

E-Newsletter

Bulgarian English Teachers' Association

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Editors' Corner



Dear reader,

The May-June issue of the BETA-IATEFL E-Newsletter (no.

41) comes to full of fresh ideas and suggestions from Bulgaria and abroad.

Perhaps somewhat in line with the programme for the 28th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference *Changing the World One Class at a Time: Getting Through to Students* and more specifically the pre-conference event's environment-conscious theme, Bill Templer has prepared a compelling article. He opens with a short but impactful video in which we hear Mother Nature speaking to us (people) "I don't really need people but people need me. / When I thrive, you thrive. / I have starved species greater than you." Then, Bill suggests numerous ways to take all that he provides in his article, in terms of references and links, and turns it into a lesson appropriate for different levels of English fluency. The ways teachers of different levels of English can turn his ideas into detailed and useful lesson plans are truly countless.

Eda Cauli provides us with an account of her participation in KETNET Conference, which took place in June this year in Pristina, Kosovo. The topic of the conference was 'Enhancing Critical Thinking in the English Language Classroom'. Apart from the usual exchange of experience and useful practices, the concurrent sessions and workshops did meaningful work on the very serious topic of how to make our students well-reasoned thinkers. In collaboration with Dr. Aileen Hale, Eda presents how the commonplace action of *greeting* is performed in two cultures (American vs. Albanian) and their respective cultural implications. The article stresses the importance of teaching culture concurrently with teaching the foreign language.

Miglena Petrova and Valentina Petrova – the dynamic duo – always tries to stay up-to-date with the newest methodological practices and to make us feel included in their Erasmus+ experiences. In this article Miglena talks about '21st Century teaching: competence-based education, soft skills and creativity,' a training she attended in Europass Teacher Academy, as well as the real-time assessment tool **SOCRATIVE** and the educational network **EDMODO**. Valentina Petrova presents her take on 'Social Media and Web Solutions for Your Classroom,' the other course in the duo's project. She focuses on social networking platforms, free resources and apps to enhance student engagement. The goal is simple – to utilise students'

knowledge of social media and the web for educational purposes. Some of the tools discussed include: **Piktochart**, **Popplet**, **Adobe Spark**, and **Oppia.org** (links and illustrations are included).

Please note that some changes in style have been introduced in issue no. 39 of the BETA E-Newsletter and our publication is now strictly following MLA 8th edition, in case you missed that, check out the Notes for Contributors Section in any of the subsequent publications. You will find other minor points in the Notes for Contributors section that can help and guide you in the submission process.

Feel free to get inspired and send us your work, presentation of classroom experience or project! Or why not send us a letter to let us know what you thought about some of our recent papers? Publications and commentaries, as well as inquiries, should be sent to the Editorial team at betaiatefl.publish@gmail.com.

Happy reading!

Issue Editor

Polly Petcova



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Implanting Nature's Voice in ELT Education: An Urgent Imperative

Bill Templer

Nature's voice resounds

Watch this brief (1:56 min.) video '[Mother Nature](#)', spoken by American actress Julia Roberts. Ponder its main argument and images (8,720,000+ views, June 2019). What was its final brief message on screen?



<https://tinyurl.com/y4fqlr39>

If Nature could talk, what would she say? We are being told by the media, many important earth scientists, ever more politicians, Green political parties across the globe -- and also the Bulgarian [Zelenite](#) -- that we are facing a looming climate emergency: [glaciers melting](#), [climate apocalypse](#), plastic pollution, species extinction, yes even '[ecocide](#)' and [human extinction](#) as our imminent doom in what is called the Anthropocene, a [new geological epoch](#) -- 'fossil capitalism and the crisis of the earth system' ([Ian](#) Angus); a veritable [Cowspiracy](#). This needs to be discussed in schools, in classrooms for EFL, geography, biology, civics, history, philosophy, here a [guide](#). It is a vital, trans-disciplinary 'environmental issues' teaching focus, and can be 'placed-based', it is not 'rocket science': teachers want [climate crisis training](#). The young Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg has electrified

millions raising public consciousness with her '[school strike for climate](#),' now gone global, another focus (see below). Students thinking *for themselves*, eco-critically: [wake up America](#). Peter McLaren's 'Critical Pedagogy' (*Life*, 119-58) is broadly integral here, as is Alan Maley in [GISIG Newsletter #17](#), and Bill McKibben's new disturbing 2019 book [Falter](#). Listen to him [here](#) and [here](#). Students everywhere are ever more concerned as *mater natura* releases her relentless fury in extreme events. [Lifestyle changes](#) are badly needed. Read [this](#). Learners can ponder the powerful film [The Age of Stupid](#) on climate change and the [10 Billion](#) film trailer. Watch his animated film on [earth heating up 5 more degrees](#). Listen also to Jane Goodall on '[Mother Earth](#)' and [Charles C. Mann](#) ditto. In a 2014 survey, Zaparucha & Hindson ("Education") found that environmental issues are poorly represented in ELT textbooks, and critical thinking on such issues is neglected. Here [Climate Change Emergency](#) lesson plans at GISIG. The times they are ♪ [a-changin'](#) ♪, as in the Gotye song '[Eyes Wide Open](#)'. and [this](#) song. We, our students need to interrogate our own positions on a multitude of eco-social issues, deconstructing "wilful blindness" (Heffernan *Wilful*). Listen to Ms. Heffernan [here](#), and [here](#). And this a reading on the "[metabolic rifts](#) of capitalism". Here an '[emergency](#)' article from the US, from the [Socialist Project](#) in Canada, & Ian Angus, a '[redder shade of green](#)'.

[Conservation International](#) has released a series '[Nature is Speaking](#)' of twelve YouTube videos that give voice to Nature. We hear from Mother Nature, Water, the Coral Reef, The Ocean, The Soil, The Rainforest and The Redwood -- and the message is loud and clear. Nature will go on. This video is from that series, spoken

by well-known actors from the US film industry. Here also is [the series in full](#).
Watch the video again (in [this version](#) with *subtitles*). Here its text (139 words):

Some call me Nature, others call me Mother Nature

I've been here for over four and a half billion years

Twenty-two thousand five hundred times longer than you

I don't really need people but people need *me*

Yes, your future depends on me

When *I* thrive, *you* thrive

When *I* falter, *you* falter or worse ...

But I've been here for aeons

I have *fed* species greater than you, and

I have *starved* species greater than you

My oceans, *my* soil, *my* flowing streams, *my* forests,

They all can take you or leave you

How you chose to live each day whether you regard or

disregard me, doesn't really matter to me

One way or the other your actions will determine *your* fate *not* mine

I am Nature

I will go on

I am prepared to evolve

Are you?

The film ends: ***'NATURE DOESN'T NEED PEOPLE. PEOPLE NEED NATURE'***.

Bricolage: a preliminary lesson plan

Show the film to students at lower intermediate (B1) level, and perhaps even to students who are advanced beginners (upper A2). (Step 1) In a pre-viewing activity, tell students they will watch a short video 'Mother Nature is Speaking'. What do they think Nature might say? (Step 2) Let them in small groups briefly think about and discuss the film a bit in English, or also in Bulgarian, and then give their thoughts, describing also their impressions of the images. What does: 'I am prepared to evolve / *Are you?*' really imply? For some today it means [transforming our whole style of living](#), what we eat and drink, how we travel, a total [paradigm shift](#) in order to achieve a '[sustainable](#) existence' on the planet, as in [Transition Towns](#) (TT), you can also show this excellent *child-spoken* [TT video](#). (Step 3) Show them 'Mother Nature' again, in [this version](#) with *subtitles*, so they can see the text while watching. Afterwards perhaps hand them a printout of the text for some 'deep reading' to reflect on it and respond. Some environmentally-conscious teachers using less photocopying for students, '[paper-free teaching](#) -- maybe you

agree. Our colleagues in [ELT Footprint](#) are discussing these and other issues related to environmentalism and what we can do. They have various eco-lesson plans. Join up as a teacher! Students can join.

(Step 4) LEXIS: What are some of the words they may not know? ‘Falter’, a harder word, means to lose momentum, to hesitate when speaking or doing something. Bill McKibben uses it in his [title](#). It is K-6, 6,000 word frequency level, as shown [by lextutor](#). Lextutor is a superb tool you (and your students) can use for determining vocabulary difficulty; show students how to use it. ‘Thrive’ is a K-4 word that students at mid-intermediate level can learn to use. An extremely rare word in the text is ‘aeon’ (or ‘eon’), K-14. In geology it means ‘a billion years’, and in more non-technical speech a long, indefinite period of time. There are four aeons in the Earth’s [Geologic Time Scale](#). There is one play on an English idiom in the text. It is in the line ‘They can take you or leave you’. ‘Take it or leave it’ in colloquial English means to accept something with no change or to refuse it. Example: ‘The rent is 300 leva a month – take it or leave it’. Here it means: the oceans, the forest, can work with humans if they cooperate -- or disregard them if not, they don’t need us. They will go on without the human species if we manage to make conditions impossible for human life and other species on the planet, oceans will long remain. Nature is prepared to evolve, now as in the past. ‘Evolve’ = adapt to conditions and change (‘evolution’), lexemes at K-3 level. Employ Lextutor for the *entire* text to see all word levels.

(5) **LP:** Here a BC [climate change lesson plan](#) as a model. A few LPs from the [NI Wiki](#), an NI [climate emergency](#) LP. You can draft a lesson plan for this video, with questions, other steps, activities. Here are excellent pointers on [lesson planning](#) from the BC, and here [additional BC lesson plan tips](#). Here a new model lesson plan, '[Lessons Learned](#)', by Kieran Donaghy, 29 steps [!]. Here an LP on [plastics](#) and the environment. Learn to sharpen your skills in better crafting your own lesson plans. Here a model lesson plan on commercial [whaling in Japan](#) from [wisehat](#). An excellent US book is: [A People's Curriculum for the Earth](#). Teachers can explore the site, articles and [books](#) from a left-critical, [social justice perspective](#). Useful are [podcasts on climate change](#), like [Mothers of Invention](#) and [Climate Cast](#).

Using related brief videos from the series *Nature is Speaking*

There are 11 related videos on different aspects of Nature in the series in full which students could watch on their own at home or together in class, discuss and compare. Perhaps students in groups could take one such video and prepare to present it to the class. Students could also combine art work with 'environmentalism' and draw or paint modes of [visual art](#). Harrison Ford speaks as the voice of the [Ocean](#). Compare what Mother Nature says with the Ocean's direct talk: 'If Nature isn't kept healthy, humans won't survive. Simple as that'. The film ends: 'I'm the Ocean. I covered this entire planet once. And I can always cover it again. That's all I have to say'.

ELTSUSTAINABLE

June 8th is World Oceans Day, June 5th World Environment day: you can go to the excellent environmental ELT site <https://eltsustainable.com/> and find lessons for [World Oceans Day](#) and [World Environment Day](#) that you can share with students. Explore the eltsustainable site, created and sustained by British Council teacher Owain Llewellyn, long based at the BC in Sofia. You will find many great suggestions for teaching about the environment and the need for ‘sustainability’ in our society and economy and lifestyles. June 20th is [Clean Air Day](#), for which he also has a lesson. Do you and students know how [polluted the air is](#) in the town or locality where you teach? How could you find out? ‘Place-based’ environmentalism is an important component in any eco-social campaign (Templer “Intercultural”). April 22nd is Earth Day, and Owain has an [A-1 lesson](#) for that day as well. How did you observe it last April? Here is Owain’s site link for ‘[Extinction Rebellion](#)’, a new movement in Europe employing tactics of ‘climate strike’: here [Extinction Rebellion in the UK](#); how will [police in future react](#)? See Owain’s [lesson](#) on bicycles for local eco-transport. A talk on [free public transit](#) as a *human right*. Here Owain’s [GISIG webinar](#) 27 June 2019.

‘School Strike for Climate’

As mentioned, the young people’s protest movement that Greta Thunberg created single-handed and energized reached a first global peak in May 2019, as reported on [here](#). Teachers should read the article to better understand the movement it

reports on, and students (B2 level) can also read and discuss the movement and Fridays for Future ([here lesson plans](#)) that is organizing the protests in over 1600 localities worldwide, including in the Balkans. How do students see this? Their demographic will live and thrive or falter in a world much more impacted by climate breakdown and severe [weather](#) phenomena. There was also a conjunct ‘school strike for climate’ [in Bulgaria and elsewhere in the Balkans](#). What do Ivo in Skopje, Valeria in Sofia and Diana in Bucharest say? Have student discuss this for a minute. In groups of three – what do they think, are they ready to join such a protest, and why? Students can also explore and discuss a [multitude of ‘striking images’](#) connected with such protest planet-wide. How will the [authorities react, the risks](#)? What do they see? The ‘Fridays for Future’ (Петъци за бъдеще) protest movement in Bulgaria has a [FB site](#). Students can join the FB group if they like. They can read and discuss this very relevant [article](#), perhaps write a short essay on the topic as they view it. Here insight on the ‘strike’ from some [UK student climate activists](#). If you are teaching academic EAP to more advanced students, this is also a good essay focus, even ‘place-based’ (Templer “Intercultural”). Aston (“EAP”) is very germane on GISIG site, EAP essay writing *focusing* on climate issues. Teachers and students at intermediate level should listen to this inspiring [TED^x talk by Greta](#) in December 2018 in Stockholm. Her final words:

... the one thing we need more than hope is action. Once we start to act, hope is everywhere. So instead of looking for hope, look for action. Then, and only then, hope will come ... Everything needs to change, and it has to start today.

Students in small groups, can summarize/discuss Greta's main points. The talk text (1,370 words) is at the site and could be reproduced. Greta's fluent English stems from school and perhaps [free voluntary reading](#) (FVR). An inspiring model for BG learners!

Green party politics on the upsurge

As mentioned, the *Zelenite*/ Зелената партия in Bulgaria are part of a broader grouping of [Green parties across Europe](#), the European Greens, well represented in the EU Parliament. Students/ teachers can explore what positions they espouse, the changes they fight for, what their relative strength is in different countries. A [Green Global Party](#)? What activities do BG Greens have in your own locality? See [ПРОГРАМА НА ЗЕЛЕНИТЕ](#). And read this by [Rosen Bogomilov](#), a *Зелените* history teacher, this by [Toma Belev](#) and: '[Аз съм Албена и съм Зелена](#)'. What are some of the [key positions](#) espoused by the European Greens? In England and Wales, the [Greens](#) had enhanced support in the 2019 EU election. Here the [UK party website](#). An interview with [Caroline Lucas](#), UK [Green MP](#), May 2017 -- and here Caroline speaking at Westminster on the [eco-crisis](#). Read an interview with EU [Green MP Alexandra Phillips](#) from Brighton. Here is regular [GP news](#). Templer ("Galvanizing"; "From 'Greed to Green'") are germane articles centered on galvanizing critical citizenship through 'place-based' Green eco-pedagogy in the EFL classroom. Here the Platform 2014 of the [Green Party US](#). Dr. [Jill Stein](#), GPUS presidential

candidate 2016: watch an [interview with her](#), a GP [statement](#), an [interview](#) 2019. And explore the [Global Greens](#)! Far more radical is [this](#) by the WSP (India).

Pollution, waste, climate emergency – place-based environmental pedagogy

Students interested in air pollution in Bulgaria and beyond can find articles in English [here](#) and article on [climate change](#) as well. They can read how people are replacing their [wood-burning stoves in Ruse](#) in order to help clean the air. The BETA Annual Conference in May 2019 in Plovdiv featured a pre-conference event (PCE) centered on ‘CLIL – Waste in the Curriculum,’ with excellent presentations, see the [conference programme](#) (8-15). Keith Kelly co-taught a workshop on environmental education, Egbert Weisheit spoke on ‘trashedworld – microplastics,’ Lora Atanasova on ‘Natural Materials in my Classroom,’ and Patrick Johnson on ‘Motivating First Green Experiences for Primary Students’. The opening plenary was by Keith Kelly & Lida Schoen on ‘Young Voices for Change,’ also stressing environmental politics and concerns. Hopefully these papers will in part be published. Keith is one of the coauthors at [TrashedWorld](#), a global schools’ platform for curriculum exchange on the topic of waste issues in ELT pedagogy. He’s also engaged with [Titagworld](#), and co-authored Ball et al. (*Putting CLIL*).

Broader frameworks of eco-social *insight*

There is a huge wealth of digital material on environmental issues, like [NI Wiki](#). Here an article on 'your own' possible individual action trying to [make a difference](#), as in these [six actions](#). Also: [What can I do?](#) The [CLIMATE EMERGENCY MANIFESTO](#) from the European United Left and Nordic Green Left in the EU Parliament is a left-socialist grouping especially centered also on issues of climate breakdown and core aspects of 'ecosocialism'. Here [articles on environmental crisis](#) from Truthdig. A recent [panel discussion](#) 'Confronting Climate Emergency. Ottawa and Beyond' in Canada is well worth listening to; there are numerous articles by Bill McKibben [online](#). [MIT Climate](#) is an outstanding site. Inside the field of TEFL, relevant is the '[Climate Emergency Declaration for the ELT Industry](#)'. How do teachers see such a declaration? A key talk is '[From Greed to Green](#)' by sociologist Charles Derber, also a [key book](#) by the same title. Aleksandra Zaparucha's [CLIL](#) plenary at IATEFL Liverpool conference '[Under One Roof](#)', 4 April 2019 also addressed global issues, such as pollution. She is a trained EFL expert and geographer, also connected with our IATEFL Global Issues SIG, see Zaparucha & Hindson ("Education"); listen to her A-1 [interview](#) in Liverpool 2019. Helen Strong's prize-winning [lesson plan](#) at the GISIG site on the dangers of population growth deals with the film [10 Billion](#). There are many [animated videos](#) on global warming for kids, see [this one](#). Naomi Klein has written much about climate change. Students can discuss this [brief video](#). As Naomi stresses: "The task is to articulate a vision for a post-carbon economy ..." (min. 0:40). Excerpts from Klein (*This Changes Everything*) can be explored, also a [film](#), and her new book [On Fire](#). Here Naomi Klein in a [visionary interview](#). Lütge (*Global Education*) also contains A-1 chapters on eco-social issues in EFL. Students/ teachers can explore [Sky Ocean](#)

[Rescue](#), '[A Plastic Whale](#)' is iconic. This on [climate change, peace & war](#). In the US talk of a [People's Green New Deal](#), and continuing GND [discussion & debate](#). Here an [ecosocialist bookshelf](#). Delve into McKibben's [videos](#). Here [Breaking News English](#) on the environment, many texts/activities! Share Sky News: [THE NEW CLIMATE](#). Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* also has dark [new relevance](#) now. Also more radical, explore these articles by Dave Hill on Marxist education [2017](#) and [2019](#), and this excellent [2017 interview](#).

You too can do research, speak up, publish

You can begin to use lesson plans, [write/publish your own](#) focused on eco-social, environmental and other crucial issues yourself, and engage in inquiry, time well invested. What is needed in Bulgarian EFL pedagogy is Exploratory Action Research on a range of eco-issues and how they can be taught locally, place-based (Templer "Intercultural") -- and how fellow teachers view such issues as vital content, write articles in this *Newsletter*. Smith & Rebolledo (*Handbook*) guiding teachers in small-team Exploratory Action Research is one feasible framework, as Richard Smith suggests in his video introduction (76 min.) to EAR: [Part I](#) and [Part II](#). You can also explore Rebolledo et al., (*Champion Teachers*). What about research on '[online extensive listening](#)' and '[free voluntary listening](#)' (FVL) focused on [climate change podcasts](#), like [at BBC](#) and [MIT](#) Climate, [SP Podcasts](#)? Here ideas on '[reading aloud](#)' to learners. Here how to access [ELT-relevant research](#).

Eco-CLIL Communities of Practice?

What still rarely exists are small groups of teachers mind-sharing and team-teaching on environmental issues across several disciplinary subjects in the curriculum, such as foreign languages, Bulgarian, history, biology, math, geography, [civics](#) / [Грaж. Об.](#), art, religion, philosophy – focusing on issues important in [democratic, critical](#) *place-based* education. Colleagues at UK universities are calling for making “[sustainability integral to all teaching](#) and a ‘way of life’ on campus.” Zapparucha (“The What, Why and How”) is a good intro to CLIL perspectives and parameters, as is Kelly (“Ingredients”) and Ball et al. (*Putting CLIL*). Watch/enjoy Zapparucha’s 2019 [IATEFL plenary](#) and [interview](#). ‘Eco-CLIL’ (as at the Plovdiv [PCE](#) 2019), *critical environmentalism in local action*, invites creative hands-on collaboration.

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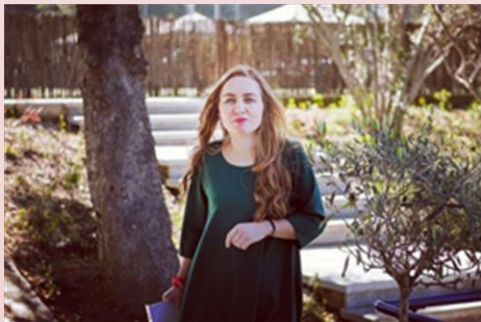
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Eda Cauli

Graduated with high scores for English language, at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Tirana, Albania, certified in TEFL, and now a PhD Candidate, Eda has been working as an English Teacher and Translator in Higher Public and Private Education Institutions. For eight years now, she is a Lecturer at the University of Tirana and the Academic Director at Britannia Languages Academy who guarantees quality and professionalism, by combining an excellent teaching way of CLIL method based on her experience. Eda continually takes parts in trainings and workshops related to her profession.

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Cultural Introductions in a Language Class (KETNET Conference, June 2019, Pristina, Kosovo)

Eda Cauli

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***“Language is the roadmap of culture. It tells
you where its people come from and where
they are going.”***

Rita Mae

Brown

Introduction

The main topic of the English language conference was *Enhancing Critical Thinking in the English Language Classroom*, held in Pristina, Kosovo on 07-08 June 2019) and there was a plenary opening on how critical thinking should be implemented in our classes and how much we as teachers and educators really put students into making reasoned judgments that are logical and well thought through. This first step, starts by questioning the arguments and conclusions and wanting to see the evidence for that particular answer or conclusion. The plenary speakers, who were English fellows from the US Embassy and were appointed to teach in different Balkan Universities, shared different real cases and useful tips on using critical thinking in our classes and enhancing students' exposure to it. This is the way to make our students get out of their comfort zone and challenge their perceptions or even misconceptions sometimes, depending on what they have previously learned and how, and let them create new and more informed ideas.

Concurrent sessions of workshops

A variety of sessions were offered simultaneously and the wonderful audience of educators, teachers, students in the last year of their Master studies and event organizers chose the workshop that most appealed to them. An eagerness to learn more new things and to share different professional experiences was read almost in everyone's face. I was presenting together with a colleague from USA, Dr. Aileen Hale, an English language fellow from the US Embassy – Tirana, who was appointed to teach in the same University where I am based, respectively at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Tirana. We found out that we had similar ideas on how to teach culture in a language class and how to incorporate

the cultural elements while teaching English language to students. Dr. Aileen had also brilliant ideas on how to teach English language through music and songs, as well as techniques that are applicable for such activities. So, after spending a couple of days on elaborating our thoughts and sharing professional knowledge, we decided to run our presentation on how to teach culture through English language. Our ideas were more concrete by moderating the ways of how *greeting* is carried out in each respective native language, the American way of saying 'hi' to people, followed by their running off to work because time is precious to them versus the Albanian way of greeting someone and spending longer time, inquiring after the health of the person we are greeting and eagerly asking for more details. So we came up with the following ways to greet people in both languages:

Different ways of greeting which reflect different cultures behind, (English way versus Albanian way):

- *Si kalove? – How's it going?*
- *I mërzhitur? – Are you upset?*
 - *I lodhur? – Tired?*
- *Çfarë ben? – What's up?*
- *A je mirë? – Are you Ok?*
- *Si ke kaluar? – How have you been?*
 - *Si je? – How are you?*
 - *Si jeni? - How are you?*

Main Content of the Presentation

The presentation focus was mainly on WHY teach cultural elements as part of teaching language and through this we teach the essence of language: so in other words culture is the 'spice/ flavor' of the language like the spices in food, which would taste bland without them. Another emphasis of culture is to avoid stereotypical understanding of cultures that the youth learns from TV movies or music which are superficial and do not reflect the deeper part of the iceberg but only the outer part of it. We pointed out the focus to teach the use of the language versus teaching about the language and furthermore, to make clear that there is no language without cultural knowledge and vice versa – there is no cultural awareness without using authentic materials in the foreign language classroom. From this point of view, we see that language has a dual focus, because it shapes culture through linguistic elements and real life situations brought into classroom projects and presentations.

How to Teach Culture?

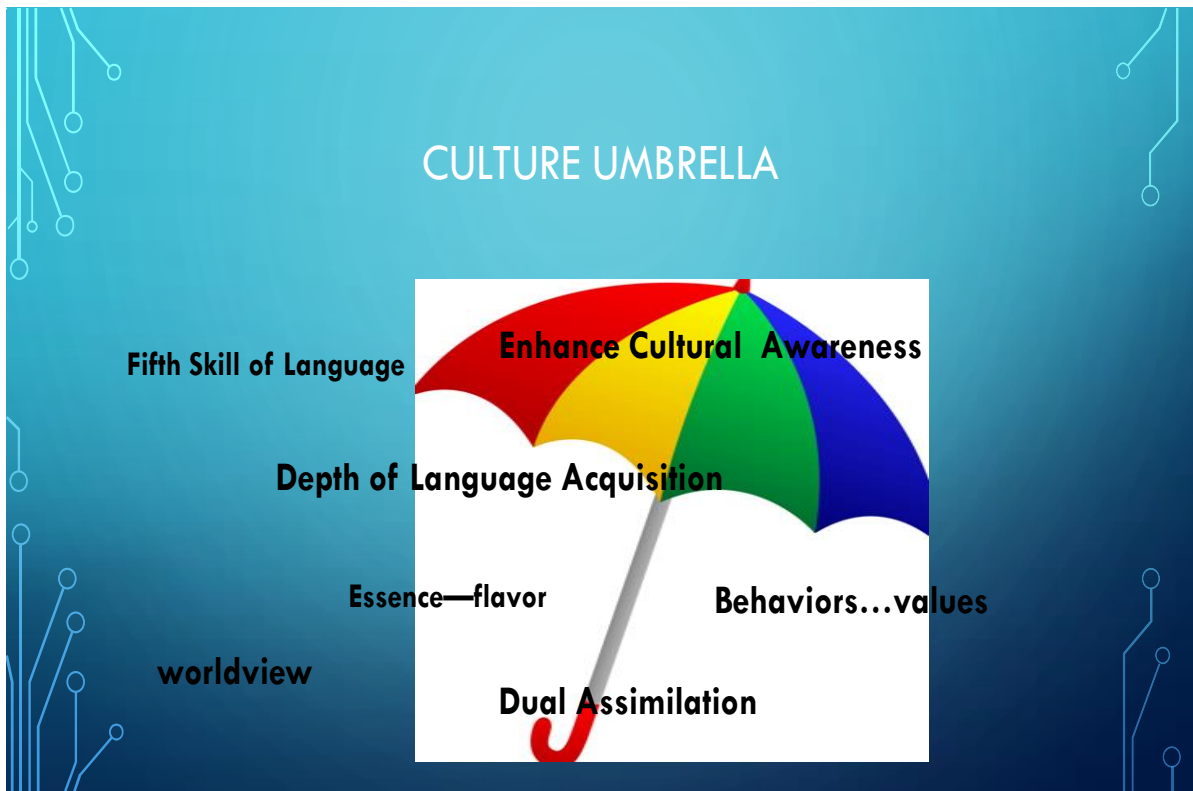
Another focus was on some of the techniques of teaching culture in class and we came out with an idea that there are three ways language and culture are inseparably intertwined:

1. Language expresses cultural reality – words help people express facts and ideas, but they also reflect their attitudes.
2. Language embodies cultural reality – people give meanings to their experience through the means of communication.
3. Language symbolises cultural reality – people view their language as a symbol of their social identity.

As language and culture are closely linked, the teaching of culture is seen as an integral component of language courses. Moreover, when languages are taught without introducing the culture of the community where they are used, they become 'robotic' and void of context, so if we teach language without simultaneously teaching the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning.

The use of authentic materials makes students visualise the real set of that specific cultural element, as if they are sitting in a café of the country in question and seeing that the a whole community of people speak the language they are learning in class, in their everyday environment and through that language they are distinguished in their lifestyle, culture, behavior and mindset. Also the use of posters, pictures, maps and signs helps students develop mental images. Assigning students foreign names heightens student interest. By applying short cultural presentations on a topic of student interest, with appropriate pictures or slides add to this mental image helps them learn simultaneously the language and culture. All of these help students realise they already know many words in the target language (i.e. some of the foods they eat) are another example of the influence of foreign cultures.

Conclusion



The culture umbrella on the presentation day, KetNet Kosovo, June 2019

The concluding slide was focused on an empty umbrella. Students had to come up with all they had learned from this workshop and then we summarized it. We were unanimous in our conclusion that culture is definitely the fifth skill of English language and that language has a dual focus because it shapes culture through its learning; language is a means of communication and a carrier of cultural identity because it shapes our perception of reality: we see the real world only in the categories of our language.



Miglena Petrova has a Master's degree in English language and literature. She has worked as an English teacher since 1996 at Saint Kliment Ohridski School in Varna. Her interests are in the field of creative teaching and materials design. "Motivation and inspiration for a modern European school" is the ERASMUS+ funded mobility project at her school where she participated together with her colleagues Albena Ilieva, Nadezhda Yantcheva and Valentina Petrova.

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Create, Motivate, Inspire in the 21st Century Classroom

Miglena Petrova and Valentina Petrova

Our school, Saint Kliment Ohridski Secondary School in Varna, has been a leading institution for 136 years of tradition and excellence. Motivating teachers for lifelong learning is what strengthens and maximizes the effectiveness of the educational process. Last year, two motivated teachers took part in training courses in Florence, Italy as an ERASMUS+, KA 1 funded mobility project realization.

The *Motivation and Inspiration for a Modern European School* project corresponds to the main aims implemented in the strategies for development of our school in the context of the modern European dimensions for education and training.

Enriching our experience in the field of modern theories and practices in language teaching gives us a great opportunity to share with colleagues what we have found useful in the training.

21st Century teaching: competence-based education, soft skills and creativity was one of the trainings in Europass Teacher Academy, attended by Miglena Petrova. Integrating creativity and innovation into teaching with a focus on key competences was explored, staged and incorporated in practical activities during two fantastic weeks in Florence. Learning to learn, communication in mother tongue and in foreign languages, cultural awareness and expression, social and civic competences are basic in lifelong learning. They are all independent with the following transversal skills: critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision-taking and constructive management of feelings. Teaching practice based on them relates classroom to real life, adds to motivation and individual growth. They are best taught through task-based and interdisciplinary principles, both collaborative and individualized, both teacher and learner-led, with attention to social and emotional aspects and, if possible, with technological innovation. Online platforms were also explored as a powerful creative tool that inspires teachers.

SOCRATIVE is flexible and easy to use assessment tool in real time. It allows teachers to create various quizzes and share those using links. Students can compete against each other and reflect at the end of the lesson.

EDMODO is an educational network that complements teaching. Teachers share content, distribute materials and manage communication with students,

colleagues and parents. It is a safe environment because the teacher can see everything posted.

A very interesting topic in the content was introducing mindfulness in teaching as a brain-training technique that makes learning stress-free. It improves your mental well-being through paying attention to your thoughts, feelings and the world around you. It helps students be less angry or moody and solve problems more easily. It raises their self-awareness and empathy and leads to mindful communication. It also increases both children's self-esteem and performance in class. Mindfulness can be applied in the classroom by using short meditation and breathing exercises or some fun activities for achieving more effective emotional regulation, better social skills and grades.

Here are some simple exercises that can be easily applied or adapted in various teaching contexts:

1. At elementary level:

- 1.1. Ring a bell and ask the kids to listen closely to the vibration of the ringing sound. Tell them to raise hands when they no longer hear the bell and to remain silent for a minute. During it they pay close attention to other sounds they hear. After that, they share what they have heard.

This exercise brings fun and really helps children connect to the present moment, increasing sensitivity of their perceptions.

1.2. Give each child an object to touch, such as a ball, a feather, a soft toy, a stone, etc. Ask them to close their eyes and describe what the object feels like to a partner. Then partners change places.

1.3. Pass something fragrant out to each child, such as a fresh orange peel, a jasmine flower or a sprig of lavender. Ask them to close eyes and breathe in the scent and focus only on the smell. Then they share how they feel about it or what can they imagine. Scent can really be a way to relief anxiety.

The last two exercises teach children to isolate their senses from one another and share emotions.

2. At secondary level:

2.1. A mindful moment at the beginning. It is a quick exercise, simple yet effective for beginning lessons with a mindful moment. Students are asked to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths. They pay attention to breathing – how does it feel when they breathe in and out. They can also notice their thoughts – is their mind still busy or quiet right now?

2.2. End of the lesson with a mindful moment as an excellent closing activity. Students focus on their breathing for 3-5 min. with eyes closed. Tell them what they have learnt and accomplished in class today. Finish with a positive statement, such as how much you believe in them or how hard they have worked.

2.3. Musical responses as a source of input for language development with a mindful focus. Students listen to a piece of instrumental music. When it is

over, they write about it in visual terms, only about what they saw in the music. Then they listen for a second time and write what they heard. After a few minutes students listen again and describe what they felt while listening. Finally they compare notes and impressions. The exercise brings joy and harmony in the classroom and gives options for students to express themselves in the preferred sense. It can be used in different ways – divided into parts as introduction or closing of a lesson, or as a whole unit.

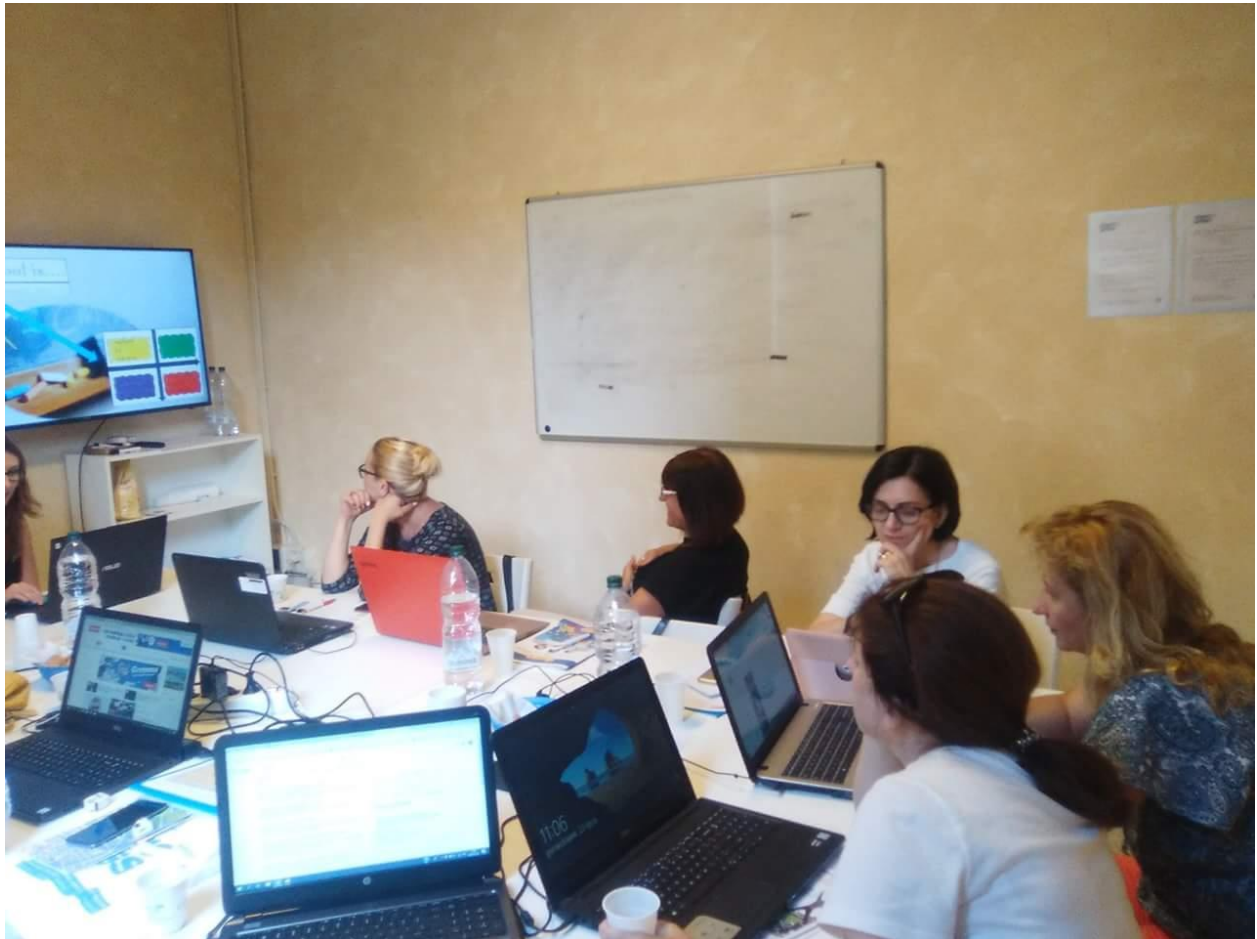




Valentina Petrova

holds Master degrees in Mathematics and Informatics from St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo and in English Language and Literature from Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen. She was awarded a PhD in Informatics from St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo. Since 2001 she has been a teacher at St. Kliment Ohridski Secondary School in Varna.

Social Media and Web Solutions for Your Classroom was the other course in our project, attended by Valentina Petrova. It was a combination of short theoretical presentations followed by practice activities, through which the participants got familiar with the various platforms and techniques covered. The participants were shown how to incorporate technology into their lessons to make them more effective and enjoyable. They acquired more knowledge about using social media as an educational tool and enhancing student engagement. They discussed how to use social networking platforms and web 2.0 to share their work, create groups, explore free resources and apps, cooperate with others online and improve communication among students and teachers. Special focus was put on learning about safe use of social media, student versus teacher roles and digital classroom management.



Piktochart is a web-based infographic application that provides tools to add interactive maps, charts, videos and hyperlinks. It allows users to easily create professional-grade infographics using themed templates. There are over 400 templates provided. It brings greater engagement of learners and also differentiation and personalisation of learning.

The theme: Continents and countries of the World





Popplet is another tool that students can use on their own devices.

Popplet is a tool for iPad and web, its purpose is to capture and organise ideas.

Used as a mind-map, Popplet helps students think and learn visually. They can capture facts, thoughts and images and learn to create links between them. Apart from language learning, it is suitable for different subjects such as history, geography and biology.



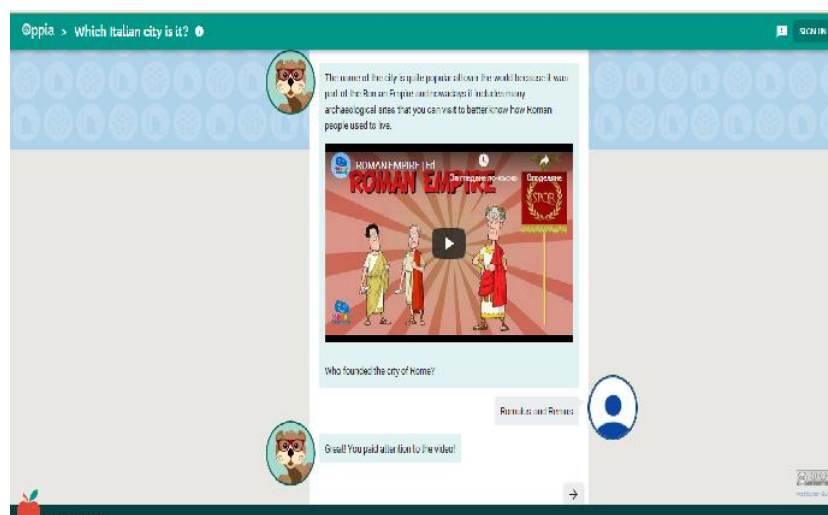
Adobe Spark is real fun to work with because you can transform your ideas into stunning visual stories. What can you create with Adobe Spark?

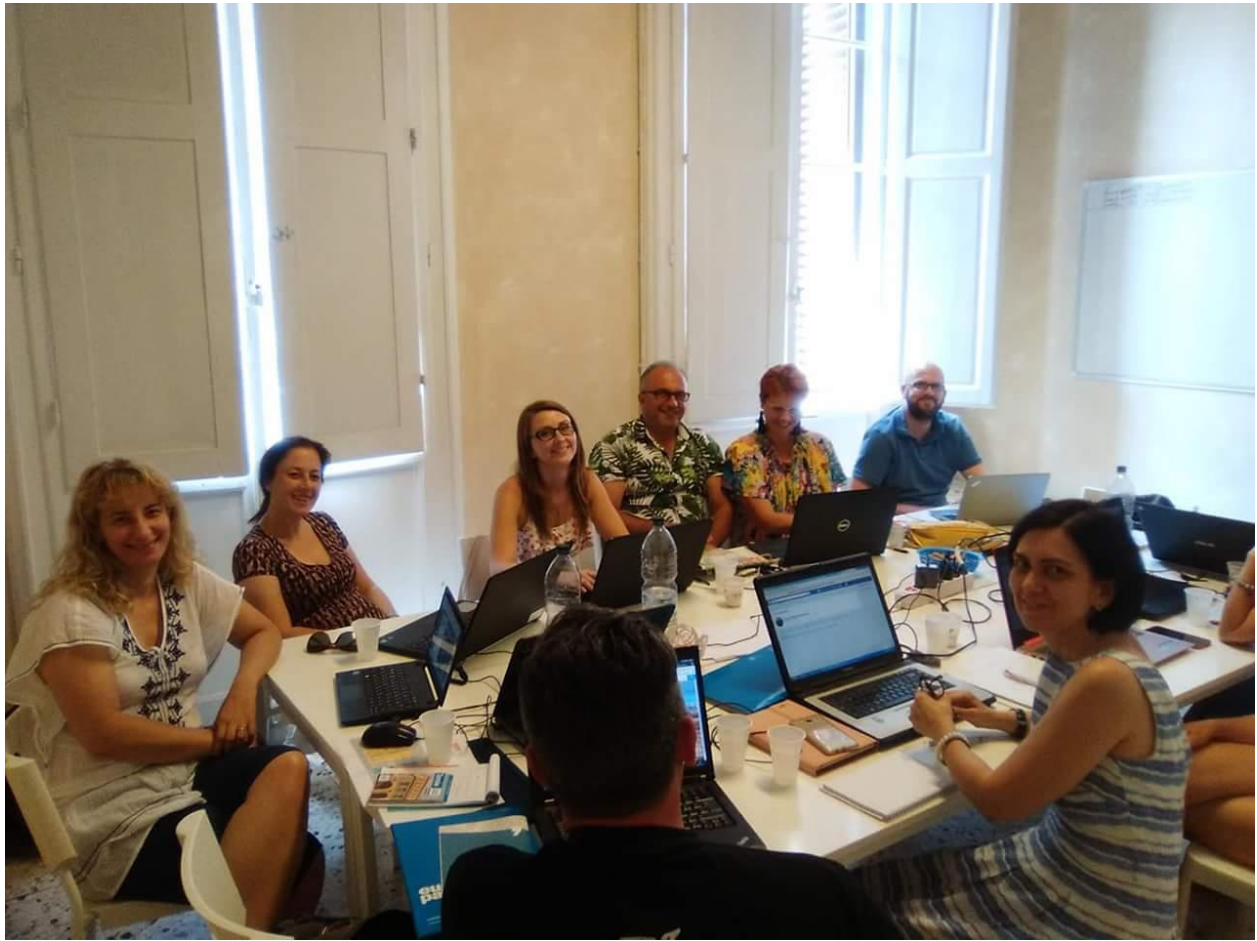
- Social Graphics: Pick a photo, add text, apply design filters or animations.
- Web Pages: Turn words and images into beautiful, magazine-style web stories that will impress readers on any device.
- Short Videos: Easily add photos, video clips, icons or your own voice. Select from professional-quality soundtracks and cinematic motion.

Here are two examples:

1. [Bella Italia](#).
2. [Web Solutions for the Classroom](#).

Oppia.org is another useful tool to bring extra efficiency in teaching. It helps teachers create engaging interactive lessons. These lessons, also known as explorations, are source of more immersive experiences than static videos or text, helping students learn by doing. Explorations are simple to create. They are easily adapted based on the specific teaching context and individual student feedback. Oppia gives teachers opportunities to create and share explorations on a wide range of subjects that corresponds to interdisciplinary principles in methodology ([Link to example below](#)).





As a conclusion, we would like to emphasize that the Erasmus+ programme opportunities are what teachers can really benefit from, because they encourage professional and personal development. That is really closely related to the quality of educational services that schools provide. The courses we attended were perfectly designed in terms of methodology and structure, really motivating and truly inspiring. In short, they were absolutely a must-have upgrade of what we have already learned and applied.

Useful links:

<https://piktochart.com/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/105764291228030459/>

<http://popplet.com/>

<http://www.elideas.com/lesson-plans/countries-nationalities-continents>

<https://www.oppia.org/splash>

<https://edublogs.org>

<https://spark.adobe.com/>

<https://www.teacheracademy.eu/course/social-media-in-the-classroom/>

<https://www.teacheracademy.eu/course/best-social-media-web-solutions/>

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- The length of your article may vary - short contributions of 300 – 800 words are as good as long ones.
- Electronic submission of your article is preferred to the following e-mail address: betaiatefl.publish@gmail.com
- Text of the article: Calibri, 14 points, with 1.5 spacing.
- Headings and subheading: Calibri, 24 points, bold, centred; first letter capitalized.
- Author names and title as well as contact details should be submitted in a separate file accompanying the article. About 50 words of biographical data and a photo should be included.
- Author names should not appear in the file of the article itself.
- New paragraphs – to be indicated with one separate line.
- Referencing should strictly follow the MLA Style (8ed.).
- Italicize the titles of sources that are independent (they are published on their own and considered containers, e.g. books, anthologies, etc.), but use quotation marks for the titles of sources that are contained in larger works (e.g., short stories, articles, poems).
 - *The Awakening* (book)
 - *The Metamorphosis* (novella)
 - “Literary History and Sociology” (journal article)

- *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Web site)
- “Free Will” (article on a Web site)
- For quotations use double quotation marks, cf. examples below.
- In-text citations must include exact page numbers. Follow this example, According to Naomi Baron, reading is “just half of literacy. The other half is writing” (194). One might even suggest that reading is never complete without writing.

or

Reading is “just half of literacy. The other half is writing” (Baron 194). One might even suggest that reading is never complete without writing.

- The same reference must appear in the Works Cited list at the end of the paper, e.g.

Works Cited

Baron, Naomi S. “Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media.” *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200.

- Tables, figures or diagrams should be numbered accordingly and included in the relevant part of the text. Each should have an explanatory caption.
- The editors will not discard any material submitted, but they reserve the right to return papers for further editing when they do not follow MLA Style 8th ed. or common rules for academic integrity. The editors can make editorial changes.
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