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Editors’ Corner

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the summer edition of the BETA-IATEFL E-Newsletter!

In his opening article, Bill Templer elucidates the idea of teachers as readers and reminds us that it is during vacation downtime that we have the chance to step away from the hectic school life and to (re-)establish our connection with books in a deep, focused, and transformative way. Along with “book-bonding”, conference attendance allows us to gain new ideas, reflect on current issues and experience a sense of community with like-minded colleagues. In this issue, a collection of reports by educators from different ELT contexts brings together kaleidoscopic reflections on the 25th BETA-IATEFL Anniversary Conference. These contributions also attest to the value of organising and attending this large-scale professional development forum, which has a long tradition in Bulgaria. Zhivka Ilieva and Gergana Georgieva, then, share personal perspectives on the opportunity to network with fellow language educators at the FIPLV Nordic-Baltic Region (NBR) Conference, Tallinn 2016 and at the 14th ELTA Serbia Conference, Belgrade 2016.

In the Poetry Corner, enjoy Martin Eayrs’ thought-provoking Task Force.

In closing, this edition brings you the latest news about forthcoming events in the world of ELT. Preparations have already started for the next BETA Conference & FIPLV East European Regional Congress, Varna 2017 – keep checking BETA website for more information about the event.

Happy reading!

We wish you a restful and inspirational summer,

Sylvia Velikova
Issue Editor
Teachers as Readers: Learning to Reunite with Your Own Reading Identity over the Summer and Beyond

Bill Templer

Your students should not be the only ones reading this summer (Templer, 2014). Knackered colleagues need to recuperate during the vacation. Becoming a read-for-fun-and-enjoyment reader again (as many of us in younger “dear and wished-for years” were) is one self-therapeutic option open to us all. Especially in the laid-back summer.

Rediscover your own reading identity – through friendship and connection with other educators. Nurture it. Find the time, make the time. And seek out anew or revisit the

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https://goo.gl/wlkI6f

http://goo.gl/4oeji6
books you love. Restore your connection to books, easy to lose as a harried and hurried EFL teacher in today’s Bulgaria. Make a pledge to read for at least 15-20 minutes a day. Read for pleasure. Like the international #ReadForFun movement [hyperlinks in orange] where educators in North America and far beyond have banded together in virtual book chat communities to read together (Williams, 2015). They are learning, as teachers, to have FUN WITH FRIENDS! AND BOOKS! To exchange ideas about book pics, must-reads. In English and Bulgarian. For starters, read Jennifer Williams’ brief energizing article.

**Readers as Teachers and Teachers as Readers**

A University of Georgia seminar by that title inspired an excellent book of essays (Commeyras et al., 2003) that you can access online. Download and explore it in full here. Michelle Commeyras notes that it was a graduate seminar “for teachers interested in having reading lives apart from their teaching lives. It is for teachers committed to attending more fully and expansively to their personal reading lives. And it is for those of us curious to know more explicitly and specifically how one’s personal reading life might be brought to bear on one’s teaching life” (pp. 1-2). That framework and its implications are central to the thrust of my suggestions below.

[https://goo.gl/t3Tdy1](https://goo.gl/t3Tdy1)  
[https://goo.gl/NzPTiI](https://goo.gl/NzPTiI)
Book Love, DIY Literacy

You can read for professional growth, for more personal (and societal) happiness, and for greater literacy together with colleagues, friends and family. Including what is sometimes called DIY Literacy (“do-it-yourself”), also as a spinoff making your own pupils better DIY self-learners (Roberts & Roberts, 2016). As Kittle (2013: 1-2) reminds us: “Teenagers want to read if we let them. Students who I believe are determined nonreaders become committed, passionate readers given the right books, time to read, and regular responses to their thinking. The path to difficult reading begins with books they enjoy. (…) Readers need attention, encouragement, and challenge. English teachers know how to provide all three.” And English teachers can also turn to enhancing their own reading lives and identities.

There is no doubt that voluntary pleasure reading has diminished planet-wide – due to the hypnotic, time-devouring turn toward social media like Facebook, the all-consuming cyber craze, exacerbated by the current “teach-to-the test” “assessment mania” in the US (Kittle, 2013: 2) and UK as well. It is demonstrable that adolescents galore, purported “digital natives” (and most adults, including teachers) are also reading less in Bulgaria, compared to socialist times – when books were far cheaper and local school and chitalishte libraries were more used and vital. An “average Bulgarian” now spends ca. BGN 20 on books a year – when did you last buy a novel or some poetry? The June 2016 matura results in Bulgarian language and literature were a dark signal, even a wake-up call: literacy problems in the schools abound, especially for students from ordinary working class families, a widening gap of “class in the classroom.”

Local “Book Club Communities”

I know Israeli and American teachers who have retired to Thailand’s north, and there have co-created very active book clubs that now play a key role in their daily and cultural lives. Some belong even to 4 book clubs. They meet regularly to discuss a chosen work together, in
depth, gathering at a club friend’s home or a local inn. It is a prime enjoyable social event, an intellectual exchange and encounter, a self-renewing, self-exploring experience. This too is possible with your own friends, colleagues, associates. “Departmental book clubs” in a school or university are also a possibility, based in part on classroom book clubs (see the video), comprising colleagues from the same or kindred department(s). Teachers as Readers book clubs in Oregon are truly flowering, see here. A “neighborhood” or “apartment block” book club is also an option that might work, concentrating on books in Bulgarian, perhaps based in part on a “literature circle” model. Here a video on how to lead a good book club discussion. Booksyoulllove offers a wealth of reading tips, reviews, and much more.

Teachers As Readers Join a Book Club


Literature Circles

Just as students can profit from literature circles (LCs), so can teachers who create such educator LCs for themselves. It is one approach to rediscovering your own reading identity, even with shared moments of “a wild surmise.” Various LC techniques can be experimented with, including assigning task roles to participants beforehand to cover or at least introduce certain perspectives on a book, story or drama under discussion. There are many LC models. Here an LC video, & another. Here an LC detailed with teachers, & here one with kids.
#ReadForFun Bulgaria

Something like the international cyber-community for educators’ pleasure reading (Williams, 2015) could also be created in Bulgaria, for starters even among the BETA membership – reading English, Bulgarian. It can sprout with just two or three participants eager to experiment. It is not hard to set up an online discussion once a month or so, in a web-conferencing format. Adobe technology and Google Hangouts are readily available options.

Explore an Author

Alone or with others, you can chose to concentrate on a specific single author from English (or Bulgarian) literature, a classic mode of “narrow reading” (Cho et al., 2005) – for example, Edgar Allan Poe. The Poe Society in Baltimore has a very extensive collection online of Poe’s works. Jack London is another intriguing option. What have you read by him in full in the original? London’s major novels like The Sea-Wolf (1904) White Fang (1906), The Iron Heel (1908), or The Valley of the Moon (1913) are perhaps little known to many ELF teachers in BG. One of his last novels, Michael, Brother of Jerry (1917) is about cruelty toward animals, here a trained dog named Michael. The novel inspired a movement of Jack London Clubs, devoted to the cause of animal welfare and humane treatment. A book being rediscovered by younger Americans today is Revolution and Other Essays (1909), containing thirteen memorable pieces, including London’s striking credo “What Life Means to Me.” Great Books Online at Bartelby is an excellent site to discover what may fascinate and transform you, like the classic A Book of Women’s Verse. Four fantasy classics by H.G. Wells could make a great summer reading adventure, a “Time Machine” springboard to imaginative delights to come.

Contemporary Bulgarian Writers

The Elizabeth Kostova Foundation offers rich material on contemporary Bulgarian writers and their work. Books by Bulgarian novelists in English, such as Nine Rabbits (2012) by Virginia
Zaharieva, a novel about growing up in socialist Bulgaria and life 40 years later. Or Georgi Tenev’s *Party Headquarters* (2016), a highly political novel about what ails Bulgaria today. Alek Popov’s acclaimed *The Black Box* (2007) probes the nature and logic of our free-market system as seen through the eyes of two immigrant Bulgarian brothers in New York. Browse through the collection of Deyan Enev’s zany flash fiction, *Circus Bulgaria* (Templer, 2013), translated by writer Kapka Kassabova. Here are numerous brief sample texts from a whole bevy of contemporary Bulgarian writers in English translation. An excerpt from Milen Ruskov’s *Thrown into Nature* (2008) is intriguing. And here a remarkable prize-winning short story written in English set in Sofia by Velina Minkoff, “The Old Woman” (2000) – centered on several young Bulgarians working as movers and their memorable encounter in Lulin with Margarita Dimitrova, “a white-haired dumpling of an old woman, peering at us from behind at least three security chains that stretched with a clank, preventing the door from opening any further.” It is also a tale about young Sofians in the later 1990s stumbling willy-nilly into their country’s socialist past. Velina (b. 1974) is herself one of us, teaching English based in Paris. Here on her 1st novel (2015). Or discover a famous US children’s book *Dobry* set in Bulgaria. Many of you will likely have read Emil Conrad’s *Нещата на които не ни учат в училище*. But what about reading it заедно in a lively LC or book club? Co-reading “for a change.”

**Personal Reading Autoethnography**

Commeyras (2003: 4) makes a primary point: “There is a need for more information from teachers about the role of personal reading in their teaching lives.” As you rediscover your own reading identity, centered especially on fiction, poetry and drama, you could also write about this as a kind of academic autoethnography of voluntary free reading as an educator, and publish your reflections in a journal or newsletter like this one. Explore Commeyras et al. (2003), easily downloadable, and you will find loads of stimulating ideas about this whole complex of self-recovery and transformation as a teacher-reader, “by sun and candlelight.”
References


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http://goo.gl/P04ik8
The 25th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference

Zhivka Ilieva, BETA President
and BETA Plovdiv 2016 Conference Coordinator

The conference was held from 3rd to 5th June 2016 at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. The first day was dedicated to a Pre-Conference Event entitled CLIL with Young Learners and co-organized in association with Keith Kelly’s Anglia School, Plovdiv. The conference topic was Teaching and Learning English: from No Tech to High Tech. How to Motivate Learners? There was a panel discussion, titled To Motivate Learners, You Need Motivated Teachers. What Motivates You?, in which a lot of highly motivated teachers took part. As usual, a British Council Bulgaria Event was held. It focused on How We Motivate Teens – and How We Might and was moderated by Christopher Holmes.

The opening plenary by Sandie Mourão
The Embassy of the United States in Sofia provided a travel grant to 20 EFL educators from under-resourced areas to attend the conference. On our behalf, BETA granted admission to these delegates for half fee (30 instead of 60 BGN).

This annual EFL forum was attended by 150 school and university teachers and ELT publishers. There were delegates from more than 10 different countries: Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Thailand, Egypt, Russia, Germany, Portugal, the UK, the USA.

There were more than 50 presentations: plenary sessions, talks, workshops, forums, dedicated 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.
The plenary speakers were:

- Christian Ludwig, PH Karlsruhe, Germany, IATEFL Official Representative: *Using Digital Tools in the EFL Classroom to Develop Learner Autonomy*;
- Sandie Mourão, Nova University, Lisbon, NILE, who gave two plenary sessions: *Pictures, Words and the Gaps Between – a No Tech Resource for the Classroom* for the main event and *Making the Impossible Possible – Play in English* for the CLIL with Young Learners PCE;
- Irina Perianova, University of National and World Economy: *For Humanistic Linguistics – FLT, Culture, Discourse*;
- Zhivka Ilieva, Dobrich College, Shumen University: *CLIL or an Integrative Approach to Teaching English to Young Learners* at the PCE.

Panel discussion *To Motivate Learners, You Need Motivated Teachers. What Motivates You?*
On behalf of the whole team, I would like to thank Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, the sponsors: British Council Bulgaria, the Embassy of the United States in Sofia, Express Publishing, Macmillan Education, Anglia School in Plovdiv, Prosveta Publishing House, and also the Kitchen of Paradise and Boris Hristov House of Culture in Plovdiv for the organization of the Welcome Reception.
First BETA Experience: Throw Me in the Deep and I Will Learn How to Host a Conference

Magdalena Gogalcheva and Polina Petcova, University of Plovdiv

Magdalena Gogalcheva holds a Bachelor’s Degree in English and American Studies (2011) and a Master’s Degree in Linguistics and Translation (2012) from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. For the last 4 years she has been a Lecturer in the Department of English and American Studies at the same institution. Mainly, she teaches English Practice classes – Grammar, Vocabulary, Writing; and during the last academic year – seminars in Text Linguistics. Other than teaching English as a foreign language, her interests include Cognitive Linguistics, Lexical Aspect and Verbal Aspect and how those connect (or not).

Polina Petcova holds a Bachelor’s Degree in English and American Studies (2011) - BA thesis “Hedges: Need Trimming? (Establishing if Bulgarians Can Handle Hedges)” from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. Since then she has been working as a Lecturer in English at the Department of English and American Studies at the same institution, where she received her Master’s Degree in Translation and Business Communication (2012). Mainly, she teaches English Practice classes: Grammar and Vocabulary, Translation and Writing Classes, Academic Writing and seminars in Sociolinguistics. Other than teaching English as a foreign language, her interests are focused on Linguistics, Cognitive Linguistics and Pragmatics.

Both have recently started working on their doctoral theses and, fingers crossed, in three years will have a “PhD” attached to their names.

Dear Organising Committee and members of BETA,

Here is how we – Magdalena Gogalcheva and Polina Petcova - formally known as the dynamic duo, came to know about the Association and its annual conferences.
Nearly a year ago, the Chair of BETA contacted the Department of English and American Studies at Paisii Hilandarski University of Plovdiv and expressed interest in holding the conference in Plovdiv. We suspect that our wonderful city – with its Old Town, overwhelming number of Roman ruins and Kapana (The Trap) – was part of the incentive. Anyway, the two of us were tasked and gladly accepted the challenge of co-organizing the event. Little did we know what this was going to involve... Let us just say the whole experience was more of a marathon and during the conference itself – a sprint. It took a great deal of patience and communication between Zhivka and us; we are sure the same goes for meetings inside the organizing committee and the members.

We have to admit that since we are quite fresh in the teaching profession, last July we heard for the first time about BETA. After a quick browse through the web-site we quickly realized that this was an important organization and that it would be a privilege to host the annual conference at Plovdiv University. Well, privilege is a nice but quite a vague word. Yes, we felt like we were given an important task to see through but we did not actually realize what it entailed. By and large, the months during the first semester of the school year made us think that if this was how you organize a conference and we could knock down a couple per year. There was an occasional e-mail with ideas about which of the university’s two main buildings to use or what kind of sights to show the then future (and so abstract) participants. At that point of the game, we also did not realize the scale, the sheer number of speakers and participants that were going to take part in the conference and, for this reason, everything was done in a very Plovdivian chill manner.

It was not until the slower days of the exam session between the first and the second semester when we felt the calm before the storm. We thought the whole situation was too breezy, and it did not match the way our colleagues looked at us when we
explained we were involved in the organization of a conference with approximately 150 participants. As if they knew what this number meant and we had no clue. And exactly in those class-less weeks we slowly came to the realization that this was a mighty ordeal, indeed. The reason why we were so clueless is that we do not think too much (and have never thought) about the amount of time it takes to do... whatever for the university. We just say “yes” and divide the tasks and only after a while do we realize how difficult it actually is. So, once we became aware that organizing a conference was quite an endeavour, we divided the tasks and followed them through.

By this time a lot of little things, and some of the big things, were completed and, again, we did everything on the phone and over e-mail and it was getting a bit strange that we were on a first-name basis with Zhivka but we still had not put a face to the name, excluding the picture from BETA’s website. Although the last three months before the conference were the busiest organization-wise, there came one hot Thursday when at two o’clock at PU’s so-called New Building we finally met Zhivka and Irina. After quick introductions, all of us quickly got down to business with the final touches before the conference days. Things finally started to look ready – the hallway with the tables for the publishing houses, the big hall had the microphone and the speakers, the signs for the rooms were up. It all finally looked real.

But all looked even more real on the first day – the pre-conference. We were in full swing. Here “we” means Polly, me and our enthusiasts who also teach at PU – Mimi, Vadim, George. We were excited to finally kick off a conference we had spent months talking about. It was at noon when our day began and suddenly it was the evening. Once the first presentations started we made sure the laptops and beamers were working properly, we started flying from room to room, from floor to floor, from hallway to hallway helping everyone who needed our help. It is quite possible we all
lost sense of time because we were always in a hurry and once we completed one little task, another popped up. But it was all worth it because even after the shorter pre-conference day, we knew we worked as a team and really completed each other’s not even sentences but thoughts. Our efforts were recognized despite the fact that Polly and I joked that we could receive compliments for job well done only after the conference was over.

At that point, though, compliments were really the last thing on our collective mind. We were so excited about the pre-conference day and the people we met but the official first conference day had even more to offer. Although we could not actually attend most of the presentations, we met all of the presenters. We managed to exchange some ideas about teaching in a really informal environment (the hallways) and we saw that all those people were passionate about their jobs and it was intoxicating. Speaking of which, we had tons of fun during the cocktail at Boris Hristov House of Culture. Although we were extremely tired and barely standing, we could not miss seeing teachers from around the world sing and dance. As usual, some people spent more time outside where it was also fun because of all the stories told and all the new friends made. After the long day most of us went home, but one brave assistant (Rally) made sure the party continued. “Assist till the end” was her motto and she assisted properly. We know this because on the next and last day of the conference a number of people were missing for the early morning presentations.

Day three was just as exciting as the previous two. We had some minor hiccups but thanks to Alex, our technical support guy, all was sorted out. Although by the third day we knew the drill, the environment was still somehow electric. After exchanging contacts, we started saying goodbye to some of the participants and slowly we prepared for the final conference event – the walk through the Old Town. Something that seemed so distant during that Thursday-at-noon when we met Zhivka. But there
it was. After the final sprint, we climbed one of Plovdiv’s seven hills (Rahat Tepe). No better way to wrap up the conference than standing on the top of a hill, overlooking the city.

Dear BETA committee, members, colleagues and friends, thank you for making us part of the BETA experience. Knowing how we could have done it even better, we now humbly accept your recognition and will gladly welcome all of you back. All of our fine work could not have been possible without the help of our colleagues – Mimi, Vadim, George, Rally, Vivian and Emmy.

Magdalena Gogalcheva
Polly Petcova
Reflections on the 25th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference, 3rd-5th June 2016, Paisiii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

Violeta Karastateva

I was happy to attend the Silver Jubilee – the 25th Anniversary of the Bulgarian English Teachers’ Association, hosted by the colleagues from Paisiii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. For me it was an emotional moment since going back to the first years of my teaching career, I can remember that the first time I joined such a large-scale professional event was again in Plovdiv. Throughout the years I have tried to be a regular goer and presenter at this significant forum offering a variety of high-quality speakers, featured sessions, talks and workshops, promotional presentations, book exhibitions of prominent publishers, etc. That is why I was highly motivated and determined to get to Plovdiv, to take part in the conference, as well as to give a presentation. At this point, I would like to express my gratitude to all BETA-IATEFL committee members, to Zhivka Ilieva (BETA President) in particular, and

Violeta Karastateva is a Senior lecturer in English at the Department of Mathematics, Physics and Foreign Languages, Technical University of Varna. She has taught for more than 20 years both General English and ESP to students from various technical specialities. V. Karastateva has been a BETA-IATEFL member for about 20 years; has taken part in more than 50 national and international conferences related to FLT issues; authored and co-authored 45 articles on specific topics in the field of ESP, EAP and Cultural Studies; participated in multiple projects and educational events, run by British Council, Bulgaria; as well as a participant in ESP materials design projects at the TU-Varna subsidized by the state budget.
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to the Embassy of the United States in Sofia for the excellent organization, regular information and financial support.

I managed for Day 2 of the conference and enjoyed the whole long day of the conference programme. It started with an opening plenary – *Using Digital Tools in the EFL Classroom to Develop Learner Autonomy!*? delivered by Christian Ludwig, University of Education Karlsruhe, LA SIG, IATEFL. The focus was on the understanding of learner autonomy as an ongoing process, which is enhanced through multi-level collaborative learning and digital media.

The second plenary presenter Irina Perianova, University of National and World Economy, shifted the focus to another key topic in ELT – *For Humanistic Linguistics – FLT, Culture, Discourse*.

Choosing from the wealth of concurrent sessions I went for “*It’s the Way that You Say it*”: *Developing Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Skills*. Patrick Painter from Express Publishing gave a talk on the importance of giving presentations as an essential life skill. Different types and structure of presentations were introduced, the power of body language was stressed.

The title of the third plenary *Pictures, Words and the Gaps Between – a No Tech Resource for the Classroom* by Sandie Mourão, Nova University, Lisbon & NILE, UK, prompted that it was going to be oriented more to the teachers of young learners. Surprisingly, the presentation revealed the partially forgotten picturebooks potential for use in multi-level classroom environments. Picturebooks were approached as springboards for the different cultures of English, for the other cultures through English and a good way to raise learners’ awareness of complex or even forbidden themes. A conclusion was made that picturebooks stimulate imagination, critical thinking and authentic responses in ELT.
Since my presentation on *Technical Translation Competence in Second Language Acquisition* was scheduled within a Forum, I listened to the other colleagues from this slot whose papers discussed topical ELT problems at tertiary level: *Terms of Politics in Language and Speech* by Inna Fomina, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Faculty of Philology; *Discourse Grammar: Implications for Language Learning* by Temenuzhka Seizova-Nankova, Shumen University; *Teaching EU English to European Studies and International Relations Students* by Gergana Georgieva, SWU “Neofit Rilski”.

*Dancing in, with and around Language* was the most refreshing and entertaining workshop. At the end of the busy day, full of plenaries, sessions, formal and informal conversations, book exhibition queues, going along corridors and up and down stairs in search of Room X, we definitely needed something to break the expected conference routine. Simona Bali and Virginia Velkova from New Bulgarian University, Sofia had prepared a provocative workshop devoted to the implementation of the multiple intelligences theory into ELT. They challenged the audience with funny activities exploring the role of homophones, puns and play on words; thus, activating learners’ vocabulary.

Some of the key words at this year’s conference were “*Autonomy*” and “*Motivation*”. The afternoon panel discussion *To Motivate Learners, You Need Motivated Teachers. What Motivates You?* was logically extended during the British Council Bulgaria event. Christopher Holmes, British Council Bulgaria drew our attention to the ongoing hot issue: *How We Motivate Teens – and How We Might*.

After the *BETA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING* which discussed both the annual report figures and outlined the problems and prospects of the organization, we finished the evening at another Plovdiv venue – *Boris Hristov Culture House* – where the Welcome Reception for the guests and participants took place. The food and drinks were excellent, the atmosphere was artistically-scientific, the conversations and chats
continued on for a long time since we all found ourselves in the hospitable and cozy environment of colleagues, friends, famous presenters, familiar faces and smiles, of people sharing the same BETA-IATEFL values. Believe it or not, we have known each other with the majority of the participants for more than 20 years! Of course, there were a lot of new, younger colleagues whose enthusiasm and curiosity reminded me of the beginning of my teacher development!

The morning session of Day 3 was a bit difficult after the late-night party but Structuring Paragraphs for Scientific Writing (English for Medical Purposes) by Ilina Doykova (Medical University, Varna) turned out to be a very interesting presentation since we share common ideas and problems in ESP and EAP.

The last session I attended was about Express DigiBooks: A Unique Digital Learning Platform. Patrick Painter from Express Publishing explained how it can facilitate teachers’ work and further motivate students.

All in all, the conference offered a great selection of academic presentations, professional meetings and social events, and I am sure that all the participants have found their personal inspiration and motivation for their future teaching and work.

Looking forward to meeting all colleagues and friends in Varna in 2017!
The Best Thing about Conferences Is Sharing

Maria Ivanova

The best thing about conferences is sharing good practices, meeting old friends and making new ones. The 25th BETA-IATEFL Conference in Plovdiv was even more than that for me. I became “greener” and more willing to use new technologies.

The workshop Can Blue Jeans Be Green? by Alexandra Zaparucha from Poland raised my awareness of the environmental and social costs from the production of most common types of clothes children wear – jeans and T-shirts. The goal was to consider limiting consumption. It had the right effect on me. And I liked the Polish ginger biscuits as well.

My environmental experience was completed by Keith Kelly’s presentation on TrashedWorld – a Global Schools Exchange Programme on Waste. ThashedWorld offers a school database for finding partners globally, for connecting young people, discussing and exchanging ideas, materials and investigations into this important problem facing our planet. The video clip, taken from the award-winning movie Trashed was very provocative.
In *Maximizing Students’ Involvement through Various Applications of Technology*, colleagues from the British-Bulgarian Information and Language Centre, Raya Malinova and Todor Todorov, shared practical ideas for using online resources. They suggested how teachers can cope with the challenges presented by the generation of “digital natives” and how we can respond to the growing demand for implementing technology in the classroom.

Maya Kyulevchieva from Ivan Vazov Language School in Plovdiv and Tzvetelena Taralova from 88 School-Sofia inspired me with their workshop focused on eTools (Socrative and Kahoot). That was *eTwinning* as part of Erasmus+ school projects.

The next crucial topic was how to use the English classroom for developing soft skills in children. This was the talk by Syana Harizanova from New Bulgarian University. It emphasized the need for looking at social emotional learning as an integral part of the curriculum so as to help young people today grow into happier, better and more successful people.

*Inspire and Encourage Confidence in English with Interview Play* by Tanya Ivanova gave us practical questions in the shape of Interview Play Kids. Some fun games and activities were shared by Zhivka Ilieva in her workshop *Play with Very Young Learners*.

Sharing, playing, meeting, singing, dancing – these were the key words for me from the 25th Annual Conference in Plovdiv. I am really grateful to have taken part in it.
Reneta Stoimenova teaches English as a foreign language at the Foreign Language School in Targovishte. She has organized various extracurricular projects and activities, such as a webquest on the comparison of 19 c. education in England and Bulgaria with a visit to an old church school in a mountain hamlet, and a theatrical performance in English on a train in Bulgaria. Reneta has an MA in English and Bulgarian Studies from the University of Veliko Turnovo. She has done post-graduate studies in EFL teaching methodology and attended teacher training courses in Bulgaria and the UK. Reneta’s interests include teaching literature and using ICT in the foreign language classroom. Among her latest interests is teaching through drama, for which she has received training at ICP Exeter in the UK and at a puppet workshop in Lille, France. E-mail: rainy.en@hotmail.com

Krikor Azaryan Sarmale

Post-BETA 2016 Article

Reneta Stoimenova

Ever thought of an educational adventure? Like taking the night train to Plovdiv, passing through a winding row of odd-name places, some of them sounding like Sindel or Straldzha, and at the 5.35 sunrise ending up in Plovdiv, having only a light rucksack on your back and 3 and a half hours before the BETA 2016 Conference begins. You can greatly enjoy your time by first eating one of the freshly baked “rogche” snacks that adorn the windows of the
early morning bakeries, then heading for the hostel of your accommodation right in front of the gorgeous Plovdiv sunrise over the hills of the old town.

On your way to the bus that will take you to the conference venue you can venture into a quick detour into old Plovdiv’s Armenian neighborhood and drop by at the Armenian Church or even stop at the Krikor Azaryan memorial plaque and pick grape leaves from the vine arbour of his birth house.

Plovdiv University’s New Building offers a different perspective to adventure-loving educationalists – they can choose from a number of concurrent workshops and training sessions. The adventure-loving educationalist addressed by this article usually knows exactly what lore is needed to complete his/her knowledge resource and unmistakably resolves on the matter of attendance. Just like me. Whatever fears I might have had initially, the moment I beheld Martin Jelinek, enticingly advertising his #Shareastory workshop, I felt that that was IT. Because if IT ain’t got a thrilling teacher, it ain’t worth a thing, and Martin Jelinek is definitely well-worth every minute of the spectacular attention he deserves. In his own words, the workshop is “a ready made lesson” allowing “us (teachers) to refresh our repertoire without photocopying and preparation and helps us react to learners’ needs as they arise. Conversation, Grammar and Vocabulary are in all stories to be told.” All story scenarios had been taken from Macmillan’s 700 Classroom Activities.

Here is an example of a game just to bring back the experience:
With the alphabet in mind, think of a verb that starts with the letter respective of your turn in the game. Besides, you should include it in a sentence somehow completing the meaning of the sentence said by the player before you. It is good to revise in advance any verbs beginning with “rare” letters as y, x, and z, in order to Zap self-invented activities of the kind: “Finally, she Zorroed to a null …………….” (whatever comes to mind 😊).

And that’s how the story ends.

A friend of mine

_Tsvetelena Taralova_

with a friend of hers (Maya Kyulevchieva), both eTwinning ambassadors, presented a hands-on experience with 2 effective educational eTools: Socrative and Kahoot. The two, especially Socrative, can be beneficial in revising subject matter and testing knowledge by creating tests similar and, why not, even better than those done in SurveyMonkey. The session also discussed the advantages of eTwinning as an electronic platform, facilitating the international links among various schools through mini-projects that can lead to larger cooperation in Erasmus+. 
What gets you going at dusk in a city winner of European Capital 2019? I for one prefer diving into Kapana, the one-of-a-kind neighbourhood of old Plovdiv, this very day filled with heaps of stylishly grunged (young) people and tonnes of funk and soul music.

The episode aptly links to the main issue of the panel discussion What motivates you? with a view to the highly overlooked aspect of education as a subversive activity, unfortunately not mentioned by the debaters. Instead, we had come up with a variety of optimistic suggestions all focused on love, intellect, reward, civil reform, etc. I myself felt characteristically motivated to roll my memories into the vine leaves growing in the streets of old Plovdiv and spread the results through lovingly cooked Sarmale. Cheers!
Conference Reflections: Plovdiv 2016

Dear Colleagues,

First of all, I would like to thank you for the brilliant organisation of the 25th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference. At the end of an extremely busy and long school year, I really needed to meet more colleagues – English teachers, teacher trainers and other ELT professionals – in order to get more support, share thoughts, swap opinions on different topics, related to teaching English and, last but not least, to attend various conference talks, workshops and discussions.

The conference in Plovdiv turned out to be an exceptional event for me. I not only made a lot of new acquaintances there, but also got hold of tons of new informative teaching materials, which I am going to use while working with my students. It was a real pleasure to hear experienced English teachers and trainers talk about the main conference theme: How to motivate learners? It appears to me that somehow all the presentations and talks I listened to were geared towards motivation as a sort of tool to keep both English teachers and their students involved in the process of studying English.

Gergana Taleva is a CELTA-certified English language teacher. She also holds a Master’s degree in International Tourism from the University of Economics in Varna. In her career path Gergana has worked as a tour guide, interpreter, translator and English teacher. She has been working in the field of ELT for a couple of years. Gergana teaches General English and Business English in the community centre “Parashkev Cvetkov-2003”, Pleven, Bulgaria. E-mail: gergana_taleva@abv.bg
I liked all the presentations and talks I went to but there were three sessions which stood out and I will discuss them briefly here.

I was especially fascinated by the panel discussion *How to Motivate English Teachers?*, moderated by Irina Ivanova and Zarina Markova. Having listened to them, I realized that I was not the only one struggling to stay motivated and willing to go further. They both raised the issue of the importance of getting more teacher support, addressed many problematic topics related to the everyday workload English teachers go through and highlighted “Teaching English as LOVE”. The panel discussion also included many practical tips and suggestions for dealing with stress and getting rid of problems in the classroom. There was a lot of audience involvement and teamwork too. The listeners were invited to discuss topics in small groups and talk about their most difficult times throughout the school year, share their ways to cope with lack of motivation and how to avoid burnout. At the end of the panel discussion every participant was invited to write their ideas on block notes that were stuck on the board in front of all the people there, and Zarina Markova read them out loud. As a conclusion, I can only point out the fact that to motivate learners, we need happy and motivated teachers.

The next impressive workshop I attended was led by Aleksandra Zaparucha. It was titled *Fun with Drama for All Ages*. I found this session pretty interesting because the presenter drew our attention to a number of warm-up activities that every teacher needs to be aware of when teaching English. The multiple benefits of using drama in the classroom were thoroughly displayed through activities such as the games: *Classify yourself, Toaster* and *Get Dressed*. The participants acted out some of the activities, gently guided by Aleksandra. Having taken part in that workshop, I am convinced that drama can be a great way to teach English in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where there is trust and cooperation. I am going to put into practice all these things as soon as I procure myself with a fair number of drama resources, adapted to my students’ needs.
The third great session I really liked was *Motivating Students through Peer Comparison and Collaboration*, presented by Albena Stefanova from the University of National and World Economy, Sofia. The main focus of her presentation was put on learning to work with specific vocabulary and stimulating teamwork in groups of students of Economics and Political Studies. She began her talk by pointing out the fact that today’s students are much more interactive than ever. Albena Stefanova pointed out that the teacher’s main role is to facilitate autonomous learning. I wholeheartedly agree with her. Using adapted authentic materials as recordings, videos and texts, combined with interesting topics and burning issues is crucial in her work. Most of the time students work in small teams or pairs, which makes them more involved and willing to work. They not only learn how to choose appropriate materials, to write articles and work with specific economic terms, but also manage to boost their vocabulary and get used to working in a competitive environment with their peers. As a result of this hard work, students become more fluent in English, feel more confident to speak in public, grow to be competent experts in their fields and go beyond the perceived limits of their knowledge and skills. It seems that the mission to motivate students is possible with the employment of modern technologies and peer collaboration.

All in all, the whole organization of the conference in Plovdiv was excellent. I would also like to thank the organizing committee of BETA for making all these wonderful annual gatherings of teachers possible and stimulating the spirit of creativity and collaboration. I look forward to the next conference.

With best wishes and gratitude for the financial support,

Gergana Taleva
A Brief Personal Review and Impressions from the BETA Conference

As a first-year member of BETA, I had the opportunity to attend the 25th Anniversary Conference of the Association in Plovdiv on 4th and 5th June 2016.

This opportunity was a real boost in my career as an English teacher because I not only attended amazing lectures and workshops, but also met so many wonderful, inspiring colleagues, and had the chance to learn about many new approaches and perspectives that I could use in my work.

I attended eight lectures and workshops and took advantage of all events. The opening ceremony and then the plenary of Christian Ludwig about using digital tools in the EFL classroom informed me about the new methodology concepts and the role of social media. Irina Perianova and her lecture on humanistic and interactional linguistics focused on communicative competence. I also participated in the workshop by Tatiana Silbus on *Effective Communication in the Classroom*, got acquainted with other colleagues and participated actively in the activities that we did together. She showed us how to use different approaches and make our students active and willing to practise and speak the language. Then, I

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Rumena Gospodinova is a teacher of English at St Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher Secondary School of European Languages, Ruse. She has graduated from the English Language School “Geo Mliev” in Ruse with a teacher’s qualification. Rumena has obtained a degree in Bulgarian and English Studies at St Cyril and St Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo. She was still a university student when she began her career as an English teacher in 1990. Rumena has experience of teaching English to students of different ages and levels. She also has a fourth level of professional qualification as an English teacher.

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attended the session on project-based learning lead by Pragasit Sitthitikul and realized that, no matter the conditions, if I have the proper knowledge, I can create a better learning environment, motivate and inspire my students. The talk about useful English Teaching websites, presented by Dimitra Christopoulou, revealed an effective strategy to help my students use the Net and improve their language skills and, as an English teacher just like me, she showed in a very simple way how easy and useful the activities could be even to reluctant students. Then, I participated in the panel discussion on motivation led by Zarina Markova and Irina Ivanova. Thinking about the difficulties with motivation and discussing various approaches in groups was very helpful and fruitful. After that, Sandie Mourão, who presented so vividly her ideas on intercultural understanding, made us enjoy and feel proud of being English teachers with style and simplicity. Almost at the end of the day, I enjoyed the presentation of Christopher Holmes, another brilliant lecturer, on teens’ motivation. On the next day, I enjoyed the workshop on improving learners’ writing skills, held by Esma Asuman Eray, a wonderful lecturer who showed us simple but very effective activities and convinced us, in a very relaxed way that all activities she used and shared can work and help our learners. The last event was the promotional presentation on Express DigiBooks by Patrick Painter, who showed us new resources which could increase both students’ and teachers’ motivation and confidence in a different interactive and entertaining way, as well as help us gain self-control and immediate results.

The whole organization, the program, the annual meeting for BETA members and the reception gave me a great opportunity to meet personally so many colleagues and acquire very useful information.

With all my respect and gratitude to both the organizers and speakers for the great event,

Rumena Gospodinova
25th BETA–IATEFL Annual International Conference

Elka Rasheva

The 25th Annual Conference of BETA-IATEFL was held from 3rd to 5th June 2016 at Plovdiv University. The anniversary conference was entitled Teaching and Learning English: from No Tech to High Tech. How to Motivate Learners?

As the title of the conference suggests, the presentations and workshops focused on the two milestones in the 21st century education – the use of ICT technology and the possible ways of increasing the motivation for learning among students. What motivates learners according to teachers and what motivates learners according to learners? Or the way Christopher Holmes, one of the conference speakers, put it: How We Motivate Teens – and How We Might.

I have come to the conclusion that the opportunity to engage in creative tasks and to “think out of the box” is what motivates my students. In fact, this is not surprising because creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration are among the 21st-century skills. These are the “basic” ones, but not the only ones, so below I will present some of the talks and the speakers, who shared their experience and expertise in the field of “soft skills”.

Elka Rasheva holds a Master’s degree in British and Irish Studies from the University of Veliko Turnovo. She is a teacher of English at Intellect State School of Finance and Management, Pleven. She has participated in student and staff mobility projects.

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Using the English Classroom for Developing Soft Skills in Children, Siyana Harizanova, NBU. I was really glad to find out that there was continuity in the topics discussed at the BETA conferences. During the 24th BETA-IATEFL conference, Ms Harizanova gave a presentation on the lack of soft skills and the difficulties students have when moving from secondary to tertiary level of education. (Moving from School to University – Bridging the Gap, Siyana Harizanova, Svetla Tashevska, NBU, Bulgaria). This year, she continued dealing with the issue “soft skills” and presented a survey on various useful soft skills such as common sense, good manners, empathy, ability to be assertive without being aggressive, ability to be kind even if there are disagreements, sense of humour, self-motivation, autonomous learning, time management, working under pressure.

• Helping Learners to Improve Their Writing, Esma Asuman Eray, Isik University, Turkey. Ms Eray also discussed soft skills but from a different perspective – creativity and critical thinking in terms of writing. In this hands-on session, we had to come up with adjectives and to combine them with the nouns in the sentence “There are apples on the table”. The exercise ended with at least ten possible versions of the sentence.

• Motivating Students through Peer Comparison and Collaboration, Albena Stefanova, UNWE, Bulgaria. In her presentation, Ms Stefanova shared her experience in motivating students to collaborate and the ways students can help each other to get better (peer comparison) while discussing articles and practising terms in the field of Economics.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the BETA Committee and the Embassy of the United States in Sofia for supporting me to join the event. Meeting teachers and educators from all over the world, sharing good practices, and tips that work, was inspirational and motivating.
BETA-IATEFL Plovdiv 2016:
Conference Impressions

Ilina Doykova

I admit I was spoiled from all the attention I got from the conference organizing team. Thank you for your relevant and timely assistance during the conference days!

I enjoyed the company of like-minded people and was impressed by the enthusiastic spirit of the conference participants. Thank you for coming to the ancient city of Plovdiv and sharing what inspires you in your work.

I cherish the discussions with lecturers from other universities in Bulgaria and abroad, which is always the backbone of our good collaboration during the years. I see the practical implications for all of us.

I wish all presentations were posted on-line as there were many interesting sessions I was not able to attend.

I hope the future conferences will be designed more for real interaction and more of a workshop style. Therefore, I recommend fewer vendors and less promotion.

On the whole, it was a well-organized, easy-going and warm-hearted event!
“One child, one teacher, one book & one pen can change the world” (Malala Yousafzai)

Musings on the 14th ELTA Serbia Conference

20th – 21st May 2016, Belgrade

Gergana Georgieva

It was with a great sense of excitement that I received the opportunity to participate in the 14th ELTA Serbia (English Language Teachers’ Association of Serbia) Conference, which took place in Belgrade from 20th to 21st May 2016. Before the start of my trip I had this feeling of anticipating a wonderful event and, undoubtedly, it was a hugely successful one!

Not only was I happy because it was to be my first time representing BETA at an international conference, but also it was going to be my first visit to Belgrade and Serbia. Besides, I had already met a few Serbian colleagues at BETA-IATEFL Annual Conferences and online and I was eager to see them again as well as in person.

The conference, which was held at the private Singidunum University, a very modern and well-facilitated building, was entitled “One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world”. The latter are words by Malala Yousafzai, a 17-year old...
Pakistani activist who became the youngest ever Nobel Prize recipient after miraculously surviving a Taliban attempt. She considers our “books and our pens” to be “our most powerful weapons” in order to make the world a better place to live in. This theme, as it may be assumed, offers a variety of topics in the area of ELT. The conference was attended by speakers, guests and exhibitors from all over the world, including the UK, the USA, Australia, Croatia, Hungary, Turkey, Slovenia, Slovakia, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, the Czech Republic, Montenegro, and Bulgaria.

On the first day, the plenary sessions were four in total. The first one was dedicated to the important mission of English teachers presented by Dr. Helena Curtain, focusing on teaching both from the language perspective and from the humanistic perspective in the balance of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. During the second plenary, Anna Kolbuszewska examined the brain as a magnificent learning machine. She looked at how recent brain research helps us understand better how memory works and what makes learning more effective. In the third plenary session Dr. Katarina Rasulić addressed the issue of what the English language itself reveals about the meaning of terms from the semantic field of teaching (teach, teacher, teaching, teachable, learn, learner, learning, learnable, etc.), taking into account different pertinent models of semantic analysis, such as relational semantics, frame semantics, and corpus-based cognitive semantics. The last plenary talk, led by Jon Hird, was a practical and informative session about what dyslexia is, how it can affect the learner and what we as teachers can do to help, particularly in terms of material selection and design.
There was a diverse array of sessions to opt for: IATEFL: Linking, developing and supporting English language teaching professionals worldwide; creating a curriculum that is deep and rich; using video in classes – fun for both students and teachers; use of narrative in ELT and grammar games in the classroom.

My presentation related to teaching EU English to European Studies and International Relations students was on the same day and provoked a lively discussion, since Serbian students – and they are not the only ones – are faced with similar challenges when it comes to the EU language that would describe EU concepts and their translation into the target language.

The second day was marked by two plenary talks – by Tim Bowen and Mark Andrews. The first one laid emphasis on what can help to make words memorable. I was “absolutely flabbergasted” because it included the stories behind the origin of certain words, when and how new words enter the English language, and the key role played by collocations.
There were plenty of sessions to choose from in-between the plenaries such as teaching materials for VYL, making learning playful for adults, communicating with digital natives, teaching medical language through all educational levels, spelling myths, teaching for social justice and many others. Despite my desire to attend most of the workshops, I could be present at only four of them. The first one was a selection of learning activities based on ONE WORD. Kathy Henderson engaged us in activities based around a single word that can be used to develop various language skills. In the end, we learned that one word, like one person, can stand alone but is more effective when part of the whole.

Kathy Henderson – activities based on one word

Another workshop that I found worth attending was the one connected with learner-centered feedback for writing. Katherine Panton and Katy Muench from Turkey addressed practical ways of making writing and giving feedback that puts the onus back onto the student to help them to notice their own errors. What I found very useful during the next workshop was how to turn the lessons into a positive learning experience for children. Different students learn in different ways and this session helped me develop my understanding of active learning and how to apply this in the classroom. The last workshop I was able to attend showed possible ways to foster assessment for learning with young learners. The presenters were inspired to incorporate self- and peer-assessment in their teaching by the fact that one of the principal characteristics of the portfolio which accompanies the course book they use is to encourage students to reflect on their own learning. They shared the ways they create activities based on those in the
course books in order to apply forms of assessment and raise students’ awareness about important aspects of the learning process.

The closing plenary centered around the English teachers as educators: the broader context of our work. Mark Andrews made an overall presentation that comprised significant moments from the two-day conference. He also scrutinized some approaches and activities which develop students’ intercultural skills, sharpen their language and cultural skills and which can also help us as teachers to see our role as educators.

Last but not least, while I was in Belgrade, I had the opportunity to take part in SEETA AGM that was held at ELTA International Conference on 21st May. SEETA is a collaborative on-line community of English teachers’ associations (TAs) in South-Eastern Europe and neighbouring areas, including ELTA Albania, BETA Bulgaria, TESOL Macedonia-Thrace Northern Greece, ETAI Israel, RATE Romania, ELTA Serbia, IATEFL Slovenia, INGED Turkey, HUPE Croatia and CyTEA Cyprus. All the teachers in the community are volunteers and SEETA’s services are free. Vladimir Siroki, Natasa Bozic Grojic, Bozica Saric-Cvjetkovic and I were at the meeting in person and the other SEETA members were participating on-line. I would like to express my gratitude to ELTA Serbia organisers for making this meeting possible. We were able to discuss in details future SEETA closed courses such as the ongoing discussion forum Ask the Trainer, teacher development courses and projects.

At the moment SEETA is running a 2-year teacher-led research project with the collaboration of Dr Desmond Thomas, University of Essex, UK and Dr Zarina Markova, South-West University, Bulgaria.
In spite of the fact that the conference was on a very tight schedule, the organisers made it possible to give us a flavour of the atmosphere of Belgrade. Bojana Nikic Vujic and Gordana Klasnja made delegates’ stay even more enjoyable and educational by inviting us to the traditional sightseeing tour for the representatives of ELTA partners associations through the city centre. I was so impressed by the capital that after dinner I, along with my dear colleagues and already friends from Macedonia and Montenegro, continued exploring this hospitable and vigorous city.

I left Belgrade with the feeling of a tremendous amount of energy, positivism and motivation to implement all the ideas I had received owing to the incredible event at Singidunum University. Everyone I met at ELTA Serbia Conference serves as a source of true inspiration for me to teach with even greater enthusiasm.

A deep bow in reverence to my colleagues from ELTA Serbia for their hard work, fantastic organisation of all versatile activities and friendly attitude!

On a final note, I would like to express my sincere thanks to BETA Committee for trusting me and giving me the chance and financial support to be an official representative at the fruitful conference in Belgrade.
Zhivka Ilieva is an associate professor at Dobrich College, Shumen University. She teaches English, Methodology, Children’s Literature in English, ESP. Her scientific interests are in the field of language teaching and applied linguistics: language acquisition, teaching English to young learners, teacher training, communicative skills development, teaching English through stories and children’s books, intercultural language teaching, ESP (IT and Farming). She is a member of: BETA and IATEFL, USB (Union of Scientists of Bulgaria), BSES (Bulgarian Society for English Studies), TESOL, AILA (International association of applied linguistics). 
E-mail: zh.ilieva.bg@gmail.com

As an FIPLV member, BETA received an invitation to the forum. The event was held at Original Sokos Hotel Viru Conference Centre, which is situated in front of the gate to the Old Town. I stayed at a hotel 10 minutes away from the conference centre and 10 minutes away from the park and the beach, which provides magnificent sunsets.

The organizers met us with coffee and breakfast at the registration. The conference started with a warm opening by Ene Peterson, Chair of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers; Terry Lamb, Secretary General of FIPLV; Sigurborg

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Jonsdottir, President of the NBR; Piret Kartner, Head of Language Policy Department, the Republic of Estonia, Ministry of Education and Research, and two interesting plenaries by Terry Lamb and Mart Laanpere.

At the Opening Ceremony

After lunch, which was organized next door, there were parallel sessions in English, German, French and Russian. There were teachers of Estonian and Finnish. Most of the presentations were in English. The languages were viewed as L1, L2 or FL.

My presentation Using Stories and Books with Children: Traditional and Innovative
Beatrice Boufoy-Bastick (France) spoke about *Restructuring EU Language Policy to Preserve our Endangered Languages*. Franz Mittendorfer (Austria) gave a plenary and a fantastic workshop on CLIL. There was a wealth of interesting presentations and posters. The delegates came from Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Russian Federation, Austria, France, Australia, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland, Japan, Ghana, Turkey and Italy. The *Round-Up-Session* ended with a surprise for us: songs in English, Finnish, Russian, French, German, and Estonian. Each of us received a handout with the texts and we all sang together.

The rich cultural and social programme allowed us to make friendships from the very beginning. As a multicultural, multilingual group, we were also teachers of various languages, and we practiced all the languages we speak. This was an exciting and enriching personal and professional experience.
The cultural and social programme started with a visit to Tompea Castle and the Riigikogu building. The castle complex consists of buildings of different styles and times and hosts the rooms of the President and the Parliament of Estonia. Those of us who climbed the tower could enjoy a wonderful view over the city and the Baltic Sea.

The tour was followed by a Baroque concert at Kadriorg Palace by the Early Music Ensemble of Kiili. This palace was built by Peter the Great of Russia in 1718 in honour of his wife Catherine I. The next social event was an elegant reception in Tallinn Teachers House – a building of architectural, cultural and historical value in the Old Town centre. The last day took us to a tour among the tunnels near the Kiek in de Kok which were part of the Ingrian and Swedish bastions. The tour was sponsored by Krisostomus bookshop.
Finally, the conference ended with the Beer Tasting Tour in Old Tallinn. At one of the places, we could feel the medieval atmosphere of Old Tallinn beer tasting ceremonies and could chat with colleagues from different countries, as well as with those on the FIPLV and NBR boards, about future events including our 2017 FIPLV/BETA regional conference in Varna. Thank you, Ene and Team!!! Thank you, FIPLV and NBR for choosing such a romantic place and time (the white nights over the Baltic) for this magnificent event!

Kadriorg Castle and Gardens

At the reception with Tina, Estonia and Maria, Russian Federation
With Ellie Boyadzhieva and other colleagues from Bulgaria

The beer tasting tour

With Evelin and Eleriin, Estonia
Poetry Corner

Task Force

Comment, order, modify,
Classify and justify,
Infer, predict, identify ...
All day long the teacher’s cry . . .

Off we go then, up the stairs.
Move the chairs and get in pairs,
Stand up, sit down,
Hands on heads, now turn around,
Head and shoulders, arms and knees,
Delete, complete, continue please,
What to do with kids like these ...?

Alter, argue, group discuss,
Left your homework on the bus?
Here’s the question, where’s the answer,
Silent reading, info transfer,
First, last, compare, contrast,
Future, perfect, present, past,
Correct, deduce, select, produce,
Read the bit on language use

Find, fill.. replace, remove,
Make an effort, must improve,
True, false, right, wrong, no and yes,
Guess, success, don’t make a mess
Describe, expand, insert, corrupt,
Explain again, don’t interrupt,
Read the fable, make a label,
Leave your homework on the table,
Write a story, if you’re able

Transform, translate,
Commentate and demonstrate,
Wait, narrate and don’t be late,
Recall, remove, rank, match, tell,
Wait for the bell, Oh, very well ...

Martin Eavrs
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Small-scale, teacher-led Research Project

EFL Teachers become researchers!

- Join the project area here.

Welcome

What advice would you give to new teachers? Post your article to the forum to be included in the SEETA Booklet for new teachers! Join us here

New Teachers 😊

SEETA BOOKLET

Join us on a collaborative project: a SEETA Booklet on how to become a successful blogger! See the project as it's happening and find out how you can contribute. JOIN HERE 😊

SEETA Teachers' Lounge

On-going community forum
Join us here

From Ararat To The Alps

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 😊
Forthcoming Events in the World of ELT

51st Annual IATEFL Conference, Glasgow 2017

PCEs 3rd April 2017
Exhibition 4 - 6th April 2017

For further information, visit:
http://www.iatefl.org/annual-conference/glasgow-2017

Coming next on the IATEFL monthly webinars
David Little - 'Learner autonomy and its implications for the discourse of language teaching and learning'
20 August 2016, 3pm BST (2pm GMT)
For further information, visit:
http://www.iatefl.org/web-events/webinars

SIG Webinars
Elena Ončevska Ager and Mark Wyatt - 'Macedonian EFL teachers on continuing professional development: What does their discourse tell us?'
23 November 2016, 5pm GMT
For further information, visit:
http://www.iatefl.org/web-events/sig-webinars
TESOL 2017, Seattle, Washington
21–24 March 2017

For further information visit:

http://www.tesol.org/attend-and-learn/international-convention

TESOL Online Courses & Virtual Seminars

- Teaching Reading and Writing Online, 1-28 August 2016
- Incorporating Human Rights Education (HRE) into the EFL Classroom, 3 August 2016
- Flipping the ELT Classroom With Technology, 24 August 2016

For further information visit:

http://www.tesol.org/attend-and-learn/online-courses-seminars

BETA Partners’ Forthcoming Events

BETA members can attend the conferences for the registration fee paid by the members of the Host Associations

- 11th International and 15th National Conference of Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic, 9-10 September 2016
- 25th IATEFL Poland Conference, 16-18 September 2016
- 9th ELTAM-IATEFL-TESOL International Biannual Conference, 14-16 October 2016
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
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