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Editors’ Corner

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 19th issue of the BETA-IATEFL E-Newsletter! The articles in this issue reflect a common appreciation of various forms of relationship building and its pivotal role for creating effective learning spaces in our professional lives and in the English language classroom.

The first contribution comes from Teodora Mincheva, who offers ideas for reaching and teaching our teen students through the use of technology in an ESP lesson on Pancake Day: How to Make Pancakes Online. Next comes Bill Templer’s “bricolage” of perspectives on Mark Twain’s The Californian Tale. This article opens up a fertile ground for numerous CALLA lessons and activities that can take EFL learners of varying ages and levels of language proficiency through the US history and culture to explore diverse questions and experiences of their own cultures and lives. In his reflections on Social and Emotional Learning for ESL Teachers, Plamen Kushkiev touches on the art of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management and their role in helping teachers to acquire a better understanding of self and others and the strength to embrace the challenges in the teaching profession. Svetlana Dimitrova then reports on her participation in the 24th Annual International IATEFL Poland Conference as an official BETA-IATEFL representative. There she had the chance to connect and share ideas for learning and teaching with educators from across Poland and around the world.
As continuing special features, this issue contains an interview with Dr Lilia Savova, a plenary speaker at the 24th BETA-IATEFL Conference in Sofia, and the poem Ferryman, My Guru by Sagun Shrestha.

There are also updates on Forthcoming Events in the World of ELT. The spotlight is on the 25th BETA-IATEFL 2016 Conference to be held next June in one of the oldest cities in the world – Plovdiv. We hope to see you there!

Best wishes,

Sylvia Velikova
Issue Editor
Pancake Day: How to Make Pancakes Online.
An Idea for ESP Classes

Teodora Mincheva

Students in vocational secondary schools who are preparing for careers in the global economy by taking courses in English that focus on business communication need to study English for specific purposes (ESP). Being language learners who are in the process of developing expertise in their fields, they need ESP communication skills as tools in their training. In order to meet these specific needs, ESP classes should be outcome-based, learner-centred and results-oriented. Teachers know that students learn best when they are fully involved in what is going on in class and are highly motivated in achieving the goals. This can be done by making ESP lessons interesting and challenging. Having in mind students’ ever growing skills in modern communication technologies, the use of computers and IT in ESP classes is getting more and more necessary. I try to incorporate computers in my EFL and ESP classes as often as possible and below I suggest a lesson plan I have designed and used for my classes with ESP students studying Catering.

Teodora Mincheva is a senior teacher from Ruse, who has been teaching English as a Foreign Language and English for Specific Purposes since 1994. She has taught students from various age groups: from kindergarten children through pupils in primary school to teenage students at their secondary education stage. She has also conducted several General English courses for adults as well as some training in ESP to workers and specialists in different realms of economy. For the past ten years she has been working with mixed-ability multicultural classes at the Professional School for Tourism in her native town.

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Pancake Day Lesson Plan

1. Introduce the topic of the lesson.

2. Drawing: the class is divided into two teams of 8-10 students; each team having a spokesperson and an artist. Students draw a picture of a woman in an apron who is running in the street with a skillet and a pancake in hand, following an oral description of a photo (e.g. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2573179/Pancake-races-country-BBCs-Nick-Robinson-way-head-warm-chilly-spring-day.html) (10 min).

3. Picture discussion: students’ pictures are displayed on the board. The class discusses and compares the drawings with the original picture projected on the whiteboard, trying to guess what it is all about (3 min).

4. Pancake races: students watch the YouTube video www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0pdkiBy3ZQ (4 min).

5. Shrove Tuesday: students browse the Internet and search for information about traditions, dates, special terminology related to the topic (5 min).

6. Round-up 1: students report and exchange information (2 min).

7. Traditional pancake recipes: students share their own recipes, orally (4 min).

8. Round-up 2: students sum-up the basic ingredients, cooking techniques, and serving pancakes (2 min).


10. Homework: My favourite pancakes. Students have to design a recipe webpage with pictures, photos, etc. to be used for their class Cookbook (a group page on Facebook or on the school’s official website).
This procedure can be used for many ESP topics, especially those connected with tourism and catering. Teachers can include another website of interest in this lesson for raising students’ competitive spirit and their motivation (for instance, www.pancakemaking.cookinggames-forgirls.com/) or add another video from www.youtube.com/watch?v=2slHCsdWKGJ which is very good and useful (especially for beginners, for it has subtitles in English) for further vocabulary practice in the subsequent lessons.

Whatever the topic, ESP classes can easily be made interesting and challenging and teachers should make the most of their students’ practical knowledge and advanced skills in using computers and IT.

So, turn on your computer, search for suitable websites with videos and games on the Internet and start planning your next lesson. Don’t forget to try out a selected game by playing it for some time yourselves. I assure you it is fun and you will enjoy it.
Exploring Mark Twain’s

*The Californian’s Tale:*
American Dream Turned Nightmare

Bill Templer

Bill Templer is a Chicago-born applied linguist with research interests in English as a lingua franca, critical and working-class pedagogy, and literature in the EFL classroom. He is active in GiSIG in IATEFL, and serves on the editorial board of the Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies. Bill has taught English and German at universities in 11 countries, is long connected with Bulgaria and is based as an independent researcher in the country’s east. Email: templerbill@gmail.com

http://goo.gl/d1xWop

(….) he was there because he had once had his opportunity to go home to the States rich, and had not done it; had rather lost his wealth, and had then in his humiliation resolved to sever all communication with his home relatives and friends, and be to them thenceforth as one dead. Round about California in that day were scattered a host of these living dead men …. (–Mark Twain, “The Californian’s Tale”)

This essay presents a multi-pronged approach—a kind of bricolage of perspectives (Steinberg, 2006)—to teaching one of Mark Twain’s (1835-1910) more intriguing tales among the 60 short stories he wrote, appropriate both for learners at lowest intermediate level (B1) and beyond. “The Californian’s Tale” was first published in 1893 and is set in an abandoned Gold Rush boom town gone bust in California in the early 1860s.
A brief plot summary: set in an old Gold Rush town in central California, this tale is told 35 years later by an unnamed narrator. While prospecting for gold, he comes to an abandoned settlement that seems empty and desolate, the cabins all dilapidated and covered with weeds. But there he chances upon an unusually neat house with cared-for garden and a man standing outside named Henry, a former miner roughly aged 45, and Henry invites the traveler in. Henry talks incessantly about his beautiful young wife and recent bride, aged 19, who has gone to visit her parents, and will return in a few days, and he shows off all the homey “tricks and touches” she has provided. The narrator admires the beauty of the house, its decor, and the wife’s striking daguerreotype photo. Henry invites the narrator to stay and meet her and he agrees. Then .... The “twist” ending of the tale as it unfolds is surprising for both the narrator and reader, and should best not be revealed until the whole story has been read/listened to attentively by all students.

The present paper provides the following:

1) A version of the story in simpler VOA Special English, as well as a link to the text of the original story, with a far greater range of more difficult lexis, very fascinating for comparison.

2) Online links to professional audio readings for both versions.

3) A comparative quantitative analysis of the “lexical difficulty level” and “readability” of the two story versions.

4) A detailed Lesson Plan on the simple version of the story, based on CALLA (Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach). This lesson plan can also serve teachers as a concrete introduction about how to write a lesson plan using CALLA.

5) A brief quiz on the content of the story, online at the VOA Learning English site.
6) A link to an excellent *Prezi slide presentation* on the tale, with questions.

7) An introduction to the American historical period in which Twain’s story is set, the California “Gold Rush” (1849-1856, and its aftermath in later decades). Learners will be encouraged to explore more about a number of aspects of this period in American history, including the Mexican-American War (1846-48) and the Indian Wars on the Western frontier, depending on their interests and passions.

8) Various aspects of the literary analysis of the tale are broached.

9) Approaches are suggested for honing the social imagination of learners through “interior monologuing” — integral to a “pedagogy of social empathy” — asking learners to imagine “How would you feel in that person’s place?” and writing poems, imagined letters, dialogues, diary entries, assuming that “role”— indeed a kind of interior imagined drama, widening our circles of human compassion, relevant to our hyper-commercialized, greed-driven society today.

10) A range of further themes more related to the broader social understanding of learners are touched on:

   (a) the story is about the powerful life-long love of a man for a woman (theme of eternal love);

   (b) it hinges on the experience of the sudden disappearance and presumed death of a close loved one and the devastating grief that can follow (theme: death of a youthful beloved, abducted);

   (c) it centers on what today is often diagnosed as PTSD, *post-traumatic stress disorder*, suffered by many in extreme circumstances, and the depression and even serious psychosis this may cause (theme: severe mental illness);

   (d) it raises questions about how a *community* can deal with such depression and even mental illness on a wild frontier with few doctors,
medicines or hospitals in the 1860s (theme: community, togetherness as neighbors, “solidarity” and cooperation), a focus developed especially in the lesson plan based on CALLA;

(e) it is based on a situation of extreme gender imbalance between the number of males and females, a world where men drastically outnumber women, and the repercussions of that, the extreme loneliness of widowed and single men;

(f) it is set in a desolate society that has massively shrunk, a world in post-Gold Rush free-fall, where many have suddenly departed and whole former communities stand empty, in some ways similar to numerous depopulated Bulgarian villages today;

(g) it is a tale strongly focused on “femininity” as a key element of civilization as opposed to the rugged uncultured “hyper-masculinity” of the frontier, and praises the ennobling qualities of womanhood, by a writer who was a proto-feminist and supporter of women’s equality much of his later life (Whitesell, 2011: 14).

Dimitrova-Gyuzelova (2015: 31) reminds us that literary texts “may serve as a rich source of FL-related historic, geographic and cultural information for the learners (thus contributing to their intercultural communicative competence as well)” and function as

a powerful motivator for the learners to communicate and improve their language skills in an integrated way [...] deciphering and (critically) reflecting on the author’s message, reading between the lines [...] and sharing relevant personal experience, using the text as a springboard for their own creativity [...].
Twain’s “The Californian’s Tale” can serve many of these learning objectives, including connecting with the learners’ own personal experience: with love, death or trauma in their own families, friendship, perhaps a person they know who suffers from “depression” or PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), deserted Bulgarian villages they may have seen and other relevant aspects of their own lives here and now, including the question “what is community”? It is also a springboard to a fascinating “Wild West” period in American history.

**Introducing the tale**

The simplified tale is available here at VOA Learning English: [http://goo.gl/HFe038](http://goo.gl/HFe038). It also has a full MP3 audio reading at slow speed (about 105 words per minute), lasting 13:40 min. The length of the simplified version is 1,440 words.

The original tale (written 1892, published 1893) is available here as .pdf ([https://goo.gl/djNf15](https://goo.gl/djNf15)) and here as an excellent audio reading with visible text on youtube: [https://goo.gl/9z2TKn](https://goo.gl/9z2TKn). The story has 3,000 words, and is read here at a rather fast pace of 165 words per minute, challenging for learners below the B2 level. Aljazeera News is about 130 words per min.

Before reading, it is important _not_ to fully summarize the story, because the reader/listener is indeed astonished in the final few sentences of the tale.

One option is to use the Lesson Plan by Dr. Jill Robbins included at the VOA story site, based on the simplified version of the story: [http://goo.gl/bBNw6U](http://goo.gl/bBNw6U). Look at the lesson plan carefully. It is based on strategies of the CALLA approach, and suggests the students read the story aloud for the first time divided into four groups with story sections, trying to predict what will happen.
Another strategy is to have learners listen to the audio as the story is being narrated, without looking at the text. The audio could also be stopped at several key points and learners asked for their predictions. There are rich options here for listening comprehension. A third option is to print out the full text and use it for class and group presentation. It is contained in the Lesson Plan. In any case, the first part of the Lesson Plan can be used to introduce the tale, and the background of the Gold Rush, using the illustrations contained there. Familiarize yourself with that Lesson Plan before you proceed. This is a short Gold Rush video students can watch: https://goo.gl/hSYEqa.

After the story has been read by students, and perhaps listened to, B1-level students can be shown or assigned this interactive Prezi slide presentation: https://goo.gl/JmP0zm. It raises questions and gives some analysis of literary aspects and themes in the tale. They can also take the brief story quiz at the VOA Learning English site, and the folk ballad “Clementine” should definitely be introduced and learned: https://goo.gl/INsvT8. The song text is a parody of a sad ballad about the loss of a beloved daughter of a “49er” miner in the Gold Rush, “you are lost and gone forever” — the refrain an uncanny echo of Henry’s wife lost and gone — written in the 1880s (see https://goo.gl/A04kFX, here another memorable rendering https://goo.gl/Xe5yGc about love and death).

**Comparison of the original and VOA Special English versions**

Even lower-intermediate learners who do not read the original should be given select sections to compare, so as to get a flavor of Twain’s original “literary” language and discover how it has been simplified. Learners at B2 level and above can be asked to make a more exacting comparison after reading and listening to the original,
indicating what lexis is new for them, and whether they understand it. Students may know Twain’s two most popular novels in Bulgarian translation, but have never read anything by him in English.

The original story has many difficult, lower frequency words, such as:
  - balmy, bodings, cobwebbed, famishing, forsaken, furtive, grizzled, howsoever, populous,
  - predecessor, pridesmitten, profanation, rose-clad, sedate, supplicating, thenceforth
and some 19th-c. lexemes even native speakers today would not know, like the nouns “tidies,” “counterpane’ or even “daguerreotype.” The VOA version has no word families above a basic vocabulary of 1,500 lexemes or less. How to teach the lexis/syntax is not a focus I will touch on, teachers know their learners and what best to practice, especially in the beautifully crafted original tale.

**Flesch-Kincaid readability level**

The story simplified has a Flesch-Kincaid grade level of 3.68 and a Reading Ease of 85.7, far easier than the original; the average number of words per sentence is 9.5. Shorter sentences often make for easier comprehension. For the original, the Flesch-Kincaid grade level is 7.78 (nearly 8th grade). For native speakers at school in the United States, Flesch Reading Ease is calculated at 71 out of 100, where 85 or above is very easy; average number of words per sentence is 17.8, and there are some sentences nearly 90 words long. Teachers (and students) can learn to apply this online “readability” tool with any text they are reading: [http://goo.gl/BmxK4B](http://goo.gl/BmxK4B). This introduces teachers to Flesch-Kincaid quantitative analysis: [https://goo.gl/9jK82c](https://goo.gl/9jK82c). DuBay (2004) is a standard work on readability.
Lextutor VocabProfile BNC-COCA

For vocabulary difficulty, the Lextutor tool has been used: [http://www.lextutor.ca/vp/comp/](http://www.lextutor.ca/vp/comp/), based on the British National Corpus and Corpus of Contemporary American English, both available as corpus tools online ([http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/](http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/) and [http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/](http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/)). Teachers are encouraged to become familiar with these tools and experiment with them, searching individual words or phrases.

Below a graphic comparison of the lexis in the two tales, based on [www.lextutor.ca](http://www.lextutor.ca) (a tool site worth exploring), where K= 1,000 word grouping in terms of overall frequency. K-1 and K-2 thus comprise the 2,000 most frequent words in English as contained in these huge corpuses. Teachers can apply Lextutor analysis with any and all texts learners are reading. It sheds illuminating light on comparative lexical ease and difficulty.

As you can see, the original has a significant number of lexemes at the K-3, K-4 and K-5 level, while the simplified version has only 14 such words. The original even has some 30 lexemes in the range K-6 to K-10, and another 13 in the range up to K-19 (a vocabulary level of 19,000 word families). “Off-list” designates a proper name, or a really rare word. A Lextutor analysis will also enumerate which specific lexemes are involved at what K-level, not copied here. Be sure to know the distinction between “word family,” “type” and “token.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freq. Level</th>
<th>Families (%)</th>
<th>Types (%)</th>
<th>Tokens (%)</th>
<th>Cumul. token %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-1 Words</td>
<td>327 (89.10)</td>
<td>405 (85.99)</td>
<td>1353 (93.31)</td>
<td>93.31</td>
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Lextutor Vocab Profile for the simpler version
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K-2 Words</th>
<th>K-3 Words</th>
<th>K-4 Words</th>
<th>K-5 Words</th>
<th>Off-List</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 (7.08)</td>
<td>8 (2.18)</td>
<td>4 (1.09)</td>
<td>2 (0.54)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 (5.73)</td>
<td>11 (2.34)</td>
<td>4 (0.85)</td>
<td>2 (0.42)</td>
<td>22 (4.67)</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 (2.14)</td>
<td>16 (1.10)</td>
<td>6 (0.41)</td>
<td>3 (0.21)</td>
<td>41 (2.83)</td>
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**Lextutor Vocab Profile for the original version**

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<th>Freq. Level</th>
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<th>Types (%)</th>
<th>Tokens (%)</th>
<th>Cumul. token %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>K-1 Words</td>
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<td>574 (63.50)</td>
<td>2700 (87.38)</td>
<td>87.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-2 Words</td>
<td>114 (16.64)</td>
<td>126 (13.94)</td>
<td>143 (4.63)</td>
<td>92.01</td>
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<td>K-3 Words</td>
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<td>44 (4.87)</td>
<td>49 (1.59)</td>
<td>93.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-4 Words</td>
<td>37 (5.40)</td>
<td>40 (4.42)</td>
<td>46 (1.49)</td>
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<td>K-5 Words</td>
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<td>K-7 Words</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1 (0.11)</td>
<td>1 (0.03)</td>
<td>97.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-15 Words</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>
Themes of the tale

Read this brief introduction to some ideas about themes in the tale: http://goo.gl/fl4Xzp, such as the solidarity of the other men around Henry there to help comfort him in his derangement. The original tale has one miner and old friend of Henry’s say:

“Never has been sane an hour since. But he only gets bad when that time of year comes round. Then we begin to drop in here, three days before she's due, to encourage him up [...] We've done it every year for nineteen years. The first Saturday there was twenty-seven of us, without counting the girls; there's only three of us now, and the girls are gone. We drug him to sleep, or he would go wild; then he's all right for another year.”

This is an extraordinary statement of community solidarity, social empathy and neighborly togetherness, often lacking today across America (and elsewhere), caught up in the ideology of fierce individualism that characterizes this neoliberal era of “to each his own,” “survival-of-the-fittest,” a cult of ego-centric individualism that
smothers and destroys bonds of community. As Giroux (2014: 9) characterizes the deepening malaise in the U.S.: “a predatory culture celebrates a narcissistic hyper-individualism that radiates a near sociopathic lack of interest in — or compassion and responsibility for — others.” The social message in Twain’s tale, the commitment of Henry’s friends to his well-being even in his long-term severe mental illness, is in some way the diametric opposite of this. The story also embodies a vision of Twain’s “ideal” woman, Henry’s lost wife, innocent, in “everlasting youth,” reflected in some of his writing in his final years, like “My Platonic Sweetheart” (Nakagaki, 2004).

**Honing social imagination through interior monologues**

In building a “curriculum of social empathy,” the “interior monologue” is a powerful tool for sharpening students’ critical social imagination, as they attempt imaginatively to enter the minds and hearts of others, either from fiction or reality, and to deepen their sense of empathy with those imagined individuals in their situation. The monologue can take many forms: a poem by or about the person, a personal letter by her or him, a song text, a diary entry, and other types of text, both spoken and written, individual and in group work. It can be expanded into a dialogue or multilogue acted out as a mini-drama (Berry, 2000). As Linda Christensen (2000: 131) notes: “Students need opportunities to think deeply about other people — why they do what they do, why they think what they think. They also need chances to care about each other and the world. Interior monologues are a good place to start.” Often, the focus is just on an ordinary person. Interior monologuing asks: “How would you feel in that person’s place?” This exercise in “imaginative stepping into the heart and mind of Others’ — and moving beyond empathy to “compassionate thinking,” recognizing the “interconnected nature of our lives” (Pohl & Szesztay, 2015) — is a part of a pedagogy of TESOL for social empathy, solidarity and equity. Such a
pedagogy knits a collage of perspectives for firing the social imagination, better understanding ourselves (Steinberg, 2006) and “what it might mean to imagine otherwise in order to act otherwise” (Giroux, 2014: 21).

Teachers can tap interior monologuing as one core approach to honing social imagination focused on Henry, his lost wife, his friends, the narrator himself, putting students imaginatively inside their imagined life worlds. They can write a letter from the narrator to a friend (or his wife), describing this strange experience; they can write a letter from Henry’s wife, like the one he received and has kept all these years. Or a letter or diary entry by his wife after her capture by local “Indians,” describing what is happening. Or a diary entry by Henry, years ago as a miner or on his wedding day. Or a letter by Henry to a relative, perhaps a few months after his marriage, or a poem by Henry about his wife. Or a letter by his wife right after her marriage. Imagine you are a friend of Henry. Together with other friends you decide to give him a present for his birthday. Write a note to go with the present. The options for such pieces of imagination can be brainstormed. For example, a class could all write such individual poems by Henry, and then compare them as a special kind of writing exercise. Let students brainstorm the kinds of texts they might write (or act out) as interior monologue or multilogue. Learners and teachers can consult two sources online (Templer & Tonawanik, 2011; Bigelow & Christensen, 2001), where there are numerous concrete lesson plan suggestions. Berry (2000) centers on relevant dramatic approaches, “educating against the grain.”

**Interior monologue and keeping a diary**

Another tool for autonomous learning we can recommend is keeping a journal or diary, in a notebook or some digital form online, perhaps both in L1 and in English, recording impressions, dreams and desires on a regular basis, talking with the self black-on-white. One of Twain’s last works is a remarkable “diary story,” *Eve’s Diary*
(1905), a humorous yet profound reflection on the biblical Eve, “the first wife,” here in a 1906 edition online: http://goo.gl/IW9Nml. It is an excellent text for EFL, in quite accessible language, and can inspire a young learner to keep a regular diary. Eve is portrayed here as the world’s first scientist [!], an “experiment” in an experimental world (http://goo.gl/z6USDP). This is the sequel to Extracts from Adam’s Diary (1904) (https://goo.gl/lZifLP).

**Learners as graphic artists**

Students can also experiment with sketches, drawing impressions of what the narrator describes in the abandoned ghost townscape and the interior of Henry’s house, or other images in their minds the story may evoke, especially if they also compare passages of the simpler version with the far more “literary” and “crafted” original. They could even make a kind of graphic story “comic” short version of the tale, working in small groups. Ilieva (2015: 63-64) has a storybuilding book project by a 4th grade student with nice self-drawn graphics.

**Introducing CALLA**

The Lesson Plan by Robbins included at the VOA site with the simplified version of the story is based on CALLA. Some teachers may find it worth exploring as a strategies-oriented approach in widespread use in the U.S. and elsewhere. I have not developed suggestions using its framework in particular, but important to my own orientation within a pedagogy of social empathy is the stress on students’ own lives and previous knowledge and experience. That is, in keeping with the CALLA focus in cognitive strategies of “Valuing their own prior knowledge and cultural experiences, and relating this knowledge to academic learning in a new language and culture” (Chamot & Robbins, 2005: 5), also using a rich variety of resources (ibid, 21, 33). In Bulgaria, Velikova (2005: 278) has discussed some aspects of the CALLA framework applied to

**Description of townscape and house interior**

Much of the story at the beginning is what the narrator has seen as he describes the boom towns of the Gold Rush, and what he sees in this deserted former boom town when he spots Henry, and the uniqueness of Henry’s house, so neat and “cared for” [!] and beautiful inside and out. When you finish the tale, you may wonder: has Henry created, somehow subconsciously, a kind of “museum” to his dead wife, memorialized in “eternal youth,” part of Twain’s search for the ideal girl (Nakagaki, 2004)? He has an old letter from her, but otherwise the house is clean and fresh as if his wife had been there all the time, although as we learn in the surprising ending, she has been dead for 19 years. How is that possible? Does Henry spend all his time keeping the house as his wife would have wished and done herself? Has Henry in some sense become his wife, strangely “feminized”? Does the story comment on the source of his income? Does he work as a prospector, can he work? What do students think? He lives after all in a deserted mining settlement, a ghost town where the gold is gone and so are most of the former residents.

**Dealing with sudden death**

This is a sensitive topic for students, but many will have some experience of death in the family or among acquaintances. What is bereavement and how do individuals and families grapple with it? In the case of Henry, it is death without the body of his wife, without a funeral, without a gravesite at which to mourn and remember in order to forget and go on living. He has preserved everything as his wife once arranged it: in some families, the room of the deceased person is also kept nicely as it was, a kind of memorial to the beloved one now gone. Some people move out of a house or
apartment after their spouse dies, too many memories. Henry is just the opposite. Sometimes, the death of a loved one is kept from other family members for some time, or permanently. Students will have discourse about how death has been dealt with from their own experience. More broadly, the question is how people cope with any significant loss, of a beloved, a job, physical and mental abilities, a home, career, a marriage, material goods, safety and security (Cummings, 2015).

“Medicalizing” of shock and depression

Some people say that too many doctors prescribe anti-depressants to people suffering from PTSD, or in mourning after the death of a loved person, and think this is wrong; that we should look to the “healing power of nature.” In some way, this is what people around Henry have done, driven by necessity. There are no doctors and little medicine in his “ghost town,” no “psychiatrists” in any case, and modern medicine was very different in the 1860s, often using herbal remedies. How would someone like Henry be treated today in Bulgaria? Dr. Peter Gotzsche, director of the Nordic Cochrane Centre in Denmark was interviewed in Sept 2015: https://goo.gl/YgMg9V and speaks about psychiatry and pharmaceuticals in Europe and North America very critically.

Henry’s future

What will happen to Henry in the future? Perhaps his friends will also leave. Students can project a narrative about what they think may transpire after a few more years. If he goes to San Francisco, for example, he may be placed in an “insane asylum” or left to wander and perhaps die in the streets. What do students think? If Henry were in their family, for example, how might he be cared for and treated? Is suicide a danger for Henry?
White and Chinese miners hoping to strike it rich during the California Gold Rush, 1852.

(Creator unknown. More about the photograph)

**Historical background:**

**exploring the Gold Rush**

For students at Low Intermediate level, this brief text can introduce the Gold Rush:

Here an article on the “gold fever”: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_Gold_Rush

An excellent video documentary is available on the history of the Gold Rush, suitable for level B2 and above: https://goo.gl/13dXo6 . But even learners at a lower level can try to learn from the film, seeing what they can grasp. Students can explore a whole range of images connected with the Gold Rush online: https://goo.gl/PsFyHi . In small groups, they can decide on images they like.
Women on the frontier

The tale also underscores the terrible absence of women, when Henry’s buddy says: “the girls are gone” from their town. Who were those “girls”? Not wives probably but entertainers, sex workers, some single women running a shop, others working in the many bars. This is perhaps one reason why Henry never met another woman who might have brought him back to some degree of sanity and a second marriage. This article discusses that central fact on the California frontier, the great lack of women, especially “respectable” women, for many decades: https://goo.gl/UixLK1. A growing portion of migrants on the California frontier came from China, and many of the Chinese women flocked into the sex trade, due in part to social discrimination against Asians. At this time, only “white” immigrants could become American citizens. This article on the Chinese immigration is informative: http://goo.gl/EEk72T.

Femininity as a civilizing influence

There is stress here on the woman’s hand in creating a culture of domestic order and beauty as contrasted with the roughness and “crude masculinity” of the miners’ camps. In fact, the narrative puts “the woman” on a kind of pedestal, her grace exemplified by the missing wife, for whom Henry has what Twain calls “affectionate worship.” How do female learners reading the tale respond to this dimension? Twain was a strong supporter of women’s rights and early feminism (Whitesell, 2011; see also http://goo.gl/1LQ9GI). Has Henry shaped and redefined a kind of “counter-masculinity” by assuming his wife’s place in the home, a kind of “gender-switching” (Nakagaki, 2004: 60)? Ponder this original passage, where the I-narrator is unaware this is Henry’s handiwork:
“ [...] here was a nest which had aspects to rest the tired eye and refresh that something in one’s nature which, after long fasting, recognizes, when confronted by the belongings of art, howsoever cheap and modest they may be, that it has unconsciously been famishing and now has found nourishment [...] the score of little unclassifiable tricks and touches that a woman’s hand distributes about a home, which one sees without knowing he sees them ...”

A true sad story behind the story

In the winter of 1864, while staying at Angels Camp in Tuolumne County, Twain recorded in his notebook “that he had happened upon a poor fellow at Tuttleville and that this poor fellow talked constantly about going to the next village to meet his wife, who had been absent for a week” (LeMaster & Wilson, 2013: 117). To Twain’s surprise, he found out later that this sadly deranged man had been making this same journey regularly over the 23 years since her death. This about Tuttleville: https://goo.gl/2b5IK3, south of Angels Camp (here a map: http://goo.gl/wKRQ8r). It is believed that Twain did not decide to write and publish this story until he was certain that his own beloved wife Livy was not seriously ill with heart disease (LeMaster & Wilson, ibid., 118). We know that he outlined the story in 1882 in his notebooks, but waited until 1892 to write it (Rasmussen, 2007: 19), maybe while living in Florence/Italy with Livy.

Ghostly villages and Henry’s “heterotopic” refuge

A strong contrast in the story is the townscape of abandonment and ghosts of the past of the former small boom town that the narrator moves through and describes, itself a symbol of urban “death,” and the strangely idyllic garden and house that Henry in his derangement lives in and cares for, a kind of very heterotopic “other
place” (Foucault, 1984): in the midst of these spaces of failure and dashed hopes — in a sense the post-Gold Rush “violence of organized forgetting” (Giroux, 2014) — a shrine to domestic memory and marital bliss. We have an “antipodal space”: the former boomtown now gutted, itself a kind of strange “heterotopic” cemetery of memories — and Henry’s refuge, a totally “delusional” world of domestic beauty, likewise built solely on memories. Yet, Henry is not in a “mental asylum,” in Foucault’s sense a “heterotopia of deviation.” Henry’s house, filled with the living ghost of his long missing wife, is somehow a kind of museum to her, a “heterotopia of suspended time” (https://goo.gl/p0auMs; cf. also Heterotopian Studies). Students can discuss this stark contrast, perhaps comparing it with something they may know first-hand or indirectly: in Bulgaria today, there are over 170 empty villages, and many other depopulated villages that have shrunken to but a few residents, in the main elderly: “The abandoned homes in whose yards weeds reign over everything have become a bleak and creepy sight across this country. The bustling life that was once making these places vibrant is now long forgotten” (BNR, 2013). The theme of ghostly village landscapes today is one that could be explored by students (Mihova, 2015). BNR (2013) notes 1,130 villages with fewer than 50 inhabitants now in Bulgaria, a number destined to become ghost villages “where only the wind will be whistling its miserable and gloomy song in the chimneys of deserted and crumbling houses.”

Other literary aspects

Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva (2015: 48) includes a quite useful set of guidelines for talking about plot and character development, and some questions there could be applied to this story. Important in the tale is the “I”-narrator and the epistemic perspective this creates in the tale, centering on the Ego-viewpoint (Dancygier, 2011: 70-75) in SV-space, story-viewpoint space. (ibid. 60-63). How much dialogue is there in the simplified tale? As mentioned, students can all be introduced to Twain’s style by comparing the simple version and the literary original. Aspects of repetition, balance,
the musicality of the prose can be explored. Twain often likes three adjectives as descriptors, or three nouns, three linked phrases, termed in rhetoric “tricolon” (http://goo.gl/v1RBuW), evident from the very first sentence in this story. One may also wonder why there is no name given for Henry’s wife nor for the Ego-narrator, nor for the Gold Rush former town where all this takes place.

**Foreshadowing and photography**

Is the story’s end foreshadowed as the story unfolds, so we might get a hint that something is terribly wrong? In the VOA simplified tale, when Henry shows the letter, it is described as “yellowed.” This tells the attentive reader: wait a second! – a very old letter. In the original version, there is no such adjective. In both versions, Tom starts crying when Henry reads the letter from his wife, and we do not know why. This is foreshadowing. In the original tale, the narrator notes that the man he meets is about 45 years old. But then we learn from Henry that his wife is 19, and supposedly very recently married. The difference between their ages is striking, this too is probably Twain’s foreshadowing — but the narrator does not wonder about this. In fact, they were married some 20 years before: so Henry was about 25 when he married, and she 19; we understand this as the story ends.

A quite subtle foreshadowing that readers a century ago might have understood is his wife’s “old-fashioned” daguerreotype. It was made around her 19th birthday and marriage day, supposedly just a few months earlier: “Nineteen her last birthday,” he said, as he put the picture back; “and that was the day we were married.” The daguerreotype was very popular as an early form of photography in the 1840s and early 1850s, but then was quickly replaced by easier and cheaper methods of photography. So, this daguerreotype is actually about two decades old, as we understand at the story’s end, made perhaps around 1854 in California. The narrator does not note this but the reader might wonder: why this then “antiquated”
daguerreotype of such a young girl, just turned 19? Intriguingly, there is a famous daguerreotype (1850) of the young Samuel Clemens at age 15 in Hannibal, Missouri: https://goo.gl/JAsVsn, a link perhaps from Twain’s own biography. Another reference to photographs on the walls of the miners’ cabins is also quite subtle. It may well set the time when Twain was actually in California, 1864: in the miners’ cabins there was “nothing of ornament but war pictures from the Eastern illustrated papers tacked to the log walls.” The reference is probably to the American Civil War (1861-65), captured in thousands of photographs, especially by pioneer photographer Mathew Brady https://goo.gl/sB8TfV, part of photography’s early history.

**Temporal setting of the story**

When then is this tale really set? The original tale begins by Ego-narrator saying: “Thirty-five years ago I was out prospecting on the Stanislaus […].” The simpler version starts: “When I was young, I went looking for gold in California.” When is the Ego-narrator telling the tale? It was written by Twain in 1892, and we know he did not venture to California (from Nevada) until 1864. The problem with the temporal location of the action is that Henry’s wife has been dead, we later learn, for 19 years. The Gold Rush began in 1849, so perhaps Henry’s wife was married sometime between 1851 and 1856: this would place the venue of the tale some 20 years later. Consequently, it is hard to establish a clear time frame. I think it is the mid-1860s, when many Gold Rush towns were abandoned: but there were very few American settlers and no gold prospectors in California 19 years before that, when Henry and his wife would have supposedly married.¹ So the “when” and “where” remain left open, as Twain desired, even though the tale is about a very specific historical time and place Twain had himself lived in, and where he started writing fiction.
Prelude to the Gold Rush:  
New Spain and *Alta California*

In looking at the historical background to the Gold Rush, students can also be briefly introduced to how California fell into the hands of the American Republic, namely as part of the spoils of a war provoked by certain circles in Washington and the American South against Mexico in 1846. Texas, with many English-speaking American settlers, had broken away from Mexico in 1836, and was annexed against Mexican wishes into the United States as a “slave-holding state” in 1845, part of the direct prelude to the war. That war ended in January 1848 with Mexico, which had become independent from Spain in 1821, surrendering about 1/3 of its territory to the United States, including what is now California, New Mexico, Arizona, parts of Nevada, Colorado and other states. This was the so-called Mexican Cession (https://goo.gl/kNLxIR), part of an ideology of “Manifest Destiny” (https://goo.gl/xwDP9D) and continental U.S. expansion westward.² Read here about the Mexican-American War: http://goo.gl/vAvAbw. Many progressive Americans opposed that war, among them Henry David Thoreau, who denounced it (and slavery) in his 1849 essay on “Civil Disobedience,” (https://goo.gl/Vz2OKF), an
Native American resistance

What was called Alta California in the province of Las Californias in “New Spain” was missionized from the 1760s, and 21 missions to convert the Native American nations there were set up, giving names to places like San Francisco, San Diego, San Jose, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara and other later cities (https://goo.gl/z0TXTw). These Native American nations resisted the Spanish and later Mexican occupation of their land and their methods of converting them to Christianity. Students can read something about the Indian wars in California: https://goo.gl/J1x5LS.

Many Native Americans died from violence and from disease (smallpox, malaria, syphilis) spread by the Spanish and later Mexican soldiers. Disease was indeed in some sense a WMD, a weapon of mass destruction. But when gold was discovered only two weeks ![!] after California became a U.S. territory, Native Americans also organized themselves to resist the many prospectors who started to pour into the territory from around the world. Dunbar-Ortiz (2015) reminds us: “Settler colonialism

https://goo.gl/0wfb8C
is a genocidal policy. Native nations and communities, while struggling to maintain fundamental values and collectivity, have from the beginning resisted modern colonialism using both defensive and offensive techniques.” Numerous mining settlements grew literally overnight. The main seaport, San Francisco, had 600 residents in 1848, by December 1849 its population had soared to 25,000 — by 1852, 34,776. Henry’s wife was supposedly captured by “Indians” and vanished. In the original tale, Joe says:

“She? Poor thing, she’s been dead nineteen years!” “Dead?” “That or worse. She went to see her folks half a year after she was married, and on her way back, on a Saturday evening, the Indians captured her within five miles of this place, and she’s never been heard of since.”

What is implied by Joe’s remark “that or worse”? Did they try to find and rescue her? Nothing mentioned. So these were also the clear dangers on the California frontier in the 1850s and for several decades later. Moreover, many migrants to California had to pass on a long overland trek of several months through the “Wild West” territory that was the core space of the great “Indian” wars and the mass destruction of the Amerindian nations and their cultures. And clipper passage from the East Coast could take even 3-4 months via Cape Horn (http://goo.gl/g9OH41), itself an ordeal, there was no Panama Canal.

Estanislao
Names on the land

The narrator in Twain’s tale is prospecting on the Stanislaus River; Stanislau is the form given in the simpler VOA version, unclear why that change. The Stanislaus River, Stanislaus County, the Stanislaus National Forest in California and California State University/Stanislaus today are all named after a famous Native American renegade of the Yokut nation, Estanislao. He led a series of violent uprisings against the Mexican settlers and missionaries in the late 1820s and 1830s (http://goo.gl/oqyiK4). Estanislao (1798-1838) was his Christian name. At his baptism, converted by Spanish missionaries, he was named after the renowned medieval Polish Saint Stanisláw or Stanislaus (http://goo.gl/8NQE4Y). Stanislaus is thus the Anglicized name of a Native American hero whom the Mexicans in Alta California branded as an outlaw.

Conclusion

What I have suggested in exploring Twain’s “The Californian’s Tale” is one kind of multi-pronged approach, a bricolage or collage of perspectives in the spirit of Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva (2015). It aims to kindle student social imagination and spark broader interest in a range of questions, in part related to their own lives and also to “Wild West” U.S. history in all its uncanny “otherness” – seeking in our pedagogical praxis to free students from what Henry Giroux (2015) terms dead zones of the imagination. [...] Any viable approach to critical pedagogy suggests taking seriously those maps of meaning, affective investments, and sedimented desires that enable students to connect their own lives and everyday experiences to what they learn. Pedagogy in this sense becomes more than a mere transfer of received knowledge, an inscription of a unified and static identity, or a rigid methodology; it presupposes that students are moved
by their passions and motivated, in part, by the identifications, range of experiences, and commitments they bring to the learning process.

Notes

1. One possibility is that Twain (aka Samuel Clemens) imagined Henry’s wife to be roughly his own age, born 1835. She would have been 19 in 1854, at the center of the Gold Rush era. And perhaps she had her daguerreotype made then, like Sam Clemens did when he was 15. We have a photo (what may be a daguerreotype) of Olivia Langdon Clemens (1845-1904), Twain’s beloved wife, aged 15 in 1860: [http://goo.gl/nZdkZo](http://goo.gl/nZdkZo). Interestingly, Livy turned 19 in 1864, precisely [!] when Twain was living at Angels Camp in California (see [http://goo.gl/tfqevY](http://goo.gl/tfqevY)) and made first notes on what became the seed for this story. Twain doubtless knew this early photo of Livy, maybe it inspired him in part for the later story. They first met in 1867 and were married in 1870. Here an opalotype photo of Olivia in 1869, a year before their marriage: [https://goo.gl/KGFckf](https://goo.gl/KGFckf), another photo that Samuel Clemens certainly cherished. Livy passed away in 1904 at the young age of 59, and her husband remained heartbroken until his death in 1910: “Livy’s tremendous influence on Mark Twain shows in the difficulty he had in living and writing after her death. His own pet names for her show that she was the center of his life, for he called her ‘my darling little mentor’ and ‘my dear little gravity’” (R. Willis, in LeMaster & Wilson, 2013: 157). The original tale ends with Joe saying: “Lord, she was a darling!” Twain’s “Eve’s Diary” (1905), written shortly after Livy’s death, is also clearly a text about her. Nakagaki’s (2004) theses about Twain’s “searching for the ideal girl” are relevant here, as is the uncanny dream-tale “My Platonic Sweetheart” (1912) Nakagaki analyzes, about the “Dreamland sweetheart” the Ego-narrator repeatedly meets, both in “eternal youth” ([http://goo.gl/U22wER](http://goo.gl/U22wER)), she 15, he 17. Notably, the “dream-girl” Agnes in that tale is always at age 15, like Olivia’s photo in 1860.

2. On his historic visit to the U.S. in September 2015, Pope Francis chose to canonize the highly controversial Spanish missionary to Alta California in the 1760s and 1770s, Junipero Serra. St. Serra founded 21 missions to convert ‘los indios.’ Serra’s sainthood has provoked criticism in the U.S., by Native Americans and others, a current dispute students will find interesting ([http://goo.gl/O8NYr8](http://goo.gl/O8NYr8)).

References


Social and Emotional Learning for ESL Teachers

Plamen Kushkiev

The notion of social and emotional learning (SEL) has its origins deeply rooted in the realm of emotional intelligence (EQ) and positive psychology. And even though these terms were coined not far back in the day, the idea that both positive and negative emotions are inextricably interwoven into the physical and social life of individuals dates back to Charles Darwin and his book *the Origin of Species* (1859). More recently, Daniel Goleman, who popularized the idea of emotional intelligence in 1995, reiterated the need for educators, stakeholders, students and everybody involved in gaining, producing and disseminating knowledge, to self-reflect and be aware of their own strengths and character traits. Educators as leaders, role models and mentors, are often faced with the challenge of decision-making and all other multiple tasks of different nature in their profession, and communities of practice. EQ and its four-branch model (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) could be the answer to many of the modern challenges teachers are faced with.
To start with, identifying and managing their own emotions is a preliminary requirement teachers need to fulfill before entering the classroom. The idea here is to learn how to respond and not just react to situations of unruly behavior, bullying, disrespect, social absenteeism, dealing with fellow teachers as well as management. It is naïve to expect students to have gained the necessary intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, or critical thinking skills (aka 21-st century skills) when the major role of education is to develop primarily their cognitive abilities. I deem self-awareness and self-control vital for preventing burnout, teacher attrition and low motivation. This is especially valid for novice teachers who may feel demotivated by students’ attitude, scarce incentives, their (un)professional environment, and “fluctuating” relationships with fellow teachers and supervisors. Only after the teacher has become fully aware of their emotions, how to manage and channel them appropriately, will the classroom and school ethos turn into favorable and conducive environment where effective teaching and learning take place.

The other two components of EQ, social awareness and relationship management, serve as a focal point towards establishing a healthy relationship with students. This is particularly valid with large classes where knowing the students’ names may turn into a daunting task. It is my conviction that students at all levels need to feel acknowledged, and their insight taken into consideration by the teacher. This, in turn, lays the groundwork for building rapport and achieving positive reinforcement. Moreover, social and emotional skills are crucial when teaching students of diverse backgrounds – knowing how to listen and respond to your learners’ needs is the base upon which your relationship is built. Learners have various needs, which they manifest in a variety of ways. For example, in some cultures, leaving the class to offer a prayer, returning a call to a family member or not participating in class discussions may seem odd to teachers who come from a different background. Students who do not seem engaged or interested in class may perform well on a final exam. Irritability,
aggressiveness, rudeness and cultural insensitivity or any other disturbing behavior that hinders learning could easily be overcome once the teacher-student relationship is one of trust, mutual respect and cultural sensitivity.

I believe that teaching is a two-way process – i. e. teachers, too, need to learn from their students. Oftentimes, the demand on the part of the students from their teachers is too high or too astray from what the curricula postulate. Here comes the role of the emotionally intelligent teacher who prepares and delivers the material in a way that it makes sense to their learners in that particular context. Being aware of students’ previous learning experiences, be it positive or negative, their immediate educational needs as well as ways to improve their social skills would be the most favorable example of exemplary and meaningful education. Or as Daniel Goleman puts it “IQ contributes about 20 percent to the factors that determine life success, which leaves 80 percent to other resources” (Goleman, 1995).

In summary, IQ and EQ should go hand in hand, and it is the role of educators to become more self-aware and emotionally intelligent to be able to instill that practice among learners. In the extremely demanding world that we live in, possessing the right interpersonal skills is a key factor for job satisfaction and successful career.

References

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We were hosted by the Language Centre of the Jagiellonian University, whose teachers and administrative staff went out of their way to make us feel most welcome and to ensure the smooth running of the conference. As usual, the conference brought together ELT professionals from around the world: educators, researchers and students who came

Report from IATEFL
Poland’s 2015 Conference

Svetlana Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva

An energizing and inspiring professional forum – that is how I could summarize my experience of 24th Annual International IATEFL Poland Conference, which took place in Krakow - a historic place of great beauty and heart-warming charm - between the 18th and 20th September 2015.
to Krakow in order to discuss and reflect on a wide range of ELT topics, to share professional experience and to establish and/or strengthen professional contacts and networks.

The conference was preceded by five half-day professional development pre-conference events, focusing on English for specific purposes, teacher training / classroom management, materials design, drama-&-psychology and, last but not least, ELT for young learners. The conference participants could choose to attend any of these parallel practice-oriented training sessions at no additional fee.

The three-day professional forum of IATEFL-Poland attracted over 800 delegates from more than 30 different countries all over the world. Renown keynote speakers, like David Little, Péter Medgyes, Jamie Keddie, Steve Taylore-Knowles, Hugh Dellar, Marjorie Rosenberg, JJ Wilson, Lewis Lansford, Geoff Tranter, Piotr Bucki and many others, familiarized the participants with the latest developments in ELT methodology and teacher training.

Among the most widely enjoyed and thought-provoking ones were the two plenary talks by Professor Péter Medgyes. In the first of those, The fifth paradox – What’s the English lesson all about?, he challenged certain deep-set CA\(^1\)-related beliefs about language teaching. Namely, Professor Péter Medgyes claimed that foreign languages are unique subjects in the school curriculum where the lesson content and the lesson carrier overlap; that learners have no real messages to convey in the foreign language; that the foreign language is at best an inadequate means of communication and that the foreign

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\(^1\) Communicative Approach
language lesson is not suitable for creating life-like situations. He argued, however, that the artificialities of the foreign-language class can only be endured if “both teacher and learners suspend their beliefs in normalcy and join the language learning circus.” The second one of his talks, *Elfies at large – Beware!*, was delivered in an equally sagacious and intriguing style. Here he challenged the claims of the proponents of the ELF (English as Lingua Franca) movement, whom he humorously referred to as *elfies* in his talk, that native English standards need not be followed any longer because today the overwhelming majority of communication takes place between non-native users of English and a relatively good command of English is usually completely adequate for the purposes of the context in which it is used. After subjecting this assumption to critical analysis, Professor Péter Medgyes concluded that EFL teachers had better follow their own practice-supported agenda and satisfy their learners’ genuine needs and expectations, instead of listening to ELFies – or any other researchers, for that matter.

Another well-received plenary was delivered by Marjorie Rosenberg, the current IATEFL President. In very practical terms, she explored some of the ways in which teachers can make their lessons memorable by making them fun, engaging, creative and relevant for the learners. Along the same lines, Bethany Cagnol (the representative of TESOL France) offered some unconventional “quirky” ideas for motivating teens and young adults to participate more actively in the ELT classroom: some of them – e.g. teacher’s text messaging feedback on students’ oral presentations or students’ use of water guns to express disagreement with fellow speakers – took the teachers way out of their comfort zones, but the spirited presenter managed to convince them in their efficiency in the classroom.
Steering in the way of teacher training, in his talk *Mentors, Myths and Memories: The Dream Lives of Teachers*, JJ Wilson argued that to grow as professionals, we need to understand our lives as teachers and examine the different paths we might take. Through the lens of personal narrative, he invited the participants to explore their identities as teachers and look at different ways of developing.

Another inspiring presentation was given by Steve Taylore-Knowles, one of the authors of the ELT on award winning course for teenagers and adults *Open Mind* (Macmillan 2014), which includes life skills as an integral part of the course. In his hands-on workshop, he maintained that our students need to develop skills of different kinds, from language skills to life skills, and went on to illustrate what is involved in breaking these skills down into teachable and learnable chunks and how specific task sequences work to develop these skills.

I had my slot on teaching English through literature on Saturday afternoon, just before late lunch, and was happy to actually see some people attending (among which such household names as Mark Andrews and Bethany Cagnol!), despite the hour and the strong competition of other presenters.

Throughout the whole conference, there were about 13 parallel presentations in each slot, which made the choice of what to attend tough and, as I heard from some of the local participants say, it was quite difficult to resist the temptation of going to workshops delivered by native speakers.
Even though I cannot describe all of the talks, presentations and practical workshops, I can definitely say that the conference programme was well balanced and wide-ranging in terms of topics covered and speakers featured (for more details see http://iatefl.org.pl/programme-136.html?file=files/magazyn/konferencja2015/Entertainment/Programme%20Draft%202015-08-18%281%29.pdf). Throughout the conference there were ample opportunities to attend and observe live EFL lessons with various groups of learners or take part in real lessons in another foreign language (e.g. Spanish, French, Modern Greek, Lithuanian, Japanese or even Polish for foreigners). There was also an extensive Exhibition where leading publishers and language service providers offered great discounts on the latest ELT books, resources, software and services, as well as gave away splendid prizes to different quiz & puzzle winners.

The organizers had also prepared an enjoyable evening entertaining programme to help the participants relax after the multiple activities of the conference days. The events included a concert by the eminent Polish jazz singer and music composer Stanislaw Soyka, a formal cocktail party for the international conference delegates at the main building of the Jagiellonian University in the heart of the old town, a quiz The weakest IATEFL link, based on the TV programme format and hosted by Peter Whiley (the Editor of the IATEFL
in which ELT celebrities like Jamie Keddie, Hugh Dellar, David Fisher, Beth Cagnol, Geoff Tranter and others pit their wits against each other.

In conclusion, I would like to thank both BETA-IATEFL and IATEFL-Poland for sponsoring my participation in this fantastic professional forum, and encourage all BETA members to consider applying for funding to attend the conferences of other sister organizations of BETA around Europe.
Interview with

Lilia Savova

Tanya Bikova conducted a short interview with Lilia Savova, a plenary speaker at the 24th BETA-IATEFL Conference in Sofia.

Lilia Savova works in the Graduate Program in Composition and TESOL at Indiana University of Pennsylvania where she teaches Second Language Acquisition and Teaching, Cross-Cultural Communication, Discourse Analysis, Sociolinguistics, Assessment, Instructional Design, Technology and Literacy and Composition. She is co-editor-in-chief of the TESOL Classroom Practice Series by TESOL Inc. and co-author of The Lincom Guide to Materials Design in ELT. She has published EFL textbooks in Bulgaria and S. Korea, many articles and book chapters. She has also offered over 100 presentations in the US and abroad as well as invited keynote speeches at the International TESOL Convention (USA), Tamkang University (Taiwan), Shanghai International Studies University (China), Birzeit University (Palestine), New Bulgarian University. She has served as TESOL Teacher Education Interest Section President, Three Rivers TESOL President, and Director of the IUP Masters in TESOL Program. She is winner of the Three Rivers TESOL Professional Achievement Award.

Tanya Bikova is a teacher of English at the High School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Blagoevgrad. Since April 2014 she has been a co-opted BETA-IATEFL Committee Member and conducts the interviews for the BETA-IATEFL e-newsletter. E-mail: tanyabikova@abv.bg
Dr Savova, thank you for agreeing to this interview. At the end of this year’s 24th BETA-IATEFL conference in Sofia (June 5-7), you said you would always be glad to return to Bulgaria and willing to accept other future invitations to our conferences. During the workshops and coffee breaks I noticed some teachers and university professors who were happy to see you and greeted you with respect. So, what memories do you have of Bulgaria of the time you left it in the early 1990s?

Lilia Savova:
The 90s were a difficult time for me, my family, and for everyone I know. The many years of security and predictability had ended. Everybody was scared.

Tanya:
Why did you decide to leave Sofia University in the first place?

Lilia Savova:
I didn’t. I was invited to teach at the University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Tanya:
What is your impression of the country now?

Lilia Savova:
My impressions of the country now are limited and rare. I am impressed by the thousands of new businesses, by the many business women, by the new Metro, the most beautiful I have ever seen. I am curious about the new developments in Bulgarian. Sometimes, I feel that if I didn’t know English, I wouldn’t understand some
of the signs, which are literal translations from English. I am proud of the accomplishments of my former students and the many young people who have put Bulgaria’s name on the map. Currently, Sonya Yoncheva is playing Desdemona at the Met. I read about her in *The New Yorker* with pride. My dream is to be able to come back and to visit all the beautiful historical and natural sites that I never visited before.

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**Tanya:**

Did the USA meet your expectations in professional and personal aspect? Were there any difficulties in the beginning?

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**Lilia Savova:**

Every beginning is difficult: I expected public transportation and I learned I had to drive everywhere; I was in awe of the endless choices of tomato sauce in the store only to find that made my life more difficult, not easier. By the way, the Bulgarian Billa has even more kinds of butter, for example, than my local food chains. I knew very little about the US, so I had no expectations. But I am a hard worker and soon I was able to adjust and advance in my job. For me, working at an American University is similar to working at Sofia University: I love my students and my work. I find great satisfaction in helping students become better teachers and professionals. After many years of teaching, I feel like an expert violinist who can play for pleasure and not worry about the notes.

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**Tanya:**

In your plenary session at the conference, entitled *Variation in Educational Design: Using Universal Principles of Design*, you talked about the 80/20 principle – a smaller percentage of an object’s constituent parts, i.e. 80% of the value comes from the content. What are your 20 percent that keep you going – traveling and lecturing, doing fieldwork, being a winner of the Three Rivers TESOL Professional
Achievement Award etc.?

Lilia Savova:
I will respond in Bulgarian: “Неволята учи човека.” I will also admit that I could have done a much better job defining the 20% in my life. You see, I learned the 20/80 principle of design rather late 😁.

Tanya:
Which aspects of your work do you enjoy the most?

Lilia Savova:
That’s hard to say. I love everything I do. Recently, I have been learning a lot about the application of technology in the classroom. Learning about apps and other media and materials for me is like being a kid in a candy store.

Tanya:
What achievement do you most pride yourself on?

Lilia Savova:
Surviving and graduating successfully from the English Language School in Sofia. I learned how to work hard and fast. After that, life was a breeze by comparison. I am proud of all smaller and bigger achievements.

Tanya:
What are you working on now and what are your professional plans for the future?
Lilia Savova:
I just got a sabbatical leave after a very competitive application process. I am working on the application of Conversation Analysis in the study of real and textbook conversations.

Tanya:
Do you have hobbies outside the ELT world? Could you tell us something about them?

Lilia Savova:
I have a small vegetable garden in my back yard. I grow Bulgarian tomatoes. I make my own Bulgarian yogurt, козунаци, банница. I guess anything I do is for a good reason or cause.
Ferryman, My Guru

Standing on the boulder at bank
I am looking at you, ferryman,
your oar and your ferry
taught me life and living
and sense and sensibility.
On this particular full moon day,
I again relish my days
I spent with you.
Those days of joy,
those days of learning
which bloomed from your soul.

Once again
I could feel the fragrance of blooming knowledge
that came out of you.
You were drawing me the other side of the river
battling with all the evil waves
that could swallow me any time.
Your small ferry and oar,
the river where you meditated,
they all are my Gurus
who taught me the meaning of life.

On this full moon day,
I remember.
My life would have been deserted filthy being
had I not met my Guru.
My life would have been lifeless
had I not acquainted with you.
I am blessed now to live
and profoundly delighted,
for Gurus are my Gods
who gave the meaning to my life.
A new meaning!

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Sagun Shrestha (Medhavi College, Kathmandu, Nepal),
sagunshrestha4@gmail.com
Coming soon!

- A week in the life of the IATEFL President

My Working Week: 26-30 October 2015
Marjorie Rosenberg

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SEETA Literature Project
Let's find out about our neighbours through literature! A unique project for teachers and students in South-East Europe!
Find out more here 😊
Dear Colleagues,

We are happy to announce again another special competition this year. We owe it to Lilia Savova plenary speaker at BETA Conference 2015 in Sofia.

The prize will be attending BETA Conference 2016 free of charge and covering your travel expenses OR two nights’ accommodation. You will receive a certificate at the AGM in 2016.

Application procedure:
1. You have attended BETA 2015.
2. After the beginning of 2015-2016 school year, you have to apply in your work ideas gained from the conference presentations.
3. Report on an activity you have done; the idea has to be from a workshop or another presentation at this year’s conference, please mention the presentation and the presenter that inspired you; the activity has to be described in 500 words minimum.
4. This short article will be published in the BETA E-Newsletter.

You can use the following plan to help you

**Introduction**
Why did you choose this activity?
What age / language level is it suitable for?
What materials do you need?
What specific language points or skills can it be used for?

**Description**
What did you do before, during and after the activity?
What did your students do?
Were there any problems?
How were they solved?

**Reflection**
What lessons have you learned from using this activity?

Please, send your material not later than 10th December 2015 to beta.iateflbg@gmail.com providing your name, contact number / e-mail and school / organization.

BETA 2015 Organizing Team
25th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference
Teaching and Learning English: from No Tech to High Tech. How to Motivate Learners?
4th-5th June 2016, Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”, Bulgaria
AND
Pre-Conference Event
CLIL with Young Learners
3rd June 2016, Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”, Bulgaria

FIRST CALL

DEAR COLLEAGUE,

The Bulgarian English Teachers’ Association (BETA-IATEFL) and Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”, are pleased to invite you to the 25th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference, which will take place from 3rd to 5th June 2016 in Plovdiv, European capital of culture 2019.

The conference aims to inspire and motivate teachers to share ideas about motivating their learners these days. We would like to offer you the opportunity to share your experience, expertise and insights into the fascinating world of language teaching and research. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to Teaching Young Learners and Teenagers; Teaching ESP; Teacher Education and Development; Bilingual Education; Literature, Media & Cultural Studies in ELT; Global Issues; Content and Language Integrated Learning; Blended Learning; Applied linguistics; Research; Testing, Evaluation and Assessment.

As usual, internationally prominent professionals in the field of ELT are invited as keynote speakers and workshop leaders. A book exhibition of major ELT publishers and service providers will accompany the conference.

SPEAKER PROPOSAL DEADLINE – 20th March 2016. For speaker proposal forms, fees and accommodation check http://www.beta-iatefl.org. For further queries, contact beta.iatefl@gmail.com

We very much look forward to seeing you in Plovdiv.

Best wishes,

The Conference Organizing Team
50th Annual International IATEFL Conference
and Exhibition
Birmingham, UK
13th-16th April 2016

Pre-Conference Events and Associates’ Day
12th April 2015

Plenary Speakers

David Crystal  Silvana Richardson  Diane Larsen-Freeman  Scott Thornbury  Jan Blake

For further information, visit:
http://www.iatefl.org/annual-conference/birmingham-2016
Keynote speakers

Aziz Abu Sarah  Dr. Andy Curtis  Dr. Jeanette Altarriba  Dr. Anne Curzan

For further information visit:

Writing for the BETA-IATEFL E-Newsletter

Have you ever wondered if you should write an article for the E-Newsletter of BETA-IATEFL?

- Please DO! Your contribution may act as a springboard for discussions, inspiration for colleagues or facilitate the work of fellow teachers!

What exactly do you have to do?

If you feel you have something you would like to share:
- Send us your article in MS Word format.
- Send us a photo of you (in jpeg format) and short biographical information (about 50 words) which will accompany your article.
- You will receive feedback from us within 10 days of your submission.
- Please, check the deadlines and the topics of the forthcoming issues. Note that the topics announced are just illustrative; if you would like to submit an article on a different topic, please do. It will be considered for publishing.
- We are looking forward to your contributions.

For further information contact: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com
Notes for Contributors

- Your article must have not been previously published and should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere.

- 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: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com

- Text of the article: Calibri, 14 points, with 1.5 spacing.

- Headings and subheading: Calibri, 24 points, bold, centred; first letter capitalised.

- 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 should be included.

- New paragraphs – to be indicated with one separate line.

- Referencing should follow the APA referencing style.

- References in the text should be ordered alphabetically and contain the name of the author and the year of publication, e.g. (Benson, 1993; Hudson, 2008).

- Quotations have to include the relevant page number(s), e.g. (Peters, 2006, p.76).

- 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 return any material submitted, but they reserve the right to make editorial changes.
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 your support!

Disclaimer. The views and opinions expressed in the articles in this e-newsletter are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or the official opinion of BETA-IATEFL or the editors. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the e-newsletter lies entirely with the author(s) of the publications.

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