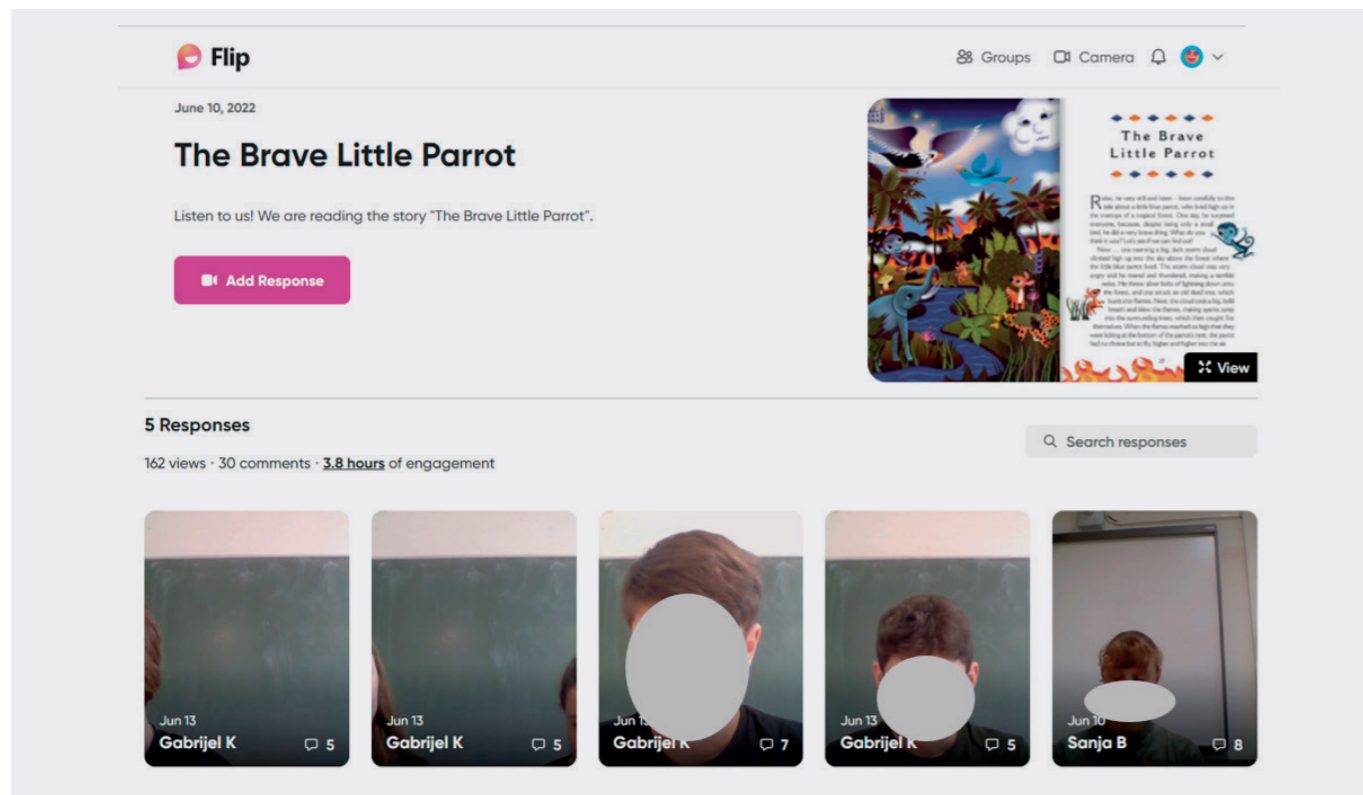


Image 5



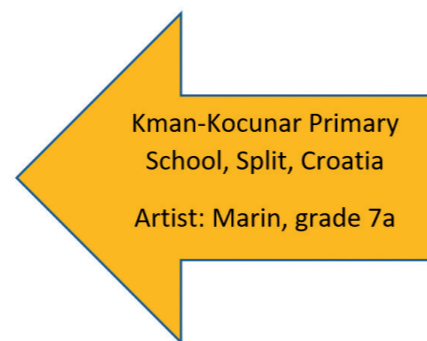
Image 6



Vladimir Nazor Primary School from Čepin with their teachers Lidija Šaravanja and Kman-Kocunar Primary School from Split with Snježana Omazić, demonstrated their reading comprehension through drawings and bookmarks labelled with morals from the stories.



Image 7



Since this mini project turned out to be a valuable teaching method to strengthen reading and writing skills along with critical thinking skills, creativity, and intercultural competence, I have developed it further as a current eTwinning project entitled Mixed Minds, which will be conducted throughout this school year. I have added one more level to this project and that is 9-year-old pupils from Finland under the leadership of their teacher Hanna-Kaisa Malinen, Mutalan koulu Elementary School. In this case we have three different educational levels, lower-level primary school from Finland, two primary schools from Croatia (Sanja Božinović with sixth graders and Snježana Omazić with sixth graders) and first graders in the high school.

Once again, we have started from the higher education level, so secondary school students have summarized stories for sixth graders using the Present Simple. The students were organized in groups, each group consisted of three members: person 1 had to write a 200-word summary, person 2's task was to write a 100-word summary, and person 3, after having received the long and short summary samples, has written four comprehension check questions for each summary along with a vocabulary section. The number of words in the summaries is intended to meet the reading criteria of the two education levels.

In phase two, Sanja Božinović and her pupils create Minecraft games based on the sent summaries, whereas Snježana Omazić and her 6th graders have various group tasks. Group Yellow creates a picture dictionary accompanied with the recorded retold story, group Blue designs a comic book, group Green plans to design a picture book, group Orange intends to design the main characters' avatars with their short description (teaching the youngest ones adjectives) and an optional group Pink plans to design a dance scenography and record it on TikTok. The partners from Finland will act the stories out and create Kahoot questions and digital comics.

In phase three the youngest pupils from Finland will choose stories from the same book based on the title and vivid illustrations, explain in a short video or audio recording why they find the chosen stories interesting and ask the seniors to summarize these for them. We also plan the same activities after the summaries are completed and delivered.

To boost productivity, encourage collaboration, promote culture and communication, we also plan to organize three videoconferences – On the Same Page, International Fiction Addiction Festival and The Reading Kings and Queens Fair. This represents an opportunity for students to present their products, read their favourite parts of the stories, discuss and review ideas, exchange their impressions, socialize, and experience peer evaluation.

Conclusion

The use of collaborative learning and global communication increased my pupils' passion for learning and got them to use higher-order thinking skills. Students learned the significance of exchanging ideas and discussing subject-related subjects through group projects and collaboration, which helped them achieve the learning objectives.

Additionally, using summarizing strategies has given my kids improved reading comprehension abilities. The summarizing technique has assisted pupils in understanding the key elements of the material and in grasping the key concepts that would help them master it.

The ability to use and generate digital information is a 21st-century necessity, which brings us to our final point. Knowledge of digital skills has helped to improve the educational process and has adapted the learning content to better meet the demands of pupils.

References

- Conrad, D. (2002). Deep in the hearts of learners: Insights into the nature of online community, *Journal of Distance Education*.
- Eryansyah, E., Erlina, E., Fiftinova, F., & Nurweni, A. (2019). EFL Students' Needs of Digital Literacy to Meet the Demands of 21st-Century Skills. *Indonesian Research Journal in Education| IRJEI*, 442-460.
- Iluz-Cohen, P., & Walters, J. (2012). Telling stories in two languages: Narratives of bilingual preschool children with typical and impaired language. *Bilingualism: language and cognition*, 15(1), 58-74.
- Khathayut, P., & Karavi, P. (2014). Summarizing Techniques: The Effective Indicators of Reading Comprehension?
- Kovač, M. (2021). Čitam da se pročitam, Deset razloga za čitanje u digitalno doba, Naklada Ljevak d.o.o., Zagreb, 2021.
- Nagaraja, D. (2008, 2010, 2016). Buddha at bedtime. London: Watkins Media Limited.
- Nagaraja, D. (2008, 2010, 2016). Buda za laku noć. London: Watkins Media Limited.
- Nurhayati, D. A. W., & Fitriana, M. W. (2018). Effectiveness of summarizing in teaching reading comprehension for EFL students. *IJOLTL: Indonesian Journal of Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 3(1), 33-50.
- Peti-Stantić, A. (2019). Čitanjem do (spo)razumijevanja. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak d.o.o.
- Stewart, J. H. (2005). Foreign language study in elementary schools: Benefits and implications for achievement in reading and math. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 33(1), 11-16.

Notes

Blank lined area for notes.

The beautiful Belfast conference

Polona Šivec



Polona Šivec is an English teacher at Heroja Janeza Hribarja Primary School in Stari trg pri Ložu. She has been the treasurer for IATEFL Slovenia for 10 years. Apart from teaching, her passions include hiking and travelling the world.



The IATEFL conference is one of the biggest events for English teaching professionals in the world and two years ago I was chosen as the representative of IATEFL Slovenia to attend it. Unfortunately, the pandemic happened and the conference was held online. 2022 was finally the year when I was able to attend the live conference, which was held in Belfast. I had already visited Belfast a few years ago, so I knew that it is a beautiful city with extremely warm and friendly people.

The conference was from 17 – 20 May. The first day was a meeting for representatives of different associations and the next four days was the time to attend workshops, plenaries and the fair. I attended many plenaries and workshops and sometimes it was very difficult to choose one, since there were so many. A great deal of them were still related to the effects and changes that the pandemic brought to schools and education itself, so they showed different digital tools and platforms and ways to engage students during online lessons. Some of them, however, were already looking into the future, offering advice on how to get students engaged and motivated about school again.

The plenary that impressed me the most was that of Hasna and Asmaa AbuMezied, who talked about teaching in conflict areas. Their plenary was extremely emotional since it presented not only the problems of educational system in conflict areas, but the presenters also shared their personal experience of teaching in Gaza and how students deal with everyday fear and difficult situations that they are faced with.

I also attended various workshops, which gave practical tips or advice. I liked Mojca Belak's workshop on pronunciation. She showed some simple activities on teaching stress patterns and pronunciation without being dull at it. I was also impressed by a workshop by Fannie Daou. She explored the world of flashcards, which might seem old-school, but the activities she showed and encouraged us to participate in were fun and new and something I will definitely use in the future.

While in Belfast, I met some wonderful people, and also had the opportunity to get to know the city better and explore its surroundings. Hopefully, in the future I will be able to attend the conference again, since it is an event that every English teacher should experience. It gives one a new perspective not only professionally but also personally.

Are face-to-face conferences still worth going to?

Danny Singh



Danny Singh, born and raised in London, but now based in Rome and Canterbury, gives creative English language lessons and teacher training courses all over Europe. He also offers stimulating monthly presentations on language related issues at Rome's biggest international bookshop and has his own YouTube channel which contains a series of interactive English video lessons. He is author of two books, "I was a happy man...then one day I came across Laughter Yoga" and "Learning English through the mind and the body" and is currently working on his third book, "Life is full of surprises". He regularly attends Pilgrims TT summer courses as a Guest Speaker.

Website: www.laughnlearn.net
e-mail: singh_danny@hotmail.com
YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCA2CFTD27Yw6Lf7kOW0PbOQ/videos

Menu

My IATEFL Slovenia Conference Experience
What makes the IATEFL Slovenia Conference so special?
Avoid drinking wine at conferences
Why Online conferences are better?
Why Face-to-face conferences are better?

My IATEFL Slovenia Conference Experience

The IATEFL Slovenia Conference in Topolšica back in 2013 was where it had all begun, my first presentation at an international teaching conference, a one-off experience I had assumed. Little did I know that I'd be back the following year and almost every other year, plus have attended several other conferences in the meantime, as I entered this endless spiral of travelling to conferences, month after month.

The only IATEFL Slovenia conference that I had the audacity to miss was in 2015, as it came just as my first ever book was about to be published and I was working to a strict deadline. I even attended the smaller national conference in Slovenia in October 2020, as the only non-Slovenian representative. Many people thought I was either extremely courageous or completely mad to even think of attending that one, as it came in a moment in which it was clear that new restrictions were coming back into force. This was after a summer in which we had all breathed a sigh of relief assuming that the nightmare was over. The reason I made the decision to go to that one, despite the lack of international colleagues, no social programme and of course few participants was that from March to October 2020 everything had been online.

As it was, fortune favoured the brave and my trek across two borders to get to this conference was well worth it, as I had the pleasure of seeing people in the flesh again, unmasked faces from time to time, real smiles, real coffee breaks, I noticed people's clothing much more than I usually did. The other reason I was grateful that I had gone was that there were no other face-to-face conferences after that in 2020, much less in 2021 where everything remained fervently online.

For those of you who have never attended a face-to-face conference, you might be wondering how on earth I ended up attending so many other conferences around different parts of Europe, when in reality, the Slovenia conference is my favourite.

What makes the IATEFL Slovenia Conference so special?

When I travel to conferences all over Europe, one of the main topics of conversation is to discuss which are our favourite conferences and why. I always give the same answer, my favourite conference is the IATEFL Slovenia one. The reasons are many, firstly, everything is held in the same location, that means we sleep, eat, give and attend talks and socialise in the same hotel. It also means that we don't have to carry around books and other materials that we might need all day, we can even change clothes during the day, being smartly dressed for some occasions and casually dressed for others. We can also go to the swimming pool when we like or have a nap if we are exhausted. When I want to speak to someone in particular, I know that I will find them somewhere once I know their habits, they might be an early riser who gets down at dawn for breakfast, or they might be standing on a staircase in the evening with a glass of wine, there's no chance of them disappearing at the end of the talks never to be seen again.

Another thing that makes the Slovenia conference so great is the social programme. There is really a wide range of activities from the international evening (my favourite event), where you can sample a range of culinary pleasures often home-made, pub quizzes and lip-synching to name a few. The workshops and plenaries are generally of high quality too, but the thing which really makes the Slovenia conference is the S factor. There are two S factors in fact. The first is Sandra (Vida). Without her, the conference would never be what it is and the second is students. Not simply the fact of having them, after all, several conferences have them, but they are often passive and just there to bolster their CV, while at the Slovenia conference, they really do put in a full stint of work. Naturally, the fact that they give so much means that they often get back in return much more than student volunteers at other conferences do.

Avoid drinking wine at conferences

Here's what happens if you do drink wine at conferences. As I sipped a glass of wine at the 2013 Slovenia conference, I was approached by a couple of Croatian ladies who asked me if I'd ever heard of their conference. I replied that I hadn't and they promptly began to explain why their conference was even better. It sounded appetizing and sure enough in 2014 as I sipped a glass of wine at the HUPE Croatia conference in Opatija, I looked out at the sea and thought that this conference and location was truly marvellous. I was then approached by a Hungarian who asked me if I'd ever heard of the conference in Budapest. And so it went on and on. At each conference, I would be approached by someone from another country promoting their conference and I would eventually be enticed into going. If you don't watch yourself, you could end up going to a different conference every weekend, so be careful!

By 2019, I was probably attending about 14 or 15 different international conferences. All this came to a head in March 2020. Having just scrambled back into Rome from Athens after attending the TESOL Greece conference, I was told by the then Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, that from midnight they would be closing the borders and I was not going anywhere. Ironically, the next conference on my list was to be the Slovenia conference of March 2020, yes, the same one which was postponed to October and then done on a slightly smaller scale.

From March 2020, all international conferences went online, this lasted through 2021 and only in 2022 did some conferences become face-to-face again. 2023 looks even more hopeful, as many countries are returning to the face-to-face format.

Why Online conferences are better?

Once we had got over the shock of having to do everything online, we suddenly discovered the benefits of online conferences. Firstly, there was the reduced cost, as we didn't have to pay any travel or hotel bills. Secondly, we could attend to other needs that we might have, while still following the online conference. Mothers with demanding families could still enjoy quality time with their kids, prepare something tasty for dinner, let the plumber in to deal with a leak in the bathroom, all while following a conference online. We didn't have to worry about how we looked, make-up became superfluous, we could dress or even not dress, switch off the camera so we couldn't be seen and best of all, if we attended a talk that turned out not to be our cup of tea, we could quietly disappear and try another without embarrassing anyone, either the speaker or ourselves. Another great advantage of online conferences is that we can attend them wherever they might be, that includes the ones that we would normally never even consider travelling to. After all, aside from the time zone issue, attending an online conference in Asia is pretty much the same as attending one in Europe or South America. Even though we are now moving back towards face-to-face activities, there are many teachers and I understand why, who insist that they are now happy to do most, if not all of their work online.

Why Face-to-face conferences are better?

Despite the numerous advantages of online conferences, there are some things that they cannot replicate. One of the things I enjoy most about attending a face-to-face conference is actually seeing that country, the people, tasting their food, listening to their language, observing their customs and behaviour. You cannot get that online. In addition, the official coffee breaks, lunch breaks and dinner breaks are real. You get a coffee, some biscuits and something interesting to eat and drink later. But more importantly, the

Having fun at the IATEFL Slovenia conference 2019.



Enjoying local cuisine in Ukraine 2019.



Demonstrating the Welcome laugh at the IATEFL Slovenia conference 2013.

breaks are even more important than the workshops and plenaries themselves, as that's where networking and connecting is done, where social exchange and cultural knowledge can be picked up.

At the face-to-face conferences that I have attended all over Europe, I regularly sell a few of my books and often get invited to give teacher trainings or have fun with the students at various educational institutions. This is probably the most valuable asset, working with people of different cultures and observing how they react to my approach in a situation which for me is not the norm. During the online conference period, I did not sell a single book at a conference despite them being mentioned by the person who introduced me to the audience, neither was I invited to work with teachers or students, not even online. This is of course no accident; this shows how important a person's presence is for building up rapport.

I have had fantastic experiences dealing with students in Debrecen (Hungary), Skopje and Struga (North Macedonia) and Thessaloniki (Greece) to name just a few, but probably the one I value most of all was thanks once again to Slovenia and the very last conference in Topolšica 2019, before the location was changed. At that conference, there was a Ukrainian lady, Oksana Vahil who gave an amazing one-hour workshop on activities to use with very young learners, running around, crawling on the floor, curling up into strange positions, the kind of things that I like doing with some of my over-serious businessmen. After her workshop, we had a chat, exchanged ideas and within three months she had organised a workshop in her hometown of Chernihiv, the city of legends. In September 2019, I attended this three-day workshop with about twenty-five enthusiastic teachers from various parts of Ukraine, one day given by Oksana, one day by a German teacher who flew in specially and one day given by me. As well as this, I was taken around this lovely city on various tours, given the opportunity to taste the local cuisine and made to feel welcome at all times.



Training teachers of Young Learners in Ukraine.

To conclude, online conferences and online activities in general have given us many opportunities that we lacked previous to 2020, however, they cannot and never will replicate the benefits (of which there are many) of the physical presence.

28th

International IATEFL Slovenia Conference

9th - 12th March 2023

Terme Vivat

We are happy to
announce the following
plenary speakers:

Marie Delaney

Jeremy Harmer

Gregg Sotiropoulos

Thom Jones

Grzegorz Śpiewak



TEACHING Only for the brave

An interview with ...

Sandra Vida, IATEFL Slovenia Vice President



"I don't know. People say I work too much, but I am quite proud of myself these past years as I have learnt to let go, enjoy myself much more than I used to and just do what I love doing. Taking care of IATEFL Slovenia related things happens to be one of the things I enjoy, so... This is why it is so hard to get rid of me. I really love being part of all this, I love the friendships that have come out of it and I love the person IATEFL Slovenia has helped me become."

Teaching is...

Everything. I think my whole essence is teaching, I know that because when I get into a situation when any kind of teaching is required, I grab the opportunity with both hands. Therefore, my daughters often tell me to stop being a teacher with them. It is hard though. Stop being a teacher. Like trying not to be Sandra anymore. I am not completely sure if that is good or bad for my students, but for most of the time what you see is what you get with me.

Most memorable teaching experience?

Oh, there are so many. Mostly the moments, when I put my foot into my mouth. It happens often. Just recently a student asked me how to write a word and I wrote it on the board. He said thank you and we went on with our lives. In the middle of the night, I realise, I wrote the word incorrectly. So the next lesson, I tell the student... "you know, that word I wrote on the board. I spelt it wrongly. It should be like this, so please correct it in your notebook." And he replies, yes I know. And I asked him why he didn't correct me if he knew. He just said I looked so determined he didn't want to ruin that for me. Those moments. Always.

What's the biggest challenge for you when it comes to teaching teenagers?

At the moment, the biggest challenge for me is to compete with what phones offer. It seems the students of today cannot be motivated with anything any more. And I get it, compared to the games on their phones, I am really boring no matter what I am trying to do. I think at least in secondary schools we are far beyond the "a teacher needs to motivate".

Who is your professional inspiration and why?

Hmmm. I get inspired easily. I get inspired by people with ideas, active people, people who care. This is why I enjoy IATEFL Slovenia so much. It brings all those people together. Especially at a conference there are so many inspirational people there and because of my work, I get to meet them. I would never dare to approach them otherwise. Funny, how I always encourage people to go and talk to the speakers at the conference, which I would never dare to do had I not been the organiser.

When are you most productive?

I often joke I only have two speeds – either full speed or standstill. So I get the most done when I am slightly over-worked. On days, when there is everything to be done and I manage, then I am also the happiest.

Would you rather be fluent in all languages or be a master of every musical instrument?

Oh, a hard one. I think I would have to choose the instruments here. I have always loved music and being able to play an instrument has brought many joys to my life. It was also much harder to learn an instrument than a language for me. I hope this gift would come with artistic abilities as well – so not just the technical skills, but also the sense of beauty and art and skill for entertaining people.

What advice would you give to your young self?

Relax. In all senses. Dare to spend the money, dare to ask, dare to go, dare to do. Don't overthink things. Take more time for friends, tend friendships. Sometimes bite your tongue and don't say it even if it is obvious and needs to be said. That would have spared me many troubles.

Favourite English word?

Thingamijig.

Paper book or e-book?

Definitely paper.

Tea or coffee?

Tea. Coffee smells so bad to me I have never been able to even try it.

Words to live by ...

Give and you will receive. And even if not, at least you have not lived in vain.



Lesson idea

The eccentric diner



Learning objectives	Level	Topic
Students will practise their speaking, reading and writing skills.	Intermediate	Food

Teacher's notes

- 1 Ask students to tell each other in pairs about their favourite food and also one or two things they would never eat.
- 2 Spot check by asking a few students to report back to class.
- 3 Put on the board any vocabulary that doesn't seem to be known by all.
- 4 Ask students if they know anybody who has eaten something they think is unusual or which has been prepared in an unfamiliar way.
- 5 Give out the cut-up strips to small groups and ask them to put the story in the correct order.
- 6 Groups check by reading the story until all agree on the correct sequence.
- 7 Students write a parallel story in groups/pairs or for an individual homework exercise.

Recommended solution:

6, 12, 5, 3, 10, 1, 7, 4, 11, 8, 2, 9.

The activity was designed by Kent School of English.



Do you have ideas you'd like to share with colleagues? Activities, tips, techniques, simple or sophisticated, tried or innovative, something that has worked well for you. Send your lesson ideas, plans, learning activities or teaching tips to alenka.tratnik@iatefl.si

Learning activities

A spread of tested ideas, suggestions, tips and techniques to use in any classroom. Try them out for yourself and send us your own contributions.

Class story

This is a good interactive way of providing a model composition before asking students to do a similar one for individual homework. It can also be used for consolidating language points which have been covered in class.

- 1 Simply give the class a title at the top of the blackboard, and invite suggestions:
 - How should the story be started?
 - What should the next sentences be?
 - What should the characters be called?
 - What should happen next?
- 2 The class must decide collectively at each point on the best way to proceed, and the teacher writes the resulting story on the board, correcting grammar as appropriate. Encourage the use of past tenses and reported speech.
- 3 At the end, select one member of the class to read the story aloud. This allows the class to see the pattern of the whole text, and to feel more easily where the individual sentences which they have been working on fit into this framework.

Variation

This is also a good exercise for introducing or revising the conventions of letter writing. Make sure that students know where to put the addresses, the date, and greetings and that they know how to sign off at the end. Check that students can identify the differences between formal and informal language.

Adverb game

- 1 One student leaves the classroom, or moves out of earshot. The rest of the class decides on an adverb of action. When the class has thought of a suitable adverb, bring the first student back. He or she must now discover what the chosen adverb is by asking other students to perform actions in the manner of that adverb.
- 2 It will probably be impossible for the student to guess the adverb first time, so he or she continues by asking a different student to perform a different action using the same adverb. This carries on until the adverb is guessed correctly, or until the teacher decides that will not happen (possibly after six or seven attempts). Another student then leaves the room, and the class decides on a new adverb.

This is a well tried and tested exercise, but it still produces some memorable and original sentences for students, e.g., Please blow your nose (Answer: romantically); Please stroke the cat (Answer: violently).

Preparation

If you are doing this exercise with a class for the first time, it might be worth having a small stock of adverbs and commands ready to give them, which will then start them thinking of their own ideas. Possible examples at this early stage follow.

Examples of adverbs

angrily, badly, carefully, crazily, dangerously, happily, lazily, painfully, quickly, quietly, sadly, slowly, stupidly, violently.

Examples of commands

do your homework, eat breakfast, feed the dog, get dressed, go for a walk, hitch a lift, play the violin, read a book, smoke a cigarette, take a shower, wait for a bus, watch TV.

Variation for larger classes

An alternative method of presenting the exercise if you have a large class is to arrange the students into sets of competing groups, which must then compile lists of adverbs for the other teams to guess. When the lists are ready, go to the first team, and allow any member of any other group to select an action for a member of that team to perform. The first person to guess the adverb being demonstrated wins a point for his or her team. Move on to the next group.

Alternatively, you may wish to have every member of the selected group performing the adverb, which removes the pressure from any one individual in that team.



From Marsland, B. (2012). *Lessons from Nothing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reading for pleasure

A Prancing Light

by K.C. Mead-Brewer

If you came here looking for a good time, you're going to be disappointed. There's a wolf-man in the trees and, I grant you, that sounds promising. But his teeth hurt and all he does is growl wetly from the darkness. There are two women arguing not far from him, holding their hair against the high wind, and at first you wonder if they'll be all right, what if they get lost or murdered or take a fall, but when the lightning flashes and you glimpse their faces—yes, it's better to go back inside. Stay home and lock the doors. There's a darkness here, too, yet it's easier to see things somehow. The kind of darkness that comes from turning on a bedside lamp. You'll need to plug that lamp in, though; the cats keep jumping on the cord and pulling it loose from the outlet. But be careful when you reach down for it behind the nightstand; you never know. The world is a seething place. Spiders. Ghosts. Men under the bed. And under the men under the bed: a writhing carpet of silverfish. Quietly, the world belongs to them, and it's a world that smells like bones and salt; if you look deep enough into its fog, you'll see a prancing light. But don't follow it. Whatever you do, don't follow it—promise me now that you won't. No matter how dark it gets.

Source

• <https://www.twinpiesliterary.com/the-gentle-slope/aprancinglight>



Girl

by Jamaica Kincaid

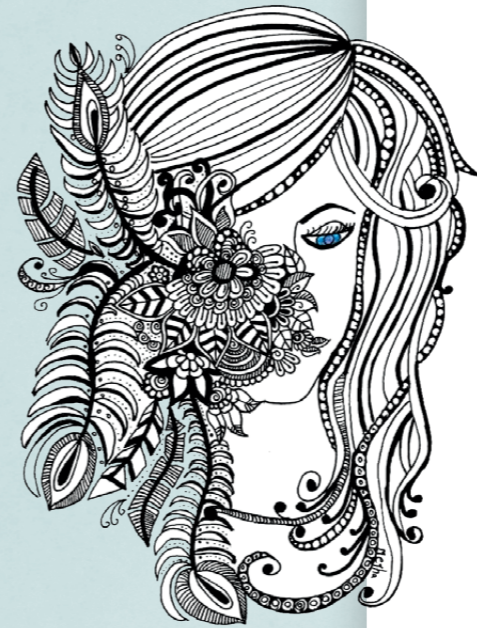


Wash the white clothes on Monday and put them on the stone heap; wash the color clothes on Tuesday and put them on the clothesline to dry; don't walk bare-head in the hot sun; cook pumpkin fritters in very hot sweet oil; soak your little cloths right after you take them off; when buying cotton to make yourself a nice blouse, be sure that it doesn't have gum in it, because that way it won't hold up well after a wash; soak salt fish overnight before you cook it; is it true that you sing benna in Sunday school?; always eat your food in such a way that it won't turn someone else's stomach; on Sundays try to walk like a lady and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming; don't sing benna in Sunday school; you mustn't speak to wharf-rat boys, not even to give directions; don't eat fruits on the street—flies will follow you; *but I don't sing benna on Sundays at all and never in Sunday school*; this is how to sew on a button; this is how to make a buttonhole for the button you have just sewed on; this is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down and so to prevent yourself from looking like the slut I know you are so bent on becoming; this is how you iron your father's khaki shirt so that it doesn't have a crease; this is how you iron your father's khaki pants so that they don't have a crease; this is how you grow okra—far from the house, because okra tree harbors red ants; when you are growing dasheen, make sure it gets plenty of water or else it makes your throat itch when you are eating it; this is how you sweep a corner; this is how you sweep a whole house; this is how you sweep a yard; this is how you smile to someone you don't like too much; this is how you smile to someone you don't like at all; this is how you smile to someone you like completely; this is how you set a table for tea; this is how you set a table for dinner; this is how you set a table for dinner with an important guest; this is how you set a table for lunch; this is how you set a table for breakfast; this is how to behave in the presence of men who don't know you very well, and this way they won't recognize immediately the slut I have warned you against becoming; be sure to wash every day, even if it is with your own spit; don't squat down to play marbles—you are not a boy, you know; don't pick people's flowers—you might catch something; don't throw stones at blackbirds, because it might not be a blackbird at all; this is how to make a bread pudding; this is how to make doukona; this is how to make pepper pot; this is how to make a good medicine for a cold; this is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child; this is how to catch a fish; this is how to throw back a fish you don't like, and that way something bad won't fall on you; this is how to bully a man; this is how a man bullies you; this is how to love a man, and if this doesn't work there are other ways, and if they don't work don't feel too bad about giving up; this is how to spit up in the air if you feel like it, and this is how to move quick so that it doesn't fall on you; this is how to make ends meet; always squeeze bread to make sure it's fresh; *but what if the baker won't let me feel the bread?*; you mean to say that after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won't let near the bread?

From The New Yorker, June 26, 1987.

Poets' corner

to feed your soul



Afternoon in School The Last Lesson

by D. H. Lawrence

When will the bell ring, and end this weariness?
How long have they tugged the leash, and strained
apart
My pack of unruly hounds: I cannot start
Them again on a quarry of knowledge they hate to
hunt,
I can haul them and urge them no more.
No more can I endure to bear the brunt
Of the books that lie out on the desks: a full three
score
Of several insults of blotted pages and scrawl
Of slovenly work that they have offered me.
I am sick, and tired more than any thrall
Upon the woodstacks working wearily.

And shall I take
The last dear fuel and heap it on my soul
Till I rouse my will like a fire to consume
Their dross of indifference, and burn the scroll
Of their insults in punishment? –I will not!
I will not waste myself to embers for them,
Not all for them shall the fires of my life be hot,
For myself a heap of ashes of weariness, till sleep
Shall have raked the embers clear: I will keep
Some of my strength for myself, for if I should sell
It all for them, I should hate them—
–I will sit and wait for the bell.

From *Love Poems and others – The Schoolmaster*, London: Duckworth and co. (1913).
Image from <http://in.pinterest.com/pin/795096509208037108/?mt=login>

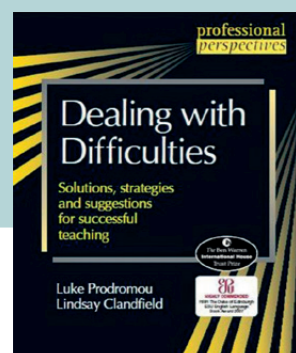
Between the covers

“A book is a dream
you hold in your hands.”

Neil Gaiman



A book is like a friend who never leaves you. It is packed with knowledge, new information, insights into life lessons, helpful advice, friendships and hardships, love and fear, and much more. In this feature, there are recommendations and reviews that take you on a journey into the pleasures of books and reading. And on that journey, you can explore new territories, learn new things, and expand your horizons. Discover your next favourite read and send us your book recommendations.



Dealing with Difficulties Solutions, strategies and suggestions for successful teaching

by Luke Prodromou and Lindsay Clandfield
Published 2007, pages: 128.
Peaslake, Surrey, England: DELTA Publishing.

About the book

Teaching English is about more than just teaching language and skills. It is also about dealing with everyday challenges, such as noisy, unmotivated, and unruly students and the wide differences in ability and learning styles in many classes. Good teaching cannot thrive when there is stress, conflict, and demoralisation. *Dealing with difficulties* contains more than 150 techniques and activities from large classes, classroom management, discipline problems, homework, and more to help you manage the beginning, middle, and end of the classroom day and create successful English lessons.

A practical book that language teachers can use to turn obstacles to learning into teaching opportunities.

An excerpt from the book (Handling Latecomers, p. 11)

You may be working in a school environment which already has rules and procedures for latecomers. But many teachers are in a situation where they have to make or break the rules themselves and they find it difficult to deal with the people who come in those five, ten or fifteen minutes late. Something can be done, but what? There are three possible options for the teacher to deal with this problem:

- ignore it and hope it goes away
- devise forfeits to punish the 'latecomer' (a 'stick' approach)
- devise incentives to 'reward' those who come on time (a 'carrot' approach)

However, a challenge really lies in not only 'dealing with' the problem (often reactively) but, rather, in taking advantage of it proactively to make learning more interesting and effective.



Brain Friendly Language Learning

by Rachel Paling
Published 2017, pages: 127.
United Kingdom: The Choir Press.

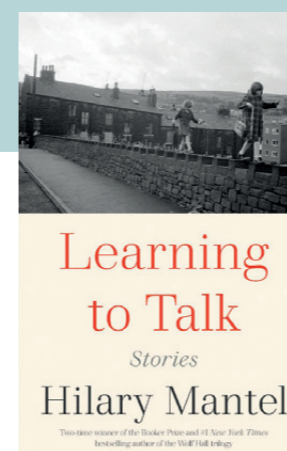
About the book

Rachel Paling is a language coach and founder of Neurolanguage Coaching, a model that brings together key findings from neuroscience and integrates them into a coaching process to revolutionise language learning as we know it. This book contains not only insights of interest to all practising and aspiring language coaches, but also invaluable insights from Paling's years of coaching and training other coaches, with practical advice for every coaching situation. It also includes a toolkit of new, proven, and brain-friendly Neurolanguage Coaching models, showing how and why using these Neurolanguage Coaching techniques can lead to happier, more fluent, and more confident learners.

This is a book for anyone who wants to learn more about brain-friendly language learning and their own brain.

An excerpt from the book (Energy goes where attention goes, p. 41)

A well-known expression, seemingly originating from Hawaiian tradition, is the expression 'energy flows where attention goes'. It is the perfect way of describing how the brain strengthens and reinforces neural networks. The more attention we give to the task at hand, the stronger the neural connections relating to that task. Conversely, the expression 'use it or lose it' also reflects how our brain connections weaken when we do not practise something enough. The Neurolanguage coach is always fully aware that we need enough attention and focus from the learner all the time to ensure the firing and wiring in the hippocampus.



Learning to Talk: Stories

by Hilary Mantel
Published 2022, pages: 176.
New York: Henry Holt and Company.

About the book

Learning to Talk is a collection of loosely autobiographical stories that locates the transforming moments of a haunted childhood. Absorbing and evocative, these drawn-from-life stories begin in the 1950s in an insular northern village "scoured by bitter winds and rough gossip tongues." For the young narrator, the only way to survive is to get up, get on, get out. In "King Billy Is a Gentleman," the child must come to terms with the loss of a father and the puzzle of a fading Irish heritage. "Curved Is the Line of Beauty" is a story of friendship, faith and a near-disaster in a scrap-yard. The title story sees our narrator ironing out her northern vowels with the help of an ex-actress with one lung and a Manchester accent. In "Third Floor Rising," she watches, amazed, as her mother carves out a stylish new identity.

With a deceptively light touch, Mantel illuminates the poignant experiences of childhood that leave each of us forever changed.

An excerpt from the book (King Billy Is a Gentleman, p. 9)

My territory was shrinking: not the house, not the garden, not home and not school. All I owned was the space behind my ribs, and that too was a scarred battleground, the site of sudden debouchments and winter campaigns. I did not tell my mother about the external persecutions. Partly it was because she had enough to bear on her own account; partly because of a sneaking pity invading even my own hard heart, as the misunderstanding about the cows grew keener, and Philip's head shrunk more defensively on to his neck. Bobby took the motor scooter behind the house and kicked it savagely; we no longer knew where our duty lay.



IF YOU ARE NOT HAPPY
WITH WHERE YOU ARE NOW,
KEEP GOING.



WHAT COMES EASY WON'T LAST,
WHAT LASTS WON'T COME EASY.



PUSH HARDER THAN YESTERDAY
IF YOU WANT A DIFFERENT
TOMORROW.

YOU DON'T SOLVE
PROBLEMS
THAT YOU PUT OFF.

EXPERTS WERE
ONCE BEGINNERS.



THERE ARE NO SHORTCUTS TO
ANY PLACE WORTH GOING.
BEVERLY SILLS



WHEN IN DOUBT
CLEAR YOUR DESK.
TIE YOUR HAIR UP.
GRAB A COFFEE.
AND JUST START.



DON'T JUST LEARN, EXPERIENCE.
DON'T JUST READ, ABSORB.
DON'T JUST THINK, PONDER.
DON'T JUST DREAM, DO.

ROY T. BENNETT