Editor’s Corner

Interview with the BETA-IATEFL 2014
Plenary Speakers

Using ‘eLesson Inspirations’

An American Dream

Two Conferences in Moscow

Students’ Corner

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Editor’s Corner

Dear Friends,

This is the last issue of the E-Newsletter compiled for you from the current BETA-IATEFL Committee! It contains an interview with two of the 23rd BETA-IATEFL Conference plenary speakers - Desmond Thomas and Gergana Aposotolova. We are sure the will wet your appetite for this international annual forum which will be held in the South-West University in Blagoevgrad from 11th to 13th April 2014. In this issue you will also be able to enjoy an article of electronic ELT resources from our regular contributor Bill Templer and the voices of two of our members - Tsvetelena Taralova and Zhivka Ilieva, who will reveal to you the pleasure of going abroad, making new friends and sharing professional insights.

This E-Newsletter also contains a paper of three students from the Dobrich College. We hope that this will be the first of many other materials developed by our students.

Hope you will enjoy this issue! And see you in Blagoevgrad!

Tsvetelina Harakchiyska
Dr Desmond Thomas works at the University of Essex as a teacher trainer and Director of the Masters in TESOL. He previously worked as a lecturer at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London and has also worked in a number of TESOL-related positions in Brazil, Japan, Slovakia, Turkey, Spain, and Bulgaria. From 1999-2002 he taught at the New Bulgarian University and Universities of Shumen and Veliko Turnovo contracted by the British Council.

**HOW DID YOU GET INTO ELT?**

By chance, like many other people. It was a long time ago in 1972 when I had my first experience of teaching English to French secondary school teenagers. I was an English assistant and was supposed to be working with a more experienced teacher but the school just left me to my own devices. While I was in France, I realized that teaching English would be a very good way to see the world without going bankrupt. As a result, I’ve spent most of my adult life living and working outside the UK.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK IS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT IN YOUR ELT CAREER?**

I can’t think of a single experience that would count as ‘the most significant’. I enjoyed running a video studio and making English language TV programmes in Brazil in the 1980s, getting books and videos published in the 1990s, and completing a PhD research project a few years later. But there are many other things that I could mention. Perhaps at the very end of my career I’ll be in a better position to answer this question.
WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE?

Trying to adapt to all of the different countries that I’ve lived and worked in. On one occasion I went directly from Rio de Janeiro in Brazil (after 10 years) to Kyoto in Japan. Then I understood the true meaning of culture shock.

WOULD YOU SHARE SOME OF YOUR INSIGHTS FROM YOUR WORK WITH YOUR STUDENTS?

It’s hard to know where to begin. Many of my current students are experienced teachers from China or other Asian countries who have made huge sacrifices to leave their families to come to Britain so that they can further their career. I am deeply impressed by their determination to succeed and by the quality of the research that they manage to produce. They also manage to demonstrate the power that researchers can have: sometimes they make a questionnaire available via the internet and get 100 replies almost immediately. Almost all of my students are carrying out research projects in specific teaching and learning contexts – for example in secondary schools in Greece, or with trainee teachers in Vietnam or with university lecturers in the Middle East. Because their work is context-specific, they can really add to the store of knowledge that we already have in their chosen area. And because their findings often differ from those in the more general ‘research literature’, they really do demonstrate the importance of local teachers acting as researchers.

YOU HAVE SUPERVISED TEACHERS-RESEARCHERS FROM DIFFERENT TEACHING CONTEXTS. WHAT SIMILARITIES AND WHAT DIFFERENCES HAVE YOU FOUND MOST INTERESTING?

English language teachers all over the world have certain things in common. They deserve to be paid more for their efforts, they are often not consulted when big educational decisions are made and they are (almost without exception) dedicated to their students and genuinely interested in their progress. But there are some differences that I have noticed when talking to teachers. For instance I’ve found that in situations where resources are lacking, teachers become much more creative. If the coursebook and the CD and the teachers’ book and the data projector and the internet are all readily available, it’s almost an invitation not to plan or think very carefully. But if these things are lacking, there has to be a much greater reliance on the skills of the teacher. In very remote places I’ve been lucky enough
to observe or supervise teachers who were forced to rely on their skills and their creative ingenuity. In Slovakia in the early 1990s, for example, I met teachers who had never spoken English to a native speaker and had never visited an English-speaking country. And yet, their students learnt more and seemed more motivated than in other more privileged situations. Bulgaria had the same experience of suddenly emerging from Socialism in 1989, and I imagine that the situation that I am describing will be very familiar to many Bulgarian teachers.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO AT THE CONFERENCE?

I’m certainly looking forward to listening to the different experiences of Bulgarian teacher who decide to conduct research into their own classroom practice. But since I lived in Sofia between 1999 and 2002, what I am looking forward to most of all is meeting and greeting old friends and acquaintances who all helped and supported me during that period.

Many thanks for this interview!
Dr Gergana Pehcheva-Apostolova is one of the founders of English studies at the SWU. Her connection with ELT began in the 1990s with starting a private school of English in Kustendil covering all possible levels and types of courses and based on a preceding doctoral study of Logic and Rhetoric. She invented a methodology called Argumentative approach to ELS. Her career at the SWU has gone through successive lecture courses of Literature, Morphology, Lexicology and Syntax. At the present moment she reads Translation studies, American Literature, Contemporary British Literature, Rhetoric, Philosophy of language, English and the Internet in their traditional and e-versions.

She is interested in the philosophy of the Infosphere and the methodology of language transcendence in the Net from a mentalist perspective. Author of 12 books. Member of editorial boards of three journals. Author of fiction books. A Fulbrighter and a winner of 2007 ESSE Senior researcher grant.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO ELT?

There are two agents to blame for this: the tales of my childhood and the Wind of change in 1990. I have always appreciated the wisdom of tales. There is an Eastern tale about the prince who fell in love with a fisherman's daughter. Her father wouldn't let her marry him unless he mastered some profession. The prince learned how to make baskets and that saved his and his wife's lives in time of war. I started learning English in 1968 and ever since I have looked upon my EL training as a professional skill that could prove useful in time of social collapse. It did. After the Fall of the Wall when the world turned upside down i.e. stopped standing on its head and turned the right direction, a newly produced PhD in Logic and Rhetoric with a university degree in Philosophy, History and English could but only become a teacher of English and open the world for our people who needed the freedom of getting beyond the frontiers of our closed culture. I applied at a couple of places that offered positions for philosophers. However, at the sight of my university diploma all of my possible employers reacted in the same way: “Oh, but you have an MA degree in English! We need English language teachers!” I had to follow the imperative of the time. After all philosophy can be taught under any guise.
WHAT DO YOU THINK IS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT IN YOUR ELT CAREER?

I managed to open a school of my own: ABC-UNIVERSAL ELL School in Kustendil and make it popular and functioning to its full capacity for 17 years between 1990 and 2007. My doctoral degree proved useful: I invented my own methodology for becoming efficient and called it „Argumentative approach to ELL“. I never use the term 'teaching' although as a philosopher my mission in life is exactly being a teacher. Instead I use the term 'learning' to signify the process of teamwork where cognition is a shared activity.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE?

I’ve been inside the profession for 24 years. Still, the biggest professional challenge for me was when my first Dean at the SWU asked me to do a lecture course in English Literature for our teacher training courses in 1993. I had 4 days to prepare. Then I found the benefit of all my efforts to master the profession while still at school: I had read all my books, I could recite most of the poems on the syllabus, I could tell all the stories that added to the glory of EL. And, what is most important, I could teach it to the class of teachers so that they liked it. Then a long period followed when my academic bosses trusted upon me all the courses on the curriculum of English Philology with the exception of three only:

Old English, Phonetics and Phonology and School Practice teaching. In the year 2000 I had my first repeated course, and stopped hating English.

WOULD YOU SHARE SOME OF YOUR INSIGHTS FROM YOUR WORK WITH YOUR STUDENTS?

I have never thought it my final occupation, never took it as the sole and solemn job of my life. I’ve rather seen it as a game which is part of my life: some quest whose goals shift with the horizon rolling in perspective. It is the incessant telling of tales: of how vast and how varied the wide world is, of how thrilling the adventure of knowing it is, and how much English we need to talk with all the interesting people on our way.

Some of my principles that I share with my students now are:

1. The Linguist needs to develop hard professional skin for there is never a last translation and a final version of your EL creativity.

2. It doesn't matter how good you are at English if you cannot make it useful for the people you communicate with. Sometimes you have to reduce your high criteria so
that they can fit real-life situations.
3. If the target text of your translation sounds idiotic, it is not necessarily the author of the source text that is an idiot.
4. There are no bad learners: there are only mediocre teachers.
5. Teachers come when gods and machines cannot manage.

**THE MOTTO ‘DON’T FORGET TO BE AWESOME!’ SEEMS TO BE AT THE CORE OF YOUR SESSION AT BETA-IATEFL 2014. WOULD YOU SHARE ONE OR TWO TIPS ON HOW TO BE A FAMOUS TEACHER?**

This is a quote from Nettlish in its SMS abbreviated mode: DFTBA. It needs only the effort to keep in time with your students, while being responsible for the time machine, e.g. to hold the past, the present and the future and while being a team-learner to keep being aware of what language education used to be in your own school years, to have a clear idea of what is happening at the moment and to have the courage of directing the future. I can remember my lecture in literature with an MA class when I had left my eyeglasses at home and could not read a line. So I had to recite all the quotes. The group kept silent and I started worrying. At the end of the lecture I tried to make an excuse about my inability to read without my pair of glasses, but one of the students said: 'We are impressed you remember all these texts'. They did their best to learn their poems by heart afterwards.

**WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO AT THE CONFERENCE?**

I must admit I have not been at a teachers' conference for a very long time. A couple of days ago a friend of mine reminded me of our first meeting at the First Balkan IATEFL conference in Athens in 1990 and I felt nostalgic about the earlier days of enthusiasm and eagerness to learn more about the profession. Maybe it is time to get the baskets I have managed to make in mastering the profession to the market and see how good they are compared to the baskets of other masters. I do hope, upon opening our baskets, to find all the wealth of goods they contain and enjoy the exchange. In the times of ubiquitous Weblish and brave Googling for everything we need via the e-extensions of our worlds, the young human individuals still need human teachers: experienced friends, co-learners and daring partners, who will lead them through spaces unexplored. We all know that the teaching of English is not as simple as learning of words and grammar or even revealing the beauty of our mother tongues through mastering English: the teachers of English still hold some very important keys to the future. I would like to ask my questions, share my anxieties, make connections and feel once again the power of the professional community work.

Many thanks for this interview!
23rd BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference

The English language classroom: Can research meet practice?

11th – 13th April 2014, Blagoevgrad

Confirmed plenary and featured speakers are Terry Lamb (University of Sheffield, UK), Desmond Thomas (University of Essex, UK), Ellie Boyadzhieva and Gergana Apostolova (South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria), Paul Davis (Pilgrims, UK), Richard Cherry (British Council Bulgaria).

A book exhibition of major ELT publishers and service providers will accompany the conference.

A programme of social events including a trip to the UNESCO World Heritage Site Rila Monastery will offer you the opportunity to combine your professional growth with delightful experiences.

For programme details, fees, and accommodation, please check: http://www.beta-iatefl.org. For further queries, contact: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you in Blagoevgrad.

With best regards,

The Conference Organising Team
Using ‘eLesson Inspirations’:
A Bank of Intriguing Building Blocks for Teachers

Bill Templer

Bill Templer is a Chicago-born applied linguist with research interests in English as a lingua franca, critical pedagogy, socialist/Marxist transformative policy for education, and Extensive Reading methodologies. He serves on the staff of the IATEFL SIG Global Issues (gisig.iatefl.org/about-us). Bill has taught English and German in the U.S., Ireland, Germany, Israel/Palestine, Austria, Bulgaria, Iran, Nepal, Thailand, Laos and Malaysia. He is Editor (Eastern Europe) at the Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies (www.jceps.com), a widely published translator from German, and chief translator for the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture, University of Leipzig (www.dubnow.de). Bill is Research Associate under Prof. O. D. Kulka, Dept. of Jewish History, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and is currently based in Shumen in eastern Bulgaria. Email: bill_templer@yahoo.com

INTRODUCING A NEW ONLINE TOOL

The Global Issues SIG of IATEFL seeks to encourage educators to get students to think about real issues both in the world and locally, as part of their learning of the language. One feature of this approach is a new idea, “eLesson Inspirations,” the brainchild of the GISIG coordinator, Margit Szesztay (Budapest). These are short videos to encourage students to think about some interesting topic, supplemented by a pdf worksheet for teachers to develop pre-viewing and post-viewing activities (with a strong emphasis on lexical development), and practical ideas for using the eLessons in the classroom - “ideas which might become the building blocks of your own lessons” (Szesztay, 2014a). Such an eLesson could normally take 45 minutes, or even less; or it could be expanded into something more, as you and your students decide. The materials are suitable for B1 level and some, like ‘Mind in a Jar’ (see below), are geared even for a more elementary A-2 level. Margit describes the worksheets:

These are not lesson plans; there is no prescribed sequence of steps. Instead, you can pick and mix activities depending on your specific teaching situation and your lesson aims. The activities
are built around a video clip and they all focus on global issues. Decide if your students should watch out of class or in class, and if you want them to watch the whole video, or just a section. You can of course listen/watch first and be inspired to come up with your own ideas!

With lessons built around these clips, your students can learn English while exploring real-world issues, relevant to their own life worlds. There is a new eLesson inspiration uploaded every Saturday, a refreshing way to begin your weekend, and the archive contains all eLessons. The website is open-access: <http://goo.gl/FX6eI8>. Students can browse on their own.

Hungarian educator Peter Medgyes (2014) has written: “What a lovely idea! I wish I had a class to teach some of this. How can you spread the news most efficiently that it exists? All IATEFL members should be notified one way or another.” Xiaobing Wang (2014) comments: “they are inspiring E resources, half ready-made, but there is still space for teachers to tailor to fit their own students and classrooms!” Chaz Pugliese (2014) is enthusiastic:

A very useful resource and once more, proof that there’s life beyond grammar. I’ve long been convinced that if I want my students to pay attention and react to the lesson/activity I must

challenge them beyond the language. Which is why I like these clips. They provide teachers with plenty [of] opportunities to tap into the cognitive and affective domains.

SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVE eLESSONS

Black Friday

A short video on ‘Black Friday’ raises questions about the new commercial shopping spree the day after Thanksgiving in late November in the United States termed ‘Black Friday.’ It raises questions about the stress on buying things in our society, what is called consumerism, and attempts to change our consumer behavior, like BND (Buy Nothing Day). Take a look: <http://goo.gl/FyohHR>. Marjorie Rosenberg (2014) commented: “Just great materials! And the Black Friday clip was fascinating. We actually included a story on Buy Nothing Day in a text book series for upper secondary schools that I have been working on for the last several years. This clip would be perfect to show in class.”
Margit Szesztay (2014c) stresses: “These short clips and the accompanying classroom activities global issues drawing on creativity, poetry, imagery, and giving voice to alternative viewpoints.”

If I could change the world …

‘If I could change the world …’ is a 6-minute clip from a Canadian university class where students hold up small sheets with ideas about issues that matter to them. Not a word is spoken, but much brief language is visible: <http://goo.gl/psRYQP>. One activity suggested is ‘Follow-up debate’ – “Motion: ‘Finding out what’s happening in the world is pointless and depressing.’ Divide the class into two teams: Optimists (against motion) and Pessimists (for motion). Give each team 5 minutes preparation time: they need to come up with reasons to back up their views. Then hold the debate.” Another ‘Create your own’ is to get students in small groups to work up a theme for change of their own, or even make a short video clip.

Mind in a jar

The eLesson ‘Mind in a Jar’ <http://goo.gl/jHy4Wh> about different emotions and states of mind stand as another example of combining language teaching with teaching for change. Watching the clips offers a fresh look at and how they affect the way we see things, and what is called ‘mindfulness’. One activity is ‘Brainstorm states of mind’ – “You can help by eliciting, demonstrating different states, giving the initial letter to jog their memory. E.g. happy, sad, tired, relaxed, angry, afraid, cold, hot, stressed, lonely, peaceful, upset, disappointed, curious, excited, thoughtful, shy, confident.” Another activity is ‘Follow-up discussion’: “Individually, students write their own definition of ‘mindfulness.’ Then invite volunteers to read out their definition. Appreciate, comment on interpretations, differences as you see fit. Follow-up questions: What are situations when breathing mindfully can be helpful? What else can help you to calm down? In the ‘Mind in a Jar’, feelings and thoughts were at the bottom of the jar. What else is there in our minds?” This is an eLesson suitable even for A2 level.

Generation waking up

Another eLesson inspiration is a clip from the worldwide organization GENERATION WAKING UP, founded in the U.S. and expanding rapidly. They
are working to ignite “a generation of young people to bring forth a thriving, just, and sustainable world.” Here the eLesson link: <http://goo.gl/ChUaoN>. One pre-viewing question is “What is the story of your generation?” That for young Bulgarians is a compelling question. Another exercise: write ‘crisis’ on the board and then generate collocations from the students, like: economic, environmental, demographic, family. Here some of the clip’s key lexis: hardship, adversity, privilege, empowerment, violence, poverty, wealth, spiritual crisis, unprecedented crisis, coming of age, transcend boxes, civically engaged, cliff, edge, cusp. One of the girls in the clip (which has many voices) says: “We are living on a cusp.” A cusp is a point of transition, an ‘in-between’ state. An apt term for describing what Bulgarians have gone through now for 24 years. Another speaker says: “we see the value in diversity.” This is a big question today in Bulgaria, with all the nationalist sentiment against minorities in the country. Another says: “we’ll either fall or fly.” Apply that with your own students. Is there a ‘generation (slowly) waking up’ in Bulgaria? Contemplating recent events, one might wonder. Ранобудните студенти … ‘Hardship, poverty, privilege, wealth, cliff, edge, cusp, unprecedented crisis.’ ....

The ‘who we are’ statement of GENERATION WAKING UP says:

As we wake up to the world we are inheriting, we recognize that we have been born into the most critical moment in history. A convergence of crises – poverty, inequality, economic instability, materialism, climate disruption, and ecological unraveling – are threatening human civilization as a whole. Amidst these widespread challenges, a record number of young people in our generation are being filled with apathy and despair, living out lives that lack meaning, purpose, or direction. At the very same time, a groundswell of consciousness and social change is emerging within our generation.

Here the website of GWU: <http://goo.gl/NKHVml>. They are trying to change things locally, in communities. See what your students think. GWU in Bulgaria? It’s possible.

Benjamin Zephaniah: Poet extraordinaire

Some of the clips use short poems as the focus, like “Football Mad,” featuring a rap-like ‘performance poem’ by the brilliant and highly critical Birmingham-born poet and writer Benjamin Zephaniah, from a Jamaican community. Here the clip: <http://goo.gl/cnAmuR>.
One pre-activity is to ‘Reflect on the Title’: “Ask your students to think about the title: ‘Football Mad’. What does it mean? [...] In their view, what is the poet’s attitude to football? How do they know? Ask them to listen a 2nd time and listen for the lines which reveal the poet’s attitude”. The poem encourages kids to think about what football as a sport means to them, and much more. Take a look and listen. Your students, who may never have heard of Zephaniah, will probably find they want to read more of his poetry and watch him in performance, dancing out and rapping his poems, many good clips on youtube. Benji’s work includes books of poetry, children’s books, novels (Templer, 2014a). He is a very ‘funky’ writer, with an earthy, unsophisticated style. Here his website: <http://goo.gl/pFGuCH>.

Benjamin describes himself as a “poet, writer, lyricist, musician, and trouble maker.” In 2008, Benji was included in The Times list of Britain’s top 50 post-war writers. Here he discusses his refusal of the OBE (Order of the British Empire <http://goo.gl/ZqBhPR>). Few Britons have ever refused that big honor bestowed by the Queen. But Benji did. He is very outspoken, and his poems are quite popular with English language learners in France, for example (Davies, 2014). Helen mentions his short video’d poem ‘Dear White Fella: colours of racism,’ which her pupils really like <http://goo.gl/VZm8oh>. A wonderful children’s poetry book by him is When I Grow Up (2011), kids thinking about their adult future <http://goo.gl/fzKP4e>.

His poem book Funky Chickens (1997) is also superb, often funny, always critical. It includes ‘Football Mad.’ One of his most touching and funky poems there, ‘Danny Lives On,’ is about a beloved cat some stranger murders out on the street. It begins: “Danny the cat / Died last week / Killed by kicks / Of human feet.” Here the poem: <http://goo.gl/nb161q>. Benjamin is a vegan and very engaged about animal rights. You’ll gain insight watching a very political interview with him on Democracy Now! (September 2010): <http://goo.gl/ime0LJ>. He talks about growing up with racism, what made him write, his kind of poetic rap activism.

GLOBAL ISSUES IN THE BULGARIAN EFL CLASSROOM

In commenting on a stimulating article by Alan Maley (2005), the founder of GISIG as a special group—Alan’s piece is a kind of introduction to the
broader focus on GI in English language teaching – Margit Szesztay (2014b) has stressed:

It reminds me that my main aim as an educator is to encourage a critical, non-conformist stance in my students. Encourage them to shake off social conditioning, see the world around them with fresh eyes, question taken-for-granted assumptions, and find personal meaning in the Aristotle quotation: “Where your talents and the needs of the world cross; there lies your vocation.”

For Margit (2014c) and most of us, “being an educator means planting the seeds for change”:

I now see the students in my classrooms as world citizens, in addition to being Hungarian or Turkish, teenagers or young adults, visual or kinesthetic learners etc. With no exception, all my students are inhabitants of a planet with diminishing resources, facing crisis of an unprecedented scale. Albert Einstein said, ‘We can’t solve today’s problems with the same mindset that created them.’ We need a change in attitude, a change in mindsets. [...] To challenge my students to think creatively and compassionately, and at the same time remember that most of them come to class expecting to have fun and to prepare for exams.

‘Food Issues’ was a special event GISIG organized online in October 2013. Many topics were addressed, ranging from hunger and food scarcity, advertising, eating disorders, local food, dangerous additives in food, to sustainable agriculture and other issues. One of best products of the event is a special ‘Pinterest page,’ explore it: <http://goo.gl/5OJJy>. Browse through the classroom activities, visuals, lesson plans, videos and articles. You’re sure to find something you can use in your classroom, or that will inspire you to make some new teaching materials of your own. One ‘Food Issues Month’ lesson Margit Szesztay developed centers on using ‘Teach every child about food’- a terrific TED talk with Jamie Oliver, about food and health, obesity, the need for a food revolution, here the video: <http://goo.gl/aGq8>. Margit’s lesson is featured 1 March at the eLesson Inspirations site. Try it out in class!

Cross-border networking, in-class action research and other options

Teaching global issues incorporating TED talks on video is a super idea for B2/C1 levels (Lavigne, 2013). Tim Grose (2013) also has practical ideas for utilizing videos in teaching GI.
Such clip-inspired lessons are great material for in-class action research—explore and publish your findings. A further option is to get students discussing with learners elsewhere: cross-border intercultural networking (Templer, 2014b), using digital media and sites like myBrainshark <http://goo.gl/2cBPS> and <http://www.mywebroom.com> — where students can even make and share their own videos or MP3s, exchanging ideas/impressions about an issue, a poem, a book, a proposed local project. The student-centered Freinet pedagogy framework that Templer (2014b) discusses is also very relevant for activities connected with GENERATION WAKING UP, which is all about young people networking for social change. Stannard (2014) has more such angles for getting students talking to each other in cyberspace.

English ... for a change

Whatever our perspectives, I think we would all agree: students in Bulgaria need to be encouraged to question taken-for-granted assumptions, and to see the world around them - often especially bewildering in the maelstrom of 24 years of relentless and unending ‘transition’- with fresh (and maybe more courageous) eyes. For example, many teens know they face the prospect of possible emigration, like the tsunami of medical personnel fleeing Bulgaria month after month (bTV, 2014), and half a million citizens aged 15 to 55 now contemplating emigration (Darik Radio, 2014). So, many students have their eyes and dreams set on a wider world, itself in deep extended crisis, with high young adult unemployment and local protest across Europe and beyond (Juventud Sin Futuro, 2013). As Margit notes: ‘world citizens’ in the making. But in what sort of a world? The message of GENERATION WAKING UP is very germane here & now: to work for change, get organized, band together, locally and across borders, civically engaged, sharing projects. Looking at global, local and ‘glocal’ issues with students is one avenue for better understanding where students’ “talents and the needs of the world cross,” and pondering what realities should/could be transformed. Take a look at GISIG and its resources: <http://gisig.iatefl.org>. An introduction to ‘English .... for a change.’ The GISIG motto in IATEFL is: “CARE GLOBAL, TEACH LOCAL!” There’s a new eLesson Inspiration every Saturday morning. Check it out.
REFERENCES


"A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality," John Lennon once said. These three weeks in October 2013 were my dream, the best professional and personal event I have ever experienced with 13 colleagues from all over Bulgaria.

It all started a year ago when I saw the announcement for Educational Leaders' Training Program 2013, organized by America for Bulgaria Foundation. After the approved application, interview and TOEFL exam I got the great news - I was one of the 14 lucky high school teachers to participate in this study, organised by the Institute of International Education and held at Teachers' College, Columbia University in New York City.
New York, New York . . . I had been dreaming of visiting the City that never sleeps for years. And suddenly it was not a dream any more, it was reality.

The day when we set out was my birthday anniversary - 6th October 2013. And I knew it would be the beginning of a new period in my life.

The first time I saw the enormous buildings in the centre of New York I felt part of this unique city. I don't quite remember what I did in the first two days – the only thing in my mind was how I felt – I was a small piece of this cosmopolitan place.

During the three-week professional development and training program, we had sessions at university facilitated by experienced teachers and each of us visited two schools, observing lessons of their partner teachers and sharing ideas about the teaching process. The goal was to introduce us to the latest pedagogical innovations used in the US education, foster collaboration between Bulgarian and American teachers.

The first week classes were based on Understanding by Design. We discussed and compared the educational beliefs in Bulgaria and The US at the beginning of the 21st century. Also, we prepared lessons in group or on our own using the plan of the backward design. The idea of this popular way of planning in the US is to start with the final goal of the lesson, which is what the students should learn. Then, we focused on the essential questions we should ask in class, performance tasks and evidences of learners' success. An idea about our work can be seen in the presentation of my group, available at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_pletB_SijUMGRydDl0SUtZbzQ/edit?usp=sharing

The second week was about authentic, formative and peer Assessment. In the sessions we discussed what students' marks 'tell' us and what remains hidden behind figures. We agreed that grades don't lead to deeper understandings of achievements and many ways of assessing students are needed. We talked over authentic assessment, which is about real-life tasks; debated on formative assessment with measuring understanding and modifying teaching to address problematic areas. In addition, we considered peer assessment as a way to help students collaborate, be tolerant and critical thinkers, who learn from peers' mistakes. We emphasized on a very important issue
for the teacher, that is, to use a good rubric for evaluation. Two examples of sites for ready rubrics are: http://www.rubrics4teachers.com/ and http://rubistar.4teachers.org/.

The third week was designed to be about Leadership, an issue of great importance in the US. We discussed the crucial and complicated role of the teacher - to be a leader, a facilitator, a lesson designer, a member of professional learning communities, etc. We agreed on the length and difficulty in the process of change that is constantly needed at school, and talked about the small steps and one by one followed in the process.

School visits were the second part of the program. In the first two weeks four colleagues and I visited Frederick Douglass Academy III secondary school in Bronx, a state school of about 300 students, mainly black. The school website is available at: http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/09/X517/AboutUs.

Each of us had a partner teacher, whom we followed during the four days we spent at the school. My partner was Takeisha Babb, who is the head of the English language department. I visited her lessons, observed what the procedure to hire a new colleague was, attended a methodology department meeting and saw the results of an online exam students sat. Most importantly, Mrs. Babb discussed with me details of her work, her worries about the teaching process and the evaluation of teachers which was being changed at the time of our visit. Also, in one of the days of our visits Frederick Douglass Academy III secondary school had organized a school trip on Randalls island, a green part of New York City area, with the idea of improving students' social skills and create a team spirit. All in all, the teachers at the visited school aimed at encouraging students' beliefs in the point of working hard for their future. We saw in practice how all teachers demonstrated a leadership at a new level - not with the authority, but with tolerance, sharing and respect among themselves and to students. At the same time, even problematic students followed the rules and felt loved and cared for.

The second school six of us visited twice was Ethical Culture Fieldson private school, which is in Bronx too. The school website is: http://www.ecfs.org/. The mission of the school is to develop individuals competent to change their environment in greater conformity with moral ideas. This school is the one that we have seen in films and
every teacher would dream to teach there – with excellent facilities, and respect between teachers and students. Pupils in class are up to 15, there are many selective subjects, a lot of opportunities for group work and technological devices usage for learning. Interdisciplinary projects used at school provide various ways to study - students were to participate in a trip to Boston, where they would discover the place of the historical Boston tea party, visit a famous spot for a literature figure from Boston and extend their knowledge on social studies. My partner teacher was Cecile Droz, who is of Belgian origin and explained that what she appreciated in the US was the collaboration with colleagues and almost unlimited resources to motivate students to learn.

Besides the official activities, we could feel the cosmopolitan culture of New York City with its unlimited opportunities, looming skyscrapers, enormous billboards, wide avenues full of yellow taxis and tourists. On the first day I was impatient to visit the heart of it - Times Square, feeling part of the world among hundreds of foreign visitors. Then, we were at The Rockefeller Center, one of the highest skyscrapers in the center of New York, and climbed upto its 62nd floor, called 'Top of the Rock' looking down at the bright lights of Manhattan. A few days later, lucky with the sunny weather on an October day, we strolled along The Brooklyn Bridge, and felt special to be part of the excited audience at the Broadway Park and the countless settings of films I have watched were unbelievably in front of me. John Lennon's song 'Imagine' I used to listen to for hours was real - I was next to the place where he used to live. Waiting in the queue to enter the 9/11 Memorial and seeing the notorious place made me think I was part of the world history. Then, I'll never forget the hospitality of The Pfrozheimer Family, one of the members of America for Bulgaria Foundation, in Scarsdale, who made us experience a real American home. Last but not least, we felt really blessed passing by the statue of Liberty on our way to Staten Island, yes we were part of it - New York ...

The American dream has come true for me and my other colleagues during these three exciting weeks in New York. It is not only the place we explored and inspiration we had, but also the new friendships we made. Now, we share experiences and valuable resources and can't wait to meet again. In January 2014 five of us met at the American Corner of The Library in Sofia to present the program to the
colleagues who would be interested to apply for the same program and be in our shoes next year. A few people came to listen. Still, we all know big changes can't happen at once. We have to be patient and persistent.

I have published my experiences in NYC in photos on the site tsvetelenataralova.weebly.com in the Qualifications section. In addition, I did two peer assessment lessons with 9 and 12 graders, where students evaluated their classmates' writings and presentations. One of the rubrics I used is available at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_pleTB_SijUbkp2dXk2QnpKUG8/edit?usp=sharing

When I think back of this stay I'd say it's worth every single minute, and I hope some friends and colleagues will be selected and experience New York next year.
Zhivka Ilieva is an assistant professor at Dobrich College, Shumen University. She teaches English, Methodology, Children’s literature in English and she is also a teacher trainer. She has a PhD in Methodology of English Language Teaching. Her scientific interests include language acquisition, teaching English to young learners, teacher training, communicative skills development, teaching English through stories and children’s books, intercultural language teaching, ESP (tourism and IT). E-mail: zhivka_ilieva@yahoo.com

Thanks to a bursary for travel expenses I could take part in two conferences in Moscow.

- **ELT and Linguistics 2013: New Strategies for Better Solutions, 11th International LATEUM Conference, 2-4 October.**

The conference was organized by the Philology Faculty and the Faculty of Economics of Moscow State Lomonosov University. It took place in the modern building of the Faculty of Economics.

The plenaries included Alan Pulverness, Andrey Lipgart, Anne Marie Burk, Michael Lang, Margarita Philippova. There were more than 80 presentations in the following sessions:

- Cognitive and Corpus-Based Discourse Studies in ELT;
- Culture-Specific Component in Language Teaching and Research;
Teaching and Researching Business English;
- Phonetics in ELT in Global English Context;
- Media Discourse;
- Language Testing and Assessment;
- Culture Studies and Translation.

Three BETA members presented there and thanks to the kindness of our hosts, and Prof. Ludmila Gorodetskaya, especially, we were on time for the next conference.

- The Magic of Innovation, “New Techniques and Technologies in Teaching Foreign Languages” 70th Anniversary of the School of International Relations 4-5 October.

The plenaries included Professor Elena B. Yastrebova and Associate Professor Dmitry A. Kryachkov, Professor Peter Grundy, Professor Gyde Hansen, Professor Elena N. Solovova, Professor Jesus Garcia Laborda, Professor Geoffrey Leech.

There were about 250 presentations in the following sessions:
- E-learning: a Buzz word or a Recognized need
- Foreign Languages for Specific Purposes: What Purposes, What Means?

I would like to thank BETA for the financial support and the Organizing Committees for their dedication and for the opportunity to visit Moscow again and to present at two conferences (and have two publications)!
SONGS AND RHYMES IN THEORY

Children enjoy learning English with the help of songs and rhymes. They are funny and stimulate children's curiosity.

The classroom can be a positive, emotional and social environment through music as young learners can share the joy of creativity in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Music is motivating and aids the development of positive attitudes towards the target language. Through songs and rhymes children easily remember new words and phrases, because they all love repeating them many times and doing it with great pleasure.

In Norman's opinion (2010) people sing because they “enjoy singing, not because songs help ...[them] learn English and yet songs are possibly one of the most brain-friendly ways of learning. Songs are multi-sensory, and they appeal to both the right and the left hemispheres of the brain, as well as to [increase] ... [people’s] desire for pleasure.’ (Norman, 2010: 17)
Songs are a useful means for developing young learners’ skills in the foreign language as they provide opportunities for practising the target language in an unobtrusive and pleasant way.

But songs have other advantages. They activate the motor memory of students and allow them to learn new vocabulary in a meaningful way. Furthermore, according to Norman (2010) “The tune and rhythm help ... [pupils] remember the sequence and meaning of the words (and bring additional parts of the brain into play). Good pronunciation (sound, stress and intonation) is in-built. Repetition is guaranteed. And enjoyment is the key.” (Norman, 2010:17).

Other researchers (Lybenova, 2004) state that through songs and rhymes children easily acquire the rhythm of the foreign language and that memorizing words and phrases through songs is long lasting. Baycheva and Ilieva (2011) also stress that songs in English stimulate all types of memory and intelligence thus contributing to better acquisition of various linguistic phenomena in the foreign language. Therefore we consider songs as a very suitable material for work with young learners.

The power of songs can be found in the combination of rhythm and music, text and motions. Children enjoy singing and learning successfully the target language grammar and vocabulary through them. This is the greatest reward for teachers and also an inspiration to create their own rhymes and songs.

The following paper presents a lesson plan that incorporates a song designed specifically by the authors of the manuscript.
SONGS AND RHYMES IN PRACTICE AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL L2 CLASSROOM

My Apple

Take an apple from the tree
One for you and one for me
Red or yellow we will see
Let's count together
One, two, three

We all know the reason
Why we need the apples every season
They are healthy and delicious
Just try don’t be suspicious

One for every day of week
Eat your apple don’t be sick
Smile and jump 'cause you're free
Now count again from one to three

---

1 Lyrics by Lyubomira Dimitrova and Sylvia Tacheva; Music by Tsanimir Baychev
LESSON PLAN

Topic: My Apple
Grade: 2nd grade (age of learners 8 – 9)

Date: ________
Duration: 35 min.

Aims:
- To revise the adjectives about colour;
- To revise the numbers from 1 to 5;
- To develop pupils’ skills for listening

Objectives:
By the end of the lesson pupils will be able to:
- use the adjectives about colour to describe objects;
- count from 1 to 5 in English;
- sing the song

Subsidiary Aims:
- To increase children’s awareness of the importance of eating fruits;
- To encourage the development of healthy habits;
- To reinforce children’s curiosity towards colours, numbers and counting;
- To develop memory, concentration and coordination.

Key skills: listening and speaking

Materials, aids and equipment: the song¹, colour pencils, paper apples (red, yellow, green), balloons, the text of the song typed

Preparation:
- copy the text of the song for each pupil – 26 copies;
- buy balloons in different colours.
- prepare the paper apples – 26 pieces;

Assumptions: Pupils have to be aware of colours and numbers and healthy eating habits

Interdisciplinary links: Maths (counting), Physical Education (dancing), Arts, Literature, Man and Nature.

Anticipated problems and solutions:
- The teacher forgets the balloons – the teacher prepares a set of coloured papers;

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hI8n5f0Xx90
# LESSON DESCRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Stage / Timing</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Interaction patterns</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1. | **Warm-up** (~ 6 min.) | The teacher checks the homework. The teacher holds a discussion about fruits. | • to check the homework;  
• to present the new topic;  
• to raise Ss’ attention in the new lesson | **T – Ss** |
| 2. | **Listening comprehension** (~ 8 min) | The teacher asks Ss to listen to the song and sets the task for listening. The teacher checks the comprehension of the song. | • to develop Ss’ skills for listening for details | **T – Ss S** |
| 3. | **Game** (~ 8 min) | The teacher plays a game with students. | • to revise and practise the adjectives about colours;  
• to revise and practise the numbers from 1 to 5; | **T – Ss S** |
| 4. | **Singing the song** (~ 10 min.) | The pupils sing the song and dance | • to practise the key vocabulary (colours and numbers) in an unconscious way | **T – Ss S S – Ss** |
| 5. | **Follow-up** (~ 3 min) | The teacher summarizes the key learning points and sets the homework for the next lesson | • to summarize the key learning points;  
• to set the homework | **T – Ss** |
1. **WARM-UP**

The teacher checks the homework from the previous lesson. The teacher starts a discussion about fruits. He / She asks the following questions: “Do you like fruits?”, “Which are your favourite ones?”, “Why do you like them so much?”. The teacher tries to elicit the word “apples” and presents the topic of the new lesson - “My Apple”.

2. **LISTENING COMPREHENSION**

The teacher introduces the song. Before playing the song, he/she sets a listening task to pupils – they have to find what colour apples are. After the listening, the teacher checks comprehension. He / she asks individual pupils for the answer to the question.

The teacher presents the new words and pupils write them down in their notebooks. Pupils repeat the new words in chorus after the teacher.

3. **GAME**

The teacher spreads the balloons on the floor. The children have to pick up only those balloons that have the colour of an apple (red, yellow, green).

The teacher asks questions of the type:

- How many balloons did you pick? What colours do they have?
- How many yellow balloons did you find?
- Did anyone else pick yellow balloons as well?
- Who found the green balloons?
- X, tell me, please, how many yellow balloons are there?
- How many red balloons are there on the floor?
- How many yellow/green balloons have we got?
- What colour are the other balloons around you?

The teacher involves students in practicing phrases from the song and cardinal numerals:

- Can you count from 1 to 3? (students count)
- Can you count to 20? (they count)
- When do we eat apples? (every day)
- Revision of the days of the week
- We eat apples every season. (revision of the seasons)
4. SINGING THE SONG

Pupils listen to the song for the second time and sing with the recording. This is repeated several times.

5. FOLLOW-UP

The teacher sums up the activities done and the results achieved (e.g. Today we revised some colours and some numbers, discussed how useful the fruits are for our health. Sang a new song, danced and had fun). He / she sets the task for homework – pupils have to learn the new song, the words from it and draw a picture of healthy food.

CONCLUSION

The most important purpose for every young learner's teacher is to create positive habits into children's lifestyle. This is incorporated in all the subjects of the curriculum. Children become aware of healthy lifestyle alongside with singing and counting in English. We think that music is the best way for doing that.

REFERENCES


can be a positive, emotional and social environment through music where young learners can share the joy of creativity in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Music is motivating and aids the development of positive attitudes towards the target language. Through songs and rhymes children easily remember new words and phrases, because they all love repeating them many times and do it with great pleasure.

In Norman’s opinion ‘We sing because we enjoy singing, not because songs help us learn English and yet songs are possibly one of the most brain-friendly ways of learning. Songs are multisensory, and they appeal to both the right and the left hemispheres of the brain, as well as to our desire for pleasure.’ (Norman, 2010: 17)

Songs influence more than one sense – the children listen to them, they see the teacher singing – articulating the sounds. They see the teacher’s actions or if there is a clip (as in our case) there are more visual clues and the children activate their motor memory.

World Poetry Day Competition

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Announcement of winners: 21 March 2014
Judges: Philip Kerr and the SEETA Projects Team

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RYE Bulgaria and Mariana Dimitrova
RYE - Research on Yoga in Education

For more information, please visit the SEETA website at:
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Established 1991 in Sofia, BETA seeks to build a network of ELT professionals on a national and regional (Southeast Europe) level and establish the association as a recognized mediator between educators and state bodies, public and other organizations.

BETA members are English teaching professionals from all educational sectors in Bulgaria – primary, secondary and tertiary, both state and private. BETA activities include organizing annual conferences, regional seminars and workshops; information dissemination; networking with other teachers’ associations and NGOs in Bulgaria and abroad; exchange of representatives with teachers’ associations from abroad.

We are on the web:
http://www.beta-iatefl.org

Thank you for reading and supporting BETA-IATEFL by being a member!

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