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Editors’ Corner

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the concluding issue of the BETA-IATEFL E-Newsletter for 2015! On the threshold of the winter holidays, we offer you a Christmas gift pack with a mix of articles, hoping it will give you food for thought, but also inspiration, and will thus add to the season’s spirit.

As usual, the contributions view English language teaching and learning from different angles. We start with A Hatful of Seuss, where Bill Templer gives us a taste of the magic in Theodor Seuss Geisel’s picturebooks and suggests a number of ways to convey this magic to English language learners. The potential of Dr Seuss’s books is further explored by Renata Krivec, who offers a delicious recipe for developing students’ writing skills. Still on the topic of books, films, songs, and authentic resources in general, Niovi Hatzinikolaou shares her experience of bringing in target language materials to make lessons more efficient and fun. Next, Avgi Vafeidou describes a cross-border school initiative to enhance acceptance and tolerance among teenage learners of English in Greece and Turkey.

There are two reports in this issue. Svetla Tashevska and Siyana Harizanova look back on their participation in the 24th International IATEFL Poland Conference; Anelia Georgieva, regional foreign language expert, and Sofia Encheva, a 1st-place winner, give us two different perspectives on the National Competition in English
Language Oral Communicative Skills. Their story is continued with Tanya Bikova’s interview with Mirela Stamatova, a 3rd-place winner in the same competition. Next, in the interview section, Nikolay Nikolov and Paul Davis speak about growth, inspiration, toils and rewards of being an English language teacher, a teacher trainer, a writer.

In the poetry corner, we offer you one more opportunity to enjoy the magic of poetic expression – this time with *Human Heart* by Simon Andrewes. Finally, there are details about forthcoming ELT events in Bulgaria, and guidelines for contributors.

This issue is full of promise. We hope it will stimulate you to reflect, experiment and, why not, contribute to the newsletter – an article or a report can be as good as a description of a learning activity, or even a teaching idea. We also hope to see you at the 25th BETA-IATEFL Conference in Plovdiv in 2016. Happy reading and a very happy and successful new year!

Zarina Markova, Issue Editor
Bill Templer is a Chicago-born applied linguist and translator with research interests in English as a lingua franca, critical and working-class pedagogy, and literature in the EFL classroom. He is on the editorial board of the Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies, is an assistant editor with clelejournal.org, and is active on the GISIG Committee in IATEFL. Bill has taught English and German at universities in 11 countries, including at VTU and KPU Shumen in Bulgaria, and is based as an independent researcher in eastern Bulgaria.

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A Hatful of Seuss: An Introduction to Using Dr. Seuss Picturebooks in Your Own Teaching

Bill Templer

https://goo.gl/PUoL3e

‘I’ve published any number of great writers, from William Faulkner to John O’Hara, but there’s only one genius on my authors’ list. His name is Ted Geisel.’ (Bennett Cerf, qtd. in Parravano, 409).

The present article builds on my piece in this E-Newsletter #12 (Templer, 2014). There (p. 22) I briefly mentioned books by Dr. Seuss (Ted Geisel, 1904-1991), the American author and illustrator, whose 44+ picturebooks have long since reached a level of huge enduring popularity in the U.S., even a kind of highly inventive ‘Dr. Seuss mini-industry’ of sorts, commercialized in a distinctively American way, but also reflected in a huge amount of open-access material online at youtube and
elsewhere. Yet remarkably, these books (and videos) are still little used in EFL teaching and voluntary free reading outside the U.S. and UK, especially for younger learners. In my view, that deficit needs to be remedied. This article seeks to stimulate your curiosity to discover and experiment with Seussian picturebooks and other materials written or inspired by his remarkable creativity (including many Seussian-like books on easy ‘fun’ science, potential texts for CLIL), to introduce Dr. Seuss to your students, whatever their age. Perhaps write up some in-class action research for publication or a conference presentation. Inspiration blooms. And you do not need to spend a barrelful of cash to buy these books, a lot of usable material is a mouse click away. A good point of departure is this comprehensive article on Dr. Seuss,¹ with links to much material on his books and info, here his art.

For brief starters

Look at this youtube reading of the Dr. Seuss’s book (a rediscovered manuscript) just published posthumously in 2015, What Pet Should I Get? It is hardly his best book, but very simple and brief, wound around a question any child will understand and the trouble of ‘making up your mind’ about a hard choice to make. Jay and his sister Kay visit a pet shop. Significantly, there are no adults around. Young learners will appreciate the simple lexis, the repetition, the rhymed meter, the drawings, and the invitation it gives learners to talk about their own pets. Many of his books are available online in this way, cost-free.

¹Numerous hyperlinks are included here in the article, just click on the text title or words highlighted.
As the book says: So, you see how it is / when you pick out a pet. / How can you make up/your mind what to get? Finally they do: ‘I will do it right now./ I will do it!’ I said./‘I will make up the mind/that is up in my head.’ In the final spread, they walk out of the shop, along with two tiny eyes peeping out of a big bow-topped basket. Readers can decide what pet they chose, left up to the imagination. Ted’s dad Theodor Geisel Sr. served as park system and zoo superintendent in Springfield/Mass., where Dr. Seuss grew up, which developed Ted’s love for animals. He played with lion cubs and could hear animals from the zoo nearby at night. This picturebook could be taught together with a classic of fanciful ‘animal imagining’, *If I Ran the Zoo* (1950).

A core Seussian theme echoed in this ‘new’ Seuss book is that of children on their own in a pet shop, concerned about their father’s wishes, yet free to choose for themselves, ‘make up their own mind’, out for an adventure in freedom, with no adults around: this is a ‘situation in which the parents do not obviously have control over the situation’, as Ruliková (2012: 10, online) stresses in her diploma thesis as a characteristic subtheme in *The Cat in the Hat* and a number of other Seuss picturebooks. Young Gerald McGrew in *If I Ran the Zoo* also takes over to remake the adult world: ‘So I’d open each cage, I’d unlock every pen,/ Let the animals go, and start over again./ And, somehow or other, I think I could find/ Some beasts of a much more un-usual kind.’ Bubíková (2008, 24) comments on
how children’s dependence on adult authority was being increasingly questioned—being controlled by parent adults and molly-coddled, pampered and protected, subtly rebelled against—in certain American literary works especially from the early 1950s. In some ways, Gerald McGrew is a ‘rebel in the imagination,’ creating his own wild and fantastic zoo. Held (2011) explores some philosophical themes in Seuss’s tales.

**Overview**

Dr. Seuss’s first more popular picturebook, the classic *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* (1938), which I discuss very briefly below, was my own favorite children’s book as a very young boy, and is written in prose, almost a kind of Grimm-like folktale about strange things in life that can ‘happen to happen’ to ordinary, simple people, in this case a peasant boy in the Kingdom of Didd who is a kind of ‘rebel’ *malgrélui*—since he cannot take off his hat before the King. But Theodor Seuss Geisel then went on to try to create a real revolution in children’s reading material in English, using extraordinary graphics (self-drawn) and his signature rhyming metered verse, *anapestic tetrameter*, as in his first huge bestseller, *The Cat in the Hat* (1957), with over a million copies sold in the first three years, and as of ‘12/17/2001 – 44 years later – it had sold 7,220,982 hardcover copies, making it the 9th best-selling hardcover children’s book of all-time.’ That picturebook is a zany tale involving two children and a tall talking cat who wildly invades their home one rainy afternoon while their mom is out, with a quite simple basic vocabulary of ca. 220 headwords (word types). The ‘cat in the hat’ has become the *iconic symbol and trademark* of Dr. Seuss and his work. The book launched a new series for kids aged 4-8 founded at Random House by Ted Geisel and his wife, *Beginner Books*. That book will be highlighted here initially,
along with the classic animal tale *Yertle the Turtle* (1958) about power and equality. His beginner learner book with the least lexis (50 word types), *Green Eggs and Ham* (1960) is also presented, as well as the ‘Elephant’ tale about equality, *Horton Hears a Who!* (1954). Another famous tale with a social subtext and message is *The Sneetches* (1961), a humorous tale about discrimination against the ‘Other,’ and the *Butter Battle Book* (1984), a parody about the Cold War and the arms race, written at the very peak of Cold War hostility. I will also comment briefly on *The Lorax* (1971), that deals with the destruction of the environment (and especially trees) and the need for its protection, espoused by a tiny militant creature named the ‘lifted Lorax.’ The famous Christmas book *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1957) is also briefly introduced. In concluding the picturebooks section, I also touch on his last book published in his lifetime, *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* (1990), a brilliant picturebook containing a kind of Seussian rhymed philosophical vade mecum for young people setting out on the unpredictable journey into young adulthood.

In closing, I refer to the extensive battery of materials on Seuss’s books that is a kind of ‘children’s literature mini-industry,’ perhaps too commercialized, but still valuable for educators, including lesson plans and numerous creative activities. There are numerous animated film versions of Seuss’s picturebooks, many accessible on youtube, a huge supplementary resource. I comment on his beginner’s English illustrated dictionary, which I think all teachers and learners should have. Also touched on in closing is an initiative started about 15 years ago at Random House with children’s books on science illustrated in the Seussian style and humor, the *Cat in the Hat*’s Learning Library. The article ends with a link to a vignette graphic of 30 classic and memorable quotes from Dr. Seuss ‘that can change your life’.
The Man

**Theodor Seuss Geisel** chose as a pseudonym the maiden family name of his mom; both his dad Theodor Robert Geisel and mother Henrietta Seuss (pronounced [zois]) were first-generation German-Americans, their parents having immigrated to the U.S., settling in western Massachusetts, where their gifted son Theodor grew up in Springfield. His dad Theodor ran a beer brewery, founded by Ted’s grandfather Theodor, and later (during Prohibition) became superintendent of the Springfield parks and local zoo. Ted grew up with a bilingual, bicultural childhood in a city with an expanding, closely-knit German-speaking community (Minear, 2001; Morgan, 1996: 14). As a young teen, Ted Geisel experienced the great wave of xenophobia against German-Americans (and their language) that arose in 1917 during World War I (Morgan, 1996: 18-20): ‘History collided with the Geisels quickly […] German-Americans in Springfield now faced a hostile world […] Ted didn’t quite understand why he had suddenly become the neighborhood boy to be picked on. Prohibition was coming to Springfield, too’ (Fensch, 2000: Prologue). And these pressures perhaps acted to shape early on Ted’s life-long commitment to liberal values, tolerance, equality and the dignity of ordinary working-class people, reflected in many of his books. He hated anti-Semitism, and particularly the Nazis (Minear, 2001). Ted worked as an illustrator in journalism and cartoonist, and in the late 1930s began to experiment with books for children. Dr. Seuss published his first children's book (1937) in anapestic rhyme *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, set in Springfield. During WW II, he worked as a political cartoonist, developing themes against racism, fascism, isolationism and the Nazis. Ted Geisel’s critique of the wartime Germany and Japan was particularly fierce, even openly racist at points, as noted in Minear (2001), but by 1950 he had softened his views, and even dedicated *Horton Hears a Who!* to a
Japanese friend. In the early 1950s, he began to publish picturebooks (now classics) such as *If I Ran the Zoo* (1950), *Horton Hears a Who!* (1954), and *If I Ran the Circus* (1956). But his first big success as a children’s book writer came with *The Cat in the Hat* (1957), and in the next decade and a half his name became a household word for encouraging fresh approaches to reading among kids across North America. Geisel's birthday, March 2, has been adopted as the annual date for National Education Association’s *Read Across America* Day. A brief digital biography of Ted Seuss Geisel is *The Boy on Fairfield Street*. Pease (2010) is a biography with scholarly analysis of his work. Nel (2004) is a useful study, and Prof. Philip Nel’s course description on *English 710 Dr. Seuss* at Kansas State University is fascinating. The standard biography is Morgan (1996), see also Fensch (2000). A book on children’s literature (‘keywords’) by Nel & Paul is also superb and a great text for overall orientation if teaching literature for young readers.

**The Cat in the Hat**

Like *What Pet Should I Get?*, *The Cat in the Hat* centers on a brother and sister alone, left at home by their mom on a rainy afternoon. The house is then invaded by a boisterous clown-like cat, who performs many strange tricks to try to amuse them, making a mess of the house, which the hatted Cat then cleans up magically before he leaves. The children do not know whether to tell their mom what has ‘happened,’ although no trace remains of the fantastic afternoon adventure. The tiny goldfish in a bowl is the voice of conscience in the tale, the ‘super-ego,’ telling the Cat to stop all his pranks and leave the house. Much has been written about the ‘meaning’ of the tale, which all young readers can enjoy without looking for interpretations about the risks of growing up, freedom from parental control,

https://goo.gl/bFTjyo

MATERIALS: Here a **youtube reading** of the book, it could be presented in class. You can give kids a handout of the **full very simple text**, some 220 word types. Here for discussion with learners a mix of *Cat in the Hat* **images**. Useful is a detailed **background article** teachers can read. A 25-minute **video animated version of the book** can also be shown and discussed, it is of course much more ‘complicated’ than the original book. A film based on the book was made in 2003 by Dreamworks, here an **article**. And here the **actual film**, but dubbed in Russian; the original is not on youtube. You can find various lesson plans online, Ruliková (2012) has one in her thesis, pp. 48-52.

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**Yertle the Turtle**

*Yertle the Turtle* (1958) is about social class, political tyranny, control of society by the powerful and the need for ordinary people, ‘the little guy’ (or turtle) to rebel against that. Mack the Turtle, at the bottom of a huge turtle tower to elevate Yertle the King ever higher, rebels against his oppression by the tyrant Yertle, a parody in part of **Adolf Hitler**. *Yertle the Turtle* is one of six of Seuss’s books
repeatedly banned over the years in various school districts in the U.S. and Canada for its ‘subversive’ subtext and message, encouraging rebellion.

MATERIALS: An article on Wikipedia is informative background. A reading from the book, the full simple text and an animated video are accessible online. Students can discuss in what way they are controlled by adults anywhere, what some call adulthood, unfair authority. Chapter 14 in Held (2011) looks in depth at philosophical aspects of the tale. Easy activity: count the turtles in this tower.

https://goo.gl/JNaozT
https://goo.gl/XkgqnL

**Green Eggs and Ham**

Watch this video animation: Green Eggs and Ham. Dr. Seuss wrote it in 1960 on a bet with his publisher Bennett Cerf at Random House that he could not write a book using just 50 word types (headwords), and won. The book was ranked in 2001 as the fourth best-selling children’s hardcover title of all time in English. The book is clearly about pre-judgment, prejudice, with a message: do not reject something or somebody until you have experience with it, whether a strange dish of food or maybe someone from a different race, culture or creed. It is a text with a very high degree of repetition. Though it may sound like ‘nonsense,’ it has a subtext about learning to be open to experience. Chapter 5 in Held (2011)
explores some of the philosophical implications of this tale. Morgan (1996: 165-180) looks at the book and his biography at the time.

MATERIALS: Here a background article. Here a reading, and here the full text that can be given as a handout to all learners. Here another animated version, and still another. Here are some learning activities by Torrey Maloof. Here still another musical animation, learners can compare. Ruliková (2012: 44-48) has a lesson plan for this tale. Teachers and students can search on youtube for other materials related to a given Seuss story, a rich diversity is available.

**Horton Hears a Who!**

In his jungle, Horton the Elephant hears talk coming from a small speck of dust and soon discovers it is a tiny planet full of microscopic people, a world called Who-ville where the Who’s live. The Mayor of Who-ville asks Horton to protect them from harm by other animals, and Horton does this throughout the tale, saving them from destruction and proclaiming again and again that ‘a person’s a person, no matter how small.’ And convincing the other jungle animals of this. The moral message here is ‘universal, multinational, multi-ethnic. In a word: Equality’ (Fensch, 2000: 110). It ends with the baby kangaroo saying: ‘...ME, TOO! From sun in the summer. From rain when it’s fall-ish, I’m going to protect them. No matter how small-ish!’ Chapters 10 and 11 in Held (2011) deal with this theme of human dignity, also central today in street protests in the U.S., ‘Black Lives Matter,’ and in social justice discourse and action worldwide. The tale’s title is typical Seussian alliteration. The story begins:
On the 15th of May, in the Jungle of Nool, In the heat of the day, in the cool of the pool, He was splashing… enjoying the jungle’s great joys… When Horton the elephant heard a small noise. So Horton stopped splashing. He looked toward the sound. ‘That’s funny,’ thought Horton. ‘There’s no one around.’

MATERIALS: published in 1954, a general overview, a reading with the illustrations and the full text are available online, as well as an animated version. An activities sheet and other Seussville materials can supplement this. An animated feature-length film Horton Hears a Who! was released in 2008. There is a Russian film by Karayev Я вас слышу (1992), based on the Russian version of Seuss. Most of the lexis is at K1/K2 level, but there are 72 headwords (types) above that, so some ‘harder’ words, and Seussian special lexis, you can test this on lextutor, a useful lexical analysis tool. The word total is 2,090, the average number of words per sentence is 8.6 (very short), and Flesch reading ease is 88 (very easy), Grade Level 3 (see this tool). The first book Horton Hatches the Egg (1940) could also be combined with this one, you can find materials online.
The Sneetches

This is a kind of serio-humorous satire about discrimination based on race, religion or other ‘difference’. This tale was, as Dr. Seuss commented, inspired by his opposition to anti-Semitism. Supposedly, ‘In 1998 NATO translated the collection into Serbo-Croatian and planned to distribute 500,000 copies to children in Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of a campaign to encourage tolerance’, but I cannot confirm it was indeed published. Today, of course, a key theme is the ‘Other’, fear of refugees, foreigners. Held (2011: 39-40) looks at the tale’s philosophical ethical implications.

MATERIALS: Here an interpretation that deals with racism. Here a reading. Here another reading, also worth watching. Here the full text a handout for learners. Here some activities: discussion questions and cartoon analysis. Getting kids to discuss the illustrations is, of course, a central focus in any work with picturebooks. An excellent video animation can also be made into a unit.

The Butter Battle Book

https://goo.gl/4sDulo
As mentioned, this was clearly a critical parody of the Cold War and its politics, written in 1984. But it can be about any ‘feud’ or hostility between different groups of people anywhere. It is quite amusing. The full text is available here. Students can enjoy watching a reading from the book, with its illustrations. An animated version is a great supplement. Here a background article. Much discussion could be generated from this theme, which is also related to the prime subtheme of The Sneetches.

The Lorax

Here an overview article. A reading learners can watch for starters can be followed by a handout of the full text. A fun supplement is the animated version. This is all about nature and its destruction, and why this is happening. It is certainly highly topical today. Climate change is a theme that could also be touched on. Here a trailer on the Universal film Dr. Seuss’ The Lorax released in 2012 (the full film hard to find online, here a Bulgarian trailer), and an interview on the film. A study pack on The Lorax written by Maureen Ellis and a team can be downloaded cost-free here. Chapter 17 in Held (2011) looks at the environment, ethics and Big

**How the Grinch Stole Christmas!**

This is a book for the Christmas season, and it deals with the true meaning of the holiday, which is not about buying presents or getting material things, but about compassion and being together, standing ‘hand in hand’. The Who’s in Who-ville (a trans-textual echo from *Horton Hears a Who!* are celebrating but the Grinch wants to stop it all. A background article provides orientation. Here a reading, and an animated version. Here another reading. The full text can be used as a handout. Here scenes from the movie version 2000. There is also a Grinch video game. Chapter 12 in Held (2011) examines the Grinch and his moral change of heart at the end of the tale. Ruliková (2012: 52-55) has a lesson plan.

![Grinch and Cubbins](https://goo.gl/88kY9jhttps://goo.gl/ljaPKo)

**The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins**

An overview article is useful orientation for the teacher. A reading with visuals from the original is with all the text, suitable for intermediate learners, here another reading. An animation is an excellent addition. Kyle Marshall discusses the book, which influenced him as a young boy. This is a kid facing a situation he has
no control over, his family cannot help, and he is facing the supreme authority all alone, namely the King. An interesting blog with a contemporary interpretation of the text is well worth reading, with ideas on arbitrary authority. The tale centers on a world of great social stratification, from the lowly working-class hut of Bartholomew past wealthy villas on up the castle high on the mountain. As the blog writer notes:

Bartholomew is only persecuted for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, wearing the wrong article of clothing, and belonging to a lower class. [...] Bartholomew’s mistreatment caused by King Derwin contains many similarities to police corruption today and in history. [...] Bartholomew is persecuted for a ‘crime’ which he cannot control; being low-class and being incapable of removing his magical hats. He is put through several very frightening situations, despite how polite and cooperative he is....

Here an in-class activity making crazy hats. Here a thoughtful article. This book made a great impression on me as well as a little boy during WWII.

Oh, the Places You’ll Go!

https://goo.gl/88X5Z0
Here a background article on this last of Seuss’s books published in his lifetime, and a good reading (+ images) of the book. Another background article is here. The full text can be copied as a handout. It begins:

Congratulations! / Today is your day. / You're off to Great Places! You're off and away! You have brains in your head. / You have feet in your shoes / You can steer yourself / any direction you choose. / You're on your own. / And you know what you know. / And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

The text explores independence, learning how to deal with challenges, adventures, failures and mistakes. It echoes subthemes about being in charge of your own life from some of Seuss’s earlier books, ‘making up your mind’ (as in the book What Pet Should I Get? or Green Eggs and Ham) and about being alone facing a scary situation (like Bartholomew)—and dealing confidently with the totally unexpected. And learning to become who you are. As it stresses: ‘You'll get mixed up, of course, / as you already know. / You'll get mixed up / with many strange birds as you go’. The lexis level is B2/intermediate. It ends:

Step with care and great tact / and remember that Life's / a Great Balancing Act. / Just never forget to be dexterous and deft. / And never mix up your right foot with your left.
And will you succeed? / Yes! You will, indeed! / (98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.)
KID, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS! / So... /
be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray / or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea, / you're off to Great Places! / Today is your day! / Your mountain is waiting. So...get on your way!

Morgan (1996: 273-288) deals with this book and Seuss’s last years, 1987-1991. This is a superb text to read with graduating high school seniors, in Bulgaria and anywhere. Here a video reading chosen in March 2015 for the ‘Read Across America’ special day. It is too ‘military’ to my taste, but in some ways is a special reading by many different average working-class Americans, coming from a range of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, male and female, who for various reasons have joined the defense forces ‘to see the world’, as some will say. You will sense as they read: these soldiers identify strongly with the text.

The Burgeoning Dr. Seuss ‘Mini-Industry’

Teachers should familiarize themselves with the official seussville site, with all its activities and other links. It is worth browsing, much to be discovered. A seussblog is also of value. The Cat in the Hat Beginner Book Dictionary (1964), a zanily illustrated ‘fun’ dictionary of some 1,350 words in basic English created by ‘the Cat himself’ (i.e. Dr. Seuss) and P. D. Eastman, is a dictionary that should, in my view, be widely circulated and used in EFL teaching in Bulgaria and indeed everywhere: learners of all ages will like it, and plenty of used copies at a reasonable price are available. Then there is the Dr. Seuss’s ABC. It is an introduction to the alphabet, and also can be found in many used copies. A project over the past 15 years, the Cat in the Hat’s Learning Library, by Aristides Ruiz as illustrator and several writers working in the Seuss tradition, such as Mses Tish Rabe and Bonnie Worth, has a large number of titles focused on aspects of science, such as My Oh My—a
**Butterfly!: All About Butterflies.** This can be an inventive ‘fun’ springboard for CLIL and much more. Further afield, *Seussical*, a musical that debuted on Broadway in 2000: here one *performance*. *Seussical* is based on *Horton Hears a Who! And Horton Hatches the Egg*. A background article on the musical and the musical’s lyrics may be of interest to some. Perhaps this Seuss ‘mini-industry,’ built up in large part by Random House, reflects some of the less attractive kinds of commercialization rampant in many areas of life, learning and publication in the U.S., but it also has its very creative sides, and much is made accessible cost-free in cyberspace, which is a boon for teachers in lower-income economies like Bulgaria and elsewhere in southeastern Europe.

**In Closing**

Explore on your own. Experiment with some of what has been touched on in the bricolage presented here. If money can be found, have your school order some used copies (many available, from abebooks.com and amazon.co.uk) of books you would like to work with. How about a 20-book gift box set for £22? At least one copy of a book in hand is good scaffolding and learners will appreciate, it will excite them to have their parents order a few books online, a mouse click away. Teachers in some cities could band together and create a shared collection of Seuss books. Maybe a foundation like *America for Bulgaria* could be approached to help finance that. Perhaps venture to do some action research, because there is little that is published for EFL teaching anywhere, Ruliková’s (2012) diploma thesis done at Pardubice University under Dr. ŠárkaBubiková is one of the few studies on Seuss in TEFL, based in part on empirical Czech classroom experience. Present findings at a conference, write it up. A new collection on teaching English to young learners is *Bland*, add to your own library. The new *Children’s Literature in English*
Language Education (CLELE) journal would be pleased to consider an article grounded on empirical work with one or several of Seuss’s picturebooks. Some of Theodor Seuss Geisel’s wisdom is reflected in 30 Dr. Seuss Quotes that Can Change Your Life, you can distribute to students for discussion, and to fellow teachers. And remember: Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You. Finally, Season’s Greetings with some Dr. Seuss songs, including one for Xmas.

References


A Recipe for Writing a Film Review

Renata Krivec

Introduction

As a teacher of the English language, I sometimes feel as if I were on a mission to help my students improve their listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. Among them, teaching someone how to write has proved to be the most challenging one. Not only because of the act of writing in general, which has become so limited and used for specific purposes only, but mainly because of the complexity of the writing process itself – it needs preparation, careful planning and a lot of thinking. Stages, which students like to skip. Knowing that I would have to guide my students through them, step by step, I chose a task based on watching films, a popular activity which students encounter almost on a daily basis. Apart from being favourite for the vast majority of my students, it has lots of other advantages. Students are motivated because they are aware that they will be involved in an activity they know from their lives and is close to them, therefore

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they should be able to focus on the process of writing a film review. They take a more active role and the level of their engagement should increase as well. In this way, writing a film review should not be a daunting task, should it? Let me present my recipe for writing a film review.

**Starter**

British Council Learn English Teens website (see references) is a good source of materials that can be used when learning how to write a film review. I used the exercise sheet that offers an introduction into the topic and provides an example of a film review based on the film *The Hunger Games*, Part 1. An exercise on distinguishing facts from opinions was also included and turned out to be a very useful one for my students. There are other practical exercises as well and you can access them if you follow the link in the references. After completing the exercise sheet, students needed to write their reviews following the instructions below:

1. Start with the title of the film.
2. Write the type of the film and when it was made.
3. Explain the story, but do not explain the ending.
4. Write your opinion.
5. Write whether or not people should watch it.

All the above activities were completed in one lesson.

**Main course**

During the following lesson, I told my students that they were going to watch a film, but I did not tell them which one. I decided that they were going to watch *The Lorax* by Dr Seuss, the original version from 1972 (see references). My reasons
for choosing this film were numerous; it is a film which my students had not known; it is a great story, which covers current economic and environmental issues; the language used is full of rhymes; and it only takes half an hour for viewing.

As a warm up activity before watching the film my students had to draw according to my instructions. I used the first person narrative and described the physical appearance and character of the Lorax. Unique images of the character were created by the students. I include one of them as an example (see Figure 1).

![Drawing of the Lorax](image-url)

Figure 1: Drawing of the Lorax, by Julija Ferenc.

Afterwards, we watched the film. As a follow up activity, students wrote their film reviews by using the instructions given in the Starter section of this article.

Enjoy your meal!

**Dessert**

In the successive lesson, a discussion about the film followed. I guided my students towards a debate on environmental awareness. They expressed their opinions on the topic in another activity – they created memes. These humorous and thought-provoking images were a great way to finish up the writing process as
a whole. I include two examples of memes created by my students (see Figure 2 and Figure 3).

Figure 2: Meme created by Lara Pintar.  Figure 3: Meme created by Eva Plešec.

**Conclusion**

Every chef adapts a recipe to his or her taste. We, teachers, should always bear in mind who our students are when we plan a lesson. We should think about our students’ knowledge, abilities and needs when we decide which methods to follow and which activities to include. Feel free to create your own recipes for writing a film review. Be creative and choose the activities that will keep your students motivated and engaged; put yourselves in the role of a film director and say: ‘Action!’

**References**


The film The Lorax: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSSrYnc1yQs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSSrYnc1yQs)

Memes: [http://memegenerator.net/](http://memegenerator.net/)
The Use of Authentic Materials in the Classroom

Niovi Hatzinikolaou

Authentic materials, realia, real life situations ... Perhaps these concepts are common in most of EFL teaching methodology books. But what exactly do we define as authentic? According to Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005), the term authentic describes ‘anything that a native speaker would hear or read such as theatre programmes, newspapers, songs, news broadcasts, films on video etc.’ (Gower, R., Phillips, D., & Walters, S. 2005: 82).

Research has shown a series of advantages for employing authentic materials in our classroom. However, instead of listing them in this article, I prefer to share my personal experience of using authentic materials with different ages and levels of students and give an overview of the outcomes.

Authentic materials can be cleverly exploited or adapted to meet the needs of different age groups. For example, teenagers normally love listening to songs of popular music bands, and watching episodes of their favorite TV series or films of their preferred genre. An adult student, on the other hand, may benefit more...
from reading a newspaper article, listening to a news broadcast online, or reading a magazine of professional interest in the target language.

However, the choice of authentic materials to be used in a lesson depends a lot on the type of motivation, whether instrumental, integrative or somewhere in between. Teenagers are usually exposed to American or English popular culture through music and films. They have a genuine interest to make sense of a world that excites them. If a foreign language is the barrier, they will be willing to break it. As a result, bringing aspects of a culture they identify with in a lesson and helping them to gain a better understanding of what interests them will work wonders.

I, personally, use lots of songs in my lessons whether it is for teaching purposes, or just for pure fun. However, I have decided that it is more interesting to leave it to the students to choose the songs they like (last year they came up with a list of songs by popular artists like Adele, Arianna Grande, Taylor Swift etc). A typical task is to remove certain words from the song and ask students to guess what is missing before listening to the song. Students always enjoy this process, especially if they are already familiar with the theme of the song and have some background knowledge. An easier task is to provide the missing words and ask students to fill in the blanks.

What I find more creative, though, is post-listening tasks. Sometimes I do not want to spoil the fun, so I have students listen to the song or, even better, watch the video clip. They then scan through the lyrics and we have an open discussion about the story behind the song. For vocabulary enhancement, I ask students to scan the lyrics quickly to find all the phrasal verbs or all adjectives describing...
someone. I may also give synonyms or definitions of unknown words in the song and ask students to match them. Students will naturally get involved in these tasks because they are interested in the content and the message of a song they love.

Adults’ interest and involvement in tasks based on authentic materials is quite different. Adults often learn a foreign language for an immediate goal that is to communicate at work or while travelling, to get a job abroad or add a language skill in their CVs. Not surprisingly, they appreciate tasks which are meaningful to them and resemble situations they might encounter in real life.

I once had an adult student who wanted to brush up her English so that she could travel to the UK and visit close relatives. She had a basic level of English, but still was too intimidated to use the language for everyday tasks abroad. We had a unit on theatre and cinema with some basic dialogues for buying tickets at a box office. I decided then to bring an authentic theatre guide I got from the UK with a list of all running theatre performances. I asked her to actually go through the guide, see what was on, and choose a performance she would like to go to. Real pictures, real schedules, real places .... She was excited that at the end of our lesson she had called me more than four times to book tickets for her favourite plays. Of course, she had to spend some time to get used to the theatre guide as the coursebook guide was a lot more simplified and clear. However, she gradually gained a lot of confidence, which helped her overcome her worries about functioning in a real-life situation.

I have a couple of more examples of bringing in target language materials to make a lesson more purposeful. But as a general last comment, I would like to say that the key for success in using authentic materials is to be able to meet students’ needs and interests to show them that coursebooks are not the limit. Language is
culture. There is a lot out there which is fun or useful and our students are close enough to be able to cope with it independently.

References

A Programme That Made the Difference: PeaceJam

Desmond Tutu: a Nobel Laureate of Peace to work with the students of our school

Avgi Vafeidou

We are often told that we should be communicative, that students should participate in original projects, that we should be using predominantly digital materials and do everything to engage and involve our students in our teaching environment. It is also true that a lot has been written on how international education caters to a microcosm of the world every day in every corner of the globe. Most of us - ELT teachers - constantly try to engage our students in open inquiry, active learning, creativity, decision-making, critical thinking and independence of thought.

In school year 2014-2015, as Head of the Foreign Languages Department in Aristotelio College, Greece, I took the initiative to implement the educational and pedagogical suggestions of UNESCO by adopting the PeaceJam innovative curriculum for the ages 11 to 14 with a view to turning the English language

Avgi Vafeidou

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lessons into a production laboratory of ideas. By urging the students to focus on principles such as universal human values, equity, inclusion, global thinking, and world citizenship, our Department made the difference in our school as well as in our community and contributed to quality education for our Junior High School students.

The PeaceJam curriculum insists on utilising the four pillars of education for the 21st century: ‘learning to learn’, ‘learning to do’, ‘learning to be’ and ‘learning to exist.’ My colleagues and I – in close cooperation with the administration of the school – integrated them into a large number of good practices because we wanted to introduce our students to issues of peace and non-violence as well as to the lives and works of Nobel Peace Laureates in an exciting and interactive format. It is a fact that in the high speed world in which we live, not only individuals, but also schools can cross countries and continents with the click of a mouse. That is what really happened in our case: the geographical distance between Greece and Turkey became much smaller by participating in a collaborative E-Twinning programme that enabled all participants to develop strong sisterhood bonds. The purpose of this partnership was to enhance understanding between the participant students through educational and cultural exchanges. It is of vital importance that the students of Aristotelio College fully comprehend the meaning of acceptance and tolerance, especially when it comes to countries like Turkey. We – students and teachers alike – had the chance to experience the Turkish culture and establish new friendships.

It goes without saying that the most important moment was when both Greek and Turkish students had a Skype teleconference with Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Laureate. Speaking with a prestigious personality either in person or online is part
and parcel of the PeaceJam curriculum. We thus had the honour and offered the opportunity to have a lengthy discussion with this spiritual leader; the students had the chance to speak to him, to ask questions, to learn new things, to see things from a different perspective, to reflect and, finally, to reform (at least most of them).

Desmond Tutu spoke to them about human rights and insisted on the rights of the oppressed. He tried to pass on the spirit and wisdom he embodies. The thought-provoking discussion with the retired Anglican bishop was, undoubtedly, an eye-opener for the students. Afterwards, they all took part in various collaborative classroom-based online projects with the Turkish students. They used diverse digital educational tools like padlet, titanpad, animoto and artsteps and were given assignments that made them see themselves as players in the world. They also did some individual tasks (e.g. wrote a report on the discussion with Desmond Tutu), organised events (e.g. a bazaar, a debate on human rights) inside the school and invited their parents to actively participate in them.

It was indeed a life-changing project for the students that exceeded our expectations and had the most fruitful outcomes.
Impressions from the 24th International IATEFL Poland Conference

Svetla Tashevska and Siyana Harizanova

September 18 - 20, 2015 was marked by a very special and rewarding experience for us – our participation in the 24th International IATEFL Poland Conference in Krakow, organized by Poland IATEFL and the Jagiellonian Language Centre of the Jagiellonian University, one of the oldest universities in the world. The conference took place on the new premises of the Faculty of Management and Social Communication, which proved to be an excellent venue for the event, providing a variety of fully equipped lecture halls and auditoriums, socialising and recreation areas, plenty of space for the publishers’...
exhibitions, and even a Speaker’s Quiet Area, where speakers could test their slides, check their email and enjoy some peace and quiet. Very thoughtful and useful indeed!

Over the last fifteen years of its quarter-of-a-century existence IATEFL Poland has turned it into a rule to attract between 800 and 1000 participants to its annual forums, and this year’s conference was no exception. With participants from over 30 countries and a constellation of famous speakers like Péter Medgyes, Marjorie Rosenberg, Hugh Dellar, and many others, it was a truly international, top quality forum, where fellow professionals got together to exchange ideas and look into the future of ELT.

The conference theme was ‘Quality in Language Education in Various Educational Environments’. Three days of intensive training seminars, plenaries, and discussion groups, as well as over 120 talks and workshops focused on issues relevant to teachers, students, teacher trainers, researchers, educators, and managers across a wide range of topics including continuous professional development, development of academic online resources and learning platforms, teaching soft skills through languages, etc.

This year, for the first time in IATEFL Poland’s history, the annual conference had a special, new feature – a pre-conference event. It ran as five simultaneous workshops organized by several of IATEFL Poland SIGs: YL, ESP, Materials Design, Drama and Psychology, and Teacher Training & Classroom
Management. After some initial wondering which SIG’s session to choose, we opted for the Drama and Psychology, and never regretted it! We couldn’t have imagined a more energizing and inspiring start than that, not to mention the opportunity to make a dozen of new friends even before the conference had begun. This does make a difference when one finds themselves in completely new surroundings with few if any acquaintances.

Unsurprisingly, we had a hard time choosing from a packed programme with up to 14 presentations running at a time, but of those which we attended some are particularly worth mentioning. Dr Melanie Ellis’s talk, for example, *Be more effective! Assessment for learning (Afl) in the classroom*, informed about the idea behind Afl as a trend in ELT and provided practical insight into how it works and why assessment-for-learning is a way better option than learning-for-grades.

A young teacher from Poland, Joanna Byszuk, gave a most thought-provoking talk entitled, rather unexpectedly in the digital era of today, *From Digital Native to Digital Immigrants – how we learn best*. The presenter used her experience as both language learner and language teacher to take a critical look at contemporary theories of teaching and learning. It was truly eye-opening to see things from a ‘digital native’ student’s perspective and realise how much is still in the hands of a teacher in our technology-ridden world.
Dr Grzegorz Spiewak (Macmillan) involved us in an energetic and entertaining practical session on *Teaching - and Learning - English with the Brain in Mind*, which included a number of brain-friendly activities for engaging and stimulating teenage learners, and not only. Vastly appreciated!

One of the most attended and sincerely enjoyed workshops was *Developing Critical Thinking – tasks, techniques and frameworks* by Alan Mackenzie (NILE), who provided a framework for understanding and designing the specific tasks involved in critical thinking. We loved being pushed to think beyond the box!

Our own talk, *Moving from School to University – Bridging the gap*, turned out to be on one of the most popular topics at the conference, namely 21st century skills/soft skills/life skills — alongside presentations by Steve Taylor-Knowles (Macmillan), Alan Mackenzie (NILE) and Hanna Kryszewska to mention but a few.

While the attendance on the last conference day was relatively modest, the audience’s genuine interest and the quality of the follow-up discussion was most stimulating, as well as the personal encouragement received from Jo Greig from Macmillan (responsible for the *Skillful* campaign). The feedback we received convinced us we were on the right track.

An additional flavour was added to the conference menu by 7 live lessons, where participants were invited to observe real lessons with real learners: from pre-school children to adult learners. The lessons attracted big audiences and were enjoyed by students, teachers and observers alike.
For those who wanted to get into the shoes of FL students themselves and gain some hands-on experience, there was a special slot in the conference programme, where lessons in Spanish, French, Modern Greek, Lithuanian, Japanese and Polish for foreigners were offered in separate auditoriums. A great hit altogether!

On top of the fully engaging academic programme, the conference provided excellent evening entertainment as well. We spent an unforgettable time with one of Poland’s most admired contemporary artists - Stanislaw Soyka, a jazz and pop singer, pianist and composer, who established a vibrant contact with the audience and had people laughing and crying to his songs.

To sum it all up, the 24th Annual Conference of IATEFL Poland was a hugely successful event. And not only due to the high quality of the sessions, but also, and equally importantly, due to the perfect organisation of the event.

Just a few things on the practical side that illustrate how much attention organisers had paid to detail, in consideration of the conference participants. Apart from recommended hotels in Krakow, student hostels offered cheap accommodation providing perfect conditions plus a shuttle bus to take participants to the conference venue for free. A taxi company with reasonable prices had been invited to serve participants at an additional 20 % discount for the days and nights of the conference. Conference participants could enjoy a 15 % discount at a number of restaurants and pubs in the most popular part of Old Krakow. All discounts were granted at simply hearing the password: IATEFL. To get a huge number of people at one place and keep them involved in and satisfied with what they are doing while at the same time making sure everyone is well-fed.
and hydrated, well-rested and transported, entertained and assisted if necessary, is not a joke. Hats off to our Polish colleagues who made such a great job of it!

So, in conclusion, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the BETA Committee for supporting us in joining this tremendous professional event. We received a powerful dose of professional motivation, collected a bunch of valuable ideas to try out, forged useful contacts and made new friends. What more could one wish for from a teachers’ conference?
The National Competition in English Language Oral Communicative Skills, Ruse, 14th - 15th November 2015

Anelia Georgieva

This autumn the National Competition in English Language Oral Communicative Skills took place for students from 6th to 11th grades, grouped in 2 age groups. The competition was held in three rounds – school, regional and national ones.

41 students from 32 schools in 22 towns from the whole country took part in the event. Each student performed in two modules. The first module was a presentation (without PowerPoint) on a topic of student’s choice under the general motto for this year ‘One Man’s Meat Is Another Man’s Poison’. The second module was a conversation with the student.

The competition was organised by the Ministry of Education and Science, Ruse Regional Inspectorate of Education, and Geo Milev English Language School. The national jury members were English teachers at British Council, Fulbright and Geo.
Milev English Language School in Ruse. They were fascinated with the students` knowledge, skills and bright ideas. In the end, they selected three winners for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place for each age group.

The results of the competition are available at http://www.mon.bg/?go=page&pageld=16&subpageld=169

**Sofia Encheva**

My participation in the National Competition for oral communicative skills has become a tradition since its first edition in 2013. It has helped me enlarge my knowledge of English as well as master my skills in public speaking. I have also learned to stay calm and build self-confidence as these are qualities I find necessary for my personal development in the future.

My preparation for this highly competitive event was connected with some sustained research on the given topic which I associated with personal feelings and ideas. In the end, I wasn`t able to include all planned elements. At the national round I managed to do exactly what I aimed at. I stated my thesis persuasively and applied interesting arguments in such a way that authenticity and freedom of thinking added to the impression of a good command of English. The freedom to construct your speech precisely the way you feel at the moment of speaking, I believe, is the key to a powerful and, consequently, successful performance.

**Editor’s Note:** Sofia was awarded a 1st place in her age group (grades 6 – 8). She is an 8th-grade student at Baba Tonka Mathematical School, Ruse.
Interview with

Tanya Bikova
Interviews Mirela Stamatova

Mirela Stamatova was awarded 3rd place in her age group (grades 9-11) at the National Oral Communicative Skills Competition, which took place on Nov. 14-15, 2015 in Ruse. She is an 11th-grade student at the Mathematics and Science High School in Blagoevgrad.

Tanya:

Is this the first time that you have participated in this competition and what is your impression of the organization of the whole event?

Mirela:

No, actually, I also took part in it two years ago but it was a last-minute decision then – I had not participated in anything like it before, so I was not well prepared and only got as far as the second round. The national round this year was a whole new experience for me and I must say I was impressed by the organisation of the event. There was an opening ceremony the day we arrived in Ruse. There we were given more details about the competition itself, which was to be held the following morning. Some students from our host school had prepared recitals and traditional dances. On the whole, it was a very warm welcome. The competition...
also went without any complaints – it was well organized and we were provided with a good atmosphere.

Tanya:
How long did it take you to prepare your 5-minute speech?

Mirela:
That is a bit difficult to answer as my speech underwent a lot of change right up till the last moment. As for research, I remember I did not do much of that – I already had the facts to support my thoughts and did not want to be influenced by the opinions of other people too much. I believe this is very important since during a speech we can only convey the right feelings if they are our own. Changing the speech from time to time is a good strategy as well – it allows for more flexibility and that is very helpful in case you forget a particular sentence or phrase.

Tanya:
What other contests have you taken part in?

Mirela:
I dare say that I have a lot of experience with language competitions. 10th grade was my most successful year – I ranked third in the National Multilingual Competition (my category was German – English) and fourth in the National English Olympiad. I also participated in the national rounds of several other contests: Klett (German), Creative Writing Competition in English (both of these for the second time in a row) and ‘Cvetna Olimpiada’ (‘Colorful Olympiad’) with English. Once I reached up to the fourth place at the National Cambridge
Competition. All in all, competitions are a passion of mine and I try to participate in as many as possible.

**Tanya:**

The motto of this year's competition was One Man's Meat is Another Man's Poison, with the main idea being that people are different and young people should learn to tolerate and respect one another. Yet, on the day the competition took place we learned about the terrorist attacks in Paris, France, with about 130 victims. What are your thoughts on this coincidence?

**Mirela:**

I think that this event was a grave reminder that the problem of toleration is not just an abstract topic – it is very real and it concerns us all. The victims of that attack were not involved in any conflicts, yet they lost their lives and, in my opinion, that is awfully unjust. But it shows that all of us need to work together to solve the issue of terrorism, since we are equally threatened by it. The wrong thing to do is to be indifferent, especially when each person can make small steps towards improving the situation because tolerance and respect are a way of thinking that we need to embrace and pass on to the next generation. We are supposed to be the role models for those younger than us and it is crucial that we make sure they know how their behaviour will affect the future. That is why I find it great that competitions like this one prompt young people to give this problem some thought.
Tanya:
What was the whole experience like for you and what do you want to say to the future participants in this competition?

Mirela:
To be honest, I was quite nervous and the fact that I was the first to speak in my age group did not help much. However, having participated in so many competitions in the past, I was able to give my best and I must say that the jury did a great job helping us relax (It came as a pleasant surprise to me that two of the jury members were native speakers). There was plenty of time afterwards to go sight-seeing around the town and that made for a very nice experience. Thankfully, due to the format of the competition, the results came out the very next day, and they made the trip home all the more enjoyable. My advice to future participants is to have confidence in their abilities and never lose motivation. Every competition has something to give and effort and persistence always pay off eventually.
Interview with

Svetlana Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva

Interviews Nikolay Nikolov

Nikolay Nikolov has an MA in English Philology and Turkology. Since 2005 he has been managing his own school, Markoni’s Language Centre, in Botevgrad. He is an oral assessor and examiner for two independent internationally-recognised EFL examination boards, and regularly presents at international ELT conferences. He has been twice nominated for the British Council ELTons Awards: in 2012, for Local Innovation, with Markoni’s Fancy-Dress Balls, and in 2015, for New Talent in Writing, with T.I.M.E. for teenagers.

Svetla:

Nicky, what is the feeling of being the only Bulgarian English language teacher nominated twice for the ELTons awards?
Nikolay:

This is something one could only feel. It is impossible to describe. To be frank with you, in 2012 when I was nominated for the first time I was sure that I would never ever have the chance to step on the ELTons red carpet again. However, fortunately, the British Council ELTons 2015 shortlist proved me wrong.

Svetla:

Could you, please, tell us a little more about the ELTons?

Nikolay:

The ELTons are the only international awards issued by the British Council in the UK that recognise and celebrate innovation in ELT. That is why they are often referred to as the Oscars in ELT. They reward educational resources that help ESL learners and teachers alike to achieve their goals.

Svetla:

Your second ELTon nomination was for your innovative ELT product T.I.M.E. for teenagers – a self-published teacher’s manual aimed at empowering ELT practitioners with some strategies for effectively improving the communicative skills of teenage learners through the implementation of professional drama techniques. What inspired you to write it?
Nikolay:
My biggest inspiration has always been my work in the classroom with my students. *T.I.M.E. for teenagers* (the Teenodrama Interactive Method in English) is the practical reflection of my PhD study, which I am currently working on at New Bulgarian University.

Svetla:
Who are the target users of your product?

Nikolay:
Being a creative and artistic interdisciplinary method of teaching English as a foreign language to teenagers through the instruction of professional acting techniques in the target language, can be successfully applied with any learners aged 13-19 at level B1/B2 (CEFR) or above. Focusing on the development of learners’ foreign language speaking skills in interactive communication, *T.I.M.E.* is intended for ELT practitioners and other English language professionals who are constantly in search of alternative and innovative teaching approaches and practices they could try and consequently implement in their classrooms.

There are no limitations as far as the T.I.M.E. participants’ profiles are concerned. The method has proved to be equally effective in instructing both introvert and extrovert learners, regardless of whether they have a talent for acting or not. Furthermore, it can be a good means of bridging gaps between learners from very different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, cognitive potential and modes of language learning, thus serving as a tool of fostering the establishment of friendly
relationships and effectively contributing to the improvement of the communicative competence of all language learners.

**Svetla:**

Could you, please, briefly describe your product?

**Nikolay:**

The main material in *T.I.M.E. for teenagers* is the Practical Guide – a book providing EFL teachers with guidance on how through more professional drama instruction in the target language teenage learners can enhance their EFL interactive speaking skills. Aimed at achieving a balance between theory and practice, the book thoroughly describes the T.I.M.E. stages and procedures, and also includes some specially selected visual aids (pictures and enclosed sample videos) to exemplify the wide range of the presented 72 Speech and Acting Practice Exercises, intended to motivate T.I.M.E. EFL learners and teachers alike through making the process of English language acquisition and instruction an entertaining experience.

The book also includes a Photo Gallery intended to give ideas of affordable and effective stage dress, as well as to suggest some use of original props in the context of Oscar Wilde’s play *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Additionally, the Photocopiable Attachments at the end of the book are to be used by the teacher in order to provide his/her T.I.M.E. participants with learner’s materials needed for the completion of some of the practical tasks.
Besides, the included Audioscripts of the recordings, the Answer Key to some of the exercises, and the pack of 46 reusable Instructions Cards can truly facilitate teachers in applying the various T.I.M.E. practices.

The manual is supplemented with a CD and DVD pack and a Teacher’s Evaluation Book to be used at the last but one stage of T.I.M.E. instruction. It is comprised of a series of three tables (the Teacher’s Observation Sheet, the Teacher’s Evaluation Sheet and the Evaluation Progress Table) that can be used for ten play rehearsals with a dozen participants. In case the T.I.M.E. learners’ number is above twelve students, teachers can use the editable materials on CD1.

**Svetla:**

Having in mind all the assets of the product you mentioned in the detailed description you made, can we expect *T.I.M.E. for teenagers* to be officially published soon and reach the wider professional community of EFL teachers?

**Nikolay:**

In fact, I am still in search of the right publisher, although I have already discussed publishing options and conditions with some ELT publishing professionals.

**Svetla:**

While you are still looking for a publisher, what do you do to disseminate your project findings of implementing *T.I.M.E. for teenagers* in the ELT classroom?
**Nikolay:**

I am really pleased to share with you that the project has already been presented to educators across the world at prestigious professional forums, recently including an international conference at Moscow State University in Russia and a research symposium at the University of Oxford (Pembroke College) in the UK. Several more presentations abroad lie ahead in the New Year 2016.

**Svetla:**

What would you wish to the other Bulgarian fellow teachers, reading our newsletter?

**Nikolay:**

Simply – always dare to make your boldest dreams come true.

**Svetla:**

Is there anything else you would like to add, Nicky?

**Nikolay:**

Yes. I would like to thank my students who took part in the experiment – the 16 English language learners, who spent so many long hours working wholeheartedly and devotedly on the project, which made the success of the T.I.M.E. method possible. I would also like to thank Mr. Miroslav Doychev, our cameraman, who recorded almost all the field work on video in order to document the implementation of the approach.
And last but not least, I would like to express my very special gratitude to you, Svetla – a unique teacher, an awesome supervisor, a great friend – I would dare say a rare combination nowadays.
Paul Davis lives in Cambridge, although he spends part of his time in Sopot (Poland) and Canterbury (UK). He has taught ELT and trained teachers on four continents, and has co-authored: Dictation (CUP), The Confidence Book (Longman), More Grammar Games (CUP), and Ways of Doing (CUP) as well as The Company Words Keep (Delta Publishing). At present he is interested in Silent Way, Linguistic Psychodrama and Corpus Linguistics.

Tanya:
Paul, thank you for agreeing to this interview. You say that you have decided to become an English teacher just because you wanted to stay in Cambridge and that was the only industry there when you were young. What made you stay in this profession?

Paul:
In 1974 I had finished studying and was just leaving Cambridge but I met someone and fell in love. There is no industry in Cambridge except teaching – so I became
an English teacher. I’m now a teacher, trainer and writer and work a lot for Pilgrims, which, I think, is the most interesting training organization in the UK.

Tanya:
You obviously love travelling. Which country has impressed you most? Have you experienced any culture shocks?

Paul:
I travel a lot for my job, but I don’t like travelling. Still, I am a “foodie”, so I do enjoy the funny foods (and sometimes even get a good recipe as I like cooking). The one country that stands out is Greenland – everything about it is different and interesting and it’s more like going to a different planet than a different country.

Tanya:
Which aspects of your work do you enjoy most - writing books, teaching students, training teachers or something else?

Paul:
Teaching learners of English, especially beginners, is my favourite thing. Beginners classes have such energy and motivation. Teaching teachers and writing books is OK too!

Tanya:
Which are the most memorable highlights of your career in education? What achievement do you most pride yourself on?
Paul:
My first two or three years of teaching were rubbish. I was seriously bad. But eventually I got it and that’s the thing I am most proud of. And I have co-authored five books, which I am also proud of.

Tanya:
Who are the FLT people you admire most? Is there anyone you would like to meet in person?

Paul:
I have three. Mario Rinvolucri (check his books), Caleb Gattegno (invented Silent Way) and Bernard Defeu (invented Linguistic Psychodrama). And..and.... I have met them all and had conversations with them.

Tanya:
You say that you don’t have a television or a computer, you don’t do technology at home. How do you feel about some teachers` (as well as publishing houses`) opinion that the future of education may well be virtual?

Paul:
When I first started teaching, we had books, and then we had tapes and language labs, and then computers, and now we have apps. But I teach my class affectively – they like each other and they like me! (Having said that, I have a beamer and a computer in my class, and use them when it’s useful to use them. I especially like using corpus evidence to teach lexical chunks or spoken grammar in class.)
**Tanya:**
What project are you working on now and what are your professional plans for the future?

**Paul:**
I’m writing a book about the History of the English language.

**Tanya:**
All teachers have memorable moments in their careers. Do you mind sharing one of them?

**Paul:**
My first ever lesson. I was very nervous. I remembered that my tutor had said: ‘Sit down if you get nervous’. I sat down. All the students looked at me in a strange way. I had sat on a student instead of an empty chair and had not noticed because I had been so nervous.

**Tanya:**
What is your impression of Bulgaria and will you be willing to take part in future BETA conferences?

**Paul:**
I liked the teachers I met. I think the thing I liked most was that they have a good combination of the practical and looking after their learners, but also a strong interest in ideas and methodology. Good mix of theory and practice. And I liked
the red wine (especially Yambol region). It is difficult to get Bulgarian wine here in UK, so I am hoping to come back.
Human Heart

Simon Andrewes

Whether heavy or light,
of stone or of gold,
our heart, it weighs hardly ten ounces;
stolen, lost,
or given away, or broken -
regardless,
eight pints of blood through our veins it urges,
relentlessly,
three times over, every minute;
kind or cold,
sinking in sorrow, or leaping for joy,
4000 constant beats it gives, each hour -
apart from the one or two it skips
on your account.

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Forthcoming Events in the World of ELT

SAVE THE DATE!

25TH BETA-IATEFL ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 25th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference will take place between

3rd – 5th June 2016
at Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski

For more information, visit:
http://www.beta-iatefl.org/annual-conference/conference-call/
Онлайн курсове за преподаватели по английски език на Британски съвет

Регистрацията за следващите курсове вече е отворена и крайния срок за записване е 16 януари, 2016.

Станете част от международното онлайн общество на преподавателите по английски език, като изберете някои от предложените познати и нови курсове.
Проверете сайта на Британски съвет за повече информация.

http://www.britishcouncil.bg/en/teach
Have you ever wondered if you should write an article for the E-Newsletter of BETA?

- 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 capitalized.

• Author names and title as well as contact details should be submitted in a separate file accompanying the article.

• About 50 words of biographical data 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, 2006:76).

• 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 the views expressed in the e-newsletter lies entirely with the author(s) of the publications.

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