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Cover Photo Credit: Stoyanka Vicheva Delibeeva, Bulgaria
Editors’ Corner

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 25th edition of the BETA-IATEFL E-Newsletter!

In the first article, Slavica Stojchevska suggests game-based activities and teaching aids that can help teachers engage young learners in the language classroom. This issue also includes a lesson plan by Stoyanka Delibeeva, the third-prize winner in the 8th round of BETA competition, 2016. This resource is aimed at teenage learners and contains teaching material about the European Union. Next, Bill Templer’s article discusses a New York Christmas story (Kin by Jacob A. Riis) and serves to give you a framework for planning language lessons and activities which facilitate learners’ thinking about diverse cultural and social issues. Finally, Carmelina Maurizio aims to bring us to an understanding of the inclusive dimension of CLIL, highlighted in the Italian context of foreign language teaching to learners with special educational needs.

One of the advantages of being a BETA member is the chance to represent the Association at conferences organised by partner associations. Albena Stefanova and Zarina Markova have had the opportunity to attend and speak at events hosted by ATECR (the Czech Republic) and IATEFL Poland. Read their reports to find out what they have enjoyed at these conferences and what they have gained from them.

In the Poetry Corner, enjoy Helen Bar-Lev’s The Art Class 2. Helen Bar-Lev is a widely published poet and aquarelle painter and lives in Israel.

As usual, you will find announcements and news about forthcoming events in the world of ELT. Also, remember to keep checking the BETA website for more information about the annual BETA Conference & 1st FIPLV East European Regional Congress, Varna 2017.

If you have comments or questions about this e-newsletter or are interested in submitting an article, please e-mail us at beta.iateflbg@gmail.com.

Happy reading!

Sylvia Velikova
Recommended Teaching Tools Leading to Improved Learning Experiences for Young Learners

Slavica Stojchevska

Teaching aids are considered important since they facilitate language learning and lead to more successful language acquisition. Another advantage of employing teaching aids is the increased students’ motivation and involvement during classes. Allowing students to play and learn with original aids and initiating creative time for interesting crafts can have long-term benefits. As the benefits are enormous, I decided to share these specific aids that I find effective, didactic and catering for different learning styles. Therefore, the goal of this article is to inspire educators to refresh their teaching and try to implement new resources in the classroom, as well as encourage students’ creativity. The tools exposed below are regarded to be more relevant for teachers working with young learners. *For this specific e-newsletter I approve the publishing of these photos of mine, representing the tools I examine below. Otherwise, all rights reserved.*

Slavica Stojchevska is a teacher of English for young learners in Primary School 11 Oktomvri in Kumanovo, R. Macedonia. She graduated from the English Language Department at the Faculty of Philology “Blaze Koneski” in Skopje. She dedicates her free time into designing creative teaching material and aids for classroom use. Slavica is a passionate blogger where she creates, publishes and shares educational material in order to improve her students’ language learning. She is very keen on web 2.0 tools that transform teaching and learning. She constantly follows MOOC courses for professional development, webinars, attends conferences, seminars and workshops. Blog: englishclub.ucoz.org
Have you ever considered using hoops in your ELT classes? I hope that after reading this you will reconsider their use and integrate them sometimes. Hoops are powerful tools that help students visualize concepts, develop critical thinking, as well as team building. Students have to collaborate, assist each other, be efficient as well as productive in order to finish the task before the other team. Hoops are perfect for categorizing, classifying and dividing objects, words, images in different categories. Students become extremely excited as they have to run to insert the word into the hoops and compete against the other team. Hoops provide an excellent opportunity to elicit, explore and practice vocabulary more deeply.

Here are a few ideas that have been tried and accomplished with delight and interest by the students, as might be guessed, in groups.

- divide food images or words into healthy and unhealthy food
- classify the words for transport into 3 categories: air, land and water
- think, write and insert the pieces of paper in the hoops for the countable or the uncountable nouns
- categorize the words into nouns or adjectives.

I am confident that you will come up with more brilliant ideas to incorporate them in ELT classes.
**Dice with words**

Students can practise correct word order with dice. They are both fun and useful as they facilitate learning the correct word structure in English. Students roll the dice and have to write correct sentences in their notebook or handout by using the dice words.

To prepare word dice, obviously dice and stickers are required. Write words of your choice on the stickers and glue them. Word dice are frequently played in pairs. Each pair needs 3 dice. The green dice has personal pronouns (subjects), the white is with verbs and the red one contains words for adverbs of frequency.

**Animal paper crafts**

You have animal-related activities on your schedule this week. Why not play with paper plates and create your own zoo with animals. Little ones love animals and they will be thrilled and excited for the given possibility to create craftwork. All they need is paper plates, scissors, crayons, glue and imagination. Not much for a creative class full of engaged students creating, playing and learning at the same time. Allow and initiate creative time in the classroom because it can have long-term benefits for students. The process of creating will stimulate student's creativity, their fantasy, art skills and develop patience.
Students can be amazing creators and they would love to continue their learning by applying their hand-made animals for various activities such as:

- making animal sounds
- role play using the animals as masks
- researching about the animal and giving an oral presentation
- inventing a story.

Lastly, do not forget to expose students’ animals craft and decorate the classroom, so that learners can be proud of their own self-made crafts.

**Cards with tick and cross**

Useful devices which can be used for various activities and different ages. They are quite simple for making. First the signs with tick and cross are printed on colored paper, cut and glued to sticks. Excellent tools which can be applied over and over again. Students want to use them mostly individually, but also together in pairs or groups.

I hope that you found these aids helpful and that it might be inspirational and beneficial to try to integrate them into your teaching. I will be very pleased to read your comments, suggestions and experience on my blog englishclub.ucoz.org.
The European Union: A Better Place to Live

Congratulations to Stoyanka Delibeeva,

18 William Gladstone Secondary School, Sofia! Stoyanka is the third prize winner in the 8th round of BETA competition - 2016!

Stoyanka Delibeeva was born in 1966 in Plovdiv. She is married, having a son. She has been a teacher in English in 18 William Gladstone Secondary School, Sofia for 25 years. Mrs Delibeeva graduated from the English Language School, and then obtained a master’s degree from Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski” in 1991. She has a third professional degree and attended numerous courses for European teachers of English in high school, including Dunfermline, Brighton and Oxford in Great Britain as well as Introduction to ICT at the University of Limerick, the Republic of Ireland. She has received a postgraduate degree in Fundamentals of diplomacy (2015-2016), with a qualification in International Relations and a specialisation in the European dimension of contemporary education in primary, secondary and high school education. She was awarded and invited to the European Parliament in April 2016 for presenting a good practice within the project Promoting excellence in teaching and research in the study of topics related to EU primary and secondary school through digital and virtual instruments (EU PETR), programme Erasmus + Jean Monnet Action.

Lesson Plan

Teacher: Stoyanka Vicheva Delibeeva

Age of students: 17-18

Level: B1+/B2

Topic: The European Union: A Better Place to Live

Teaching aids and materials: Digital photos of EU institutions (on the screen or on a sheet of paper) or one copy of the worksheets per student; blank A4 sheets of paper and crayons; a digital camera or mobile phone; Internet access for searching for further information.

Background of the group: 11th grade students learning English as a first or second foreign language
### Main aims of the lesson:
The students

- to get informed and talk about the European Union – institutions, objectives;
- to practise reading and listening comprehension;
- to practise guessing vocabulary from context;
- to share personal views and participate in discussions on current issues.

### Language focus:
- Grammar: comparative forms of adjectives; irregular plurals – e.g., datum - data; passive voice;
- Vocabulary: understanding vocabulary in context, words related to politics; word formation.

### Skills focus:
- Reading comprehension;
- Listening comprehension;
- Dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary;
- Speaking – participating in a discussion and giving opinions;
- Writing – producing a script to a video project.

### Key life skills:
- Critical thinking, social responsibility, expressing opinions, analysing information, working on a project (shooting a one-minute video).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT Stage / Procedure</th>
<th>WHY Objectives</th>
<th>HOW Interaction pattern</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.Warm-up Brainstorm ideas or answer a short</td>
<td>1. To warm the students up to the topic of EU, its institutions and its objectives; to bring it to their</td>
<td>T – Ss</td>
<td>5 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B E T A E-N e w s l e t t e r  I s s u e 2 5**

**9 | P a g e**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire – 3-4 questions; or use (No 15 or 2)</th>
<th>Ss - Ss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 2. Lead-in

The teacher displays 3 pictures of EU institutions and asks whether their buildings are recognisable to the students. Students have to name and specify where they are located.

2.1. To continue the theme that Bulgaria is part of the EU and participates fully in its management and function;

2.2. To present the main purpose and the current mission of the European Union and to introduce the 3 major EU institutions.

2.3. To open a discussion on the questions: "What brings me closer to the citizens of other European countries? What does a united Europe mean to me?"

### 3. Reading 1: Headlines

1. The teacher asks students to look at the headlines. Then pre-teaches some difficult words by having students match them with the definitions.

2. The teacher asks students to read the headlines and circle all the words connected to politics. They then match the captions with the headlines.

3. To introduce the topic of the lesson through the headlines

3.1. To teach new vocabulary

3.2. To introduce topical vocabulary related to politics

T – Ss | 5 min
---|---
Ss - T | 5 min
Pairs | 5 min
3. Students think of more comparative adjectives showing the objectives of the EU for improvement.

Reading 2: News in brief
1. The teacher asks the students to read the newspaper stories and match the headlines to the correct story.
2. Students answer the questions about each text.
3. Then find words in the texts which correspond to the definitions and complete the plural form in the second column.

II. Follow-up Lesson

4. Use of English – Vocabulary and grammar
1. The teacher asks the students to find words in the newspaper stories that match the given definitions.
2. Students complete the sentences with the correct form of the word in brackets.
3. Then underline the passive forms and complete the rule on passive voice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3. To revise and practise grammar – comparative and superlative forms of adjectives.</td>
<td>Groups of 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading comprehension:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to read for general idea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to read for specific information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to focus on irregular plural forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ss – T</td>
<td>4 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pairs</td>
<td>3 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T – Ss</td>
<td>3 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Use of English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1. To work out the meaning of key vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2. To practise word formation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. To recognise passive forms and work out how and when to use them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pairs</td>
<td>4 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ss - T</td>
<td>5 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Listening</strong></td>
<td>5. Listening comprehension</td>
</tr>
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<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. 1. The teacher asks the students to listen to the radio news report (text d) and answer the questions.</td>
<td>T – Ss  8 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 2. Students check answers in pairs first and then report to the class</td>
<td>Pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Speaking</strong></td>
<td>6.1. To discuss important issues in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1. Students discuss the questions in groups</td>
<td>S – S  5 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then each group receives 1 white sheet and has to brainstorm their ideas. Finally, the teacher summarises the proposals given by students on a large-format sheet in front of the class.</td>
<td>Groups of 5-6  5 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2. The teacher divides the class in new groups and asks students to answer questions about what the European Union does today and what it means to each individual. The teacher prompts them to be creative and express their ideas in graphics or drawings.</td>
<td>Group reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Project</strong></td>
<td>6.2. To give and support their opinions on a topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1. Students prepare a one-minute presentation</td>
<td>Groups of 3-4  9 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
on the topic of the common goals and values of the EU.

2. The teacher asks the class to share their views on what a united Europe means to them in a one-minute video.

*If they do not have time to produce the video in class, they can do it for homework. Then, the teacher gives feedback on the lessons.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7.1. To consolidate knowledge in a creative way</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2. To produce a video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groups of 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Ss – T

T – Ss
Worksheet
The European Union
A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE

I. Warm-up
Brainstorm information about the European Union.

II. Lead-in
1. Can you recognise the building in the picture? Have you ever seen it?

2. Look at these photos and answer the questions. Work in pairs.
   1. Which European institutions are seated in the buildings?
   2. Which cities are they in?

III. Reading 1: Headlines
1. a) Read the four headlines below
   (1) Charlie Hebdo* attack spurs EU anti-terror 'projects'
   (2) Commission spells out Paris climate pledge
   (3) Unequal Europe: A more caring agenda for the new Commission
   (4) SHOULD HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE BE RE-DIRECTED TOWARD R&D*?
       *RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
b) What do the following words mean? Match them with the definitions (A-D).

1. agenda /əˈdʒendə/ NOUN [COUNTABLE]
2. pledge /pledʒ/ NOUN [COUNTABLE]
3. spur /spɜː(r)/ VERB [TRANSITIVE]
4. spell out /spel aut/ PH. V., TRANSITIVE

A. urge (something) forward
B. to say or explain something clearly because someone has not understood
C. a serious and public promise to do something; undertaking
D. a list of items to be discussed at a formal meeting

2. a) Read the headlines again and circle all the words connected to politics.
Work in pairs.
b) Match the comparative captions (A-D) with the headlines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. greener Europe</th>
<th>C. safer Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. smarter Europe</td>
<td>D. more social Europe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) Think of more comparative adjectives showing the objectives of EU for improvement. Work in groups.

Reading 2: News in brief

1. Read the newspaper stories below and match the headlines from the previous page to the correct story. Work in groups.

a) The EU’s prized project of ‘Social Europe’ has been slipping steadily down its political agenda. Frank Vandenbroucke highlights the recommendations of a high-level group he has chaired. “The challenge is not just to develop ‘good policy’; it is also to convince citizens that the EU cares about social policy and what it means to people”

A focus of attention should be our capacity to tackle inequalities. We, Europeans, don’t lack common ground, but we are short on self-confidence. We must resist an unequal and unbalanced Europe, because Europe should stand for fairness and social cohesion, openness and social mobility, and hope for a better future – not just in solemn declarations, but also in practical day-to-day policies.

(Published on February 23 2015, Spring 2015)

b) The knowledge and skills acquired through research and education are the core of our innovation based-societies. We all know this, but what we don’t always realise is that this isn’t a recent development. Curiosity, creativity, intelligence and drive in human beings have shaped and usually improved the fate of mankind for millennia.
“Modern technological innovations require interdisciplinary competences, which arise typically from complex interactions between many individuals, organizations and academic institutions.”

(Published on January 14 2015, Web exclusive)

c) Experts say specifics in today's package could undermine the EU's 2030 emissions reduction commitment by at least 5%.

Environment ministers from the European Union member states are likely to adopt on Friday (6 March) an official EU emissions reduction pledge to be presented at United Nations climate talks in Paris at the end of the year.

The European Commission adopted a pledge package today (25 February) for the UN climate talks in Paris later this year. The communication released today for the first time spells out how the EU will reach its 40% commitment.

(by Dave Keating on 25.02.2015 / 15:35 CET)

d) European states have agreed to launch anti-terror “projects” with Muslim-majority nations and improve Arabic skills in response to the Charlie Hebdo attacks in France.

“Speak, write, listen”

The EU’s 28 foreign ministers met in Brussels ahead of a summit of leaders on 12 February.

After the meeting, EU foreign policy chief Ms Mogherini said the projects would be established in collaboration with Turkey, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria and the Gulf states.

The European Parliament, she added, would be asked to work on legislation covering the sharing of airline passenger data.

(BBC News, 19 January 2015)

Focus 1: Understanding meaning

2. Answer the following questions:

1. In text 1, How will a better future be established?
2. In text 2, What is the most essential for innovative society?
3. In text 3, What is the percentage of the EU's 2030 emission reduction commitment?
4. In text 4, Which skills will be developed in Arabic after the terror attacks in France?
Focus 2: Language use

3. Find words in the texts which match the definitions below and complete the plural form in the second column. Work in pairs.

a) periods of 1,000 years

b) factor or information used for making calculations or decisions: (can be followed by a plural verb in scientific English)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>millennium /mɪˈleniəm/</td>
<td>..................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>datum /deɪˈtæm/</td>
<td>..................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Irregular plural forms. Complete.

Rule: Nouns ending in - _ _ get - _ of the English plural.

E.g. medium - media; bacterium – bacteria

IV. Vocabulary Focus 1: Meaning

1. Find words in the newspaper stories, from Reading 2: “News in brief”, to match these definitions. Work in pairs.

1. .......................................................... 

a. to deal with a problem, often a social problem such as crime or unemployment (text a)

2. .......................................................... 

b. a situation in which people or things combine well to form a unit (text a)

3. .......................................................... 

c. a duty or responsibility that you have accepted; a strong belief that something is good and that you should support it (text c)

4. ..........................................................
d. to start a major activity such as a public investigation, or a new career or project (text d)

2. Complete the sentences with the correct form of the word in brackets and then underline the passive forms. There is one active form. Complete the rule below in pairs.

1. A video competition was ___________________ last month. (launch)

2. The question of unemployment will be ______________ by the next governments. (tackle)

3. The government has failed to demonstrate its ______________ to the railways. (commit)

4. __________ in a community is produced by common threat of war. (coherent)

Choose a) or b). Use of the passive voice:

1. Passive voice is used when ______________________________. It is not important or not known, however, who or what is performing the action.

2. In ______________________________ , the passive voice is often used.

   a) news reports  
   b) the focus is on the action


Listen to the radio news report in text d) and answer the questions below. Check your answers in pairs first, discuss in groups of 4, and then report to the class.

1. What are the most vital things to improve the current situation in the world?

2. How many initiatives in the radio reports did Ms Mogherini mention?

3. What were they?

VI. Speaking

Discuss these questions in groups.

1. What does the phrase *Je suis Charlie* mean? What does it mean to you? What anti-terror measures can you suggest to be taken?
2. What does the European Union do today? And what does it mean to you? - draw your ideas.

VII. Project

**What does a united Europe mean to you?**

The enlargement of the EU has broken down barriers in Europe, uniting the continent around the common goals and values of its people.

*Share your views on what a united Europe means to you in a one-minute video. Get creative!*
Teacher’s Notes and Key

Warm-up
This is a picture of the building of the European Parliament Information Office in Bulgaria and the European Commission Representation in Bulgaria (located at № 124 "Georgi Rakovski" Str. in Sofia).

Lead-in exercise
Picture One – this is a photo of the building of the European Commission, situated in Brussels.
Picture Two – 1. This is the official seat of the European Parliament; 2. It is in Strasbourg.

Reading 1
Pre-teach the words from the headlines.
Ex. 1] 1. d 2. c 3. a 4. b
Ex. 2] 2. a Work in pairs
2. a) E U / anti-terror / Commission / pledge / Unequal / agenda / re-directed;
Suggested answers: more peaceful, more prosperous, more stable, more economically developed, more democratic, more tolerant, more mobile, more sustainable.

Reading 2: News in brief
Ex 1] 1= d 2= c 3= a 4= b
Ex. 2]
1. A better future can be achieved not just through solemn declarations, but also through practical day-to-day policies.
2. The knowledge and skills acquired through research and education.

3. The EU's 2030 emission reduction commitment is 40%.

4. Speaking, writing, and listening in Arabic will be improved.

Ex. 3] Work in pairs. KEY: 3. millennia 3. 2. data

Rule: -um ___<______ -a

**Vocabulary**

Ex. 1] Work in pairs.

1. to tackle /ˈtæk(ə)l/  
2. cohesion /kəʊˈhiːʒ(ə)n/ NOUN [UNCOUNTABLE]  
3. commitment /kəˈmɪtmənt/ COUNTABLE] (to) [SINGULAR/UNCOUNTABLE]  
4. to launch /lɔːntʃ/ VERB [TRANSITIVE]  

Ex. 2]  
1. launched  2. tackle  3. commitment  4. cohesion

USE OF THE PASSIVE VOICE:

1. (b)  2. (a)

**Listening**

Ask students to discuss their answers in pairs first and then check as a whole class:

1. Federica Mogherini said that better communication with Arab states was vital.  
2. She spoke of two main things to be done  
3. 1. Ms Mogherini said new attaches at some EU foreign missions would be tasked with developing “security and anti-terror co-operation”.  
   (Security officials would be appointed at some EU foreign missions and regular contact among professionals to develop cooperation on security and contra-terorist issues will be established.)  
3. 2. Ms Mogherini said: “I want immediately to improve our communication with the Arab-speaking populations both within the EU and in the world.”
On the language initiative, she said:

“We need to improve our capacity to speak Arabic, to write in Arabic and to listen to the messages that are coming from the Arab world.”

Note: Federica Mogherini – High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/bg/player.aspx?pid=3599e24a-b5a4-4582-b335-a4370f5fb42

**Speaking**

Set the class in groups of 3-4 students. Brainstorm ideas. Discuss the questions and round up the topic by asking students to report from the groups. Put down the suggestions on a large sheet/the blackboard in front of the class.

Possible suggestions: racial and religious tolerance, broad alliance against terrorism, develop cooperation on security and contra-terrorist issues, better communication with Arab states, cultural initiatives, arts to promote peace, the media to proclaim freedom and democracy, CCTV cameras and exchange of data on potential criminals.

Change the students in the groups and ask them to discuss the second question and illustrate their opinion. Use the answers and ideas to lead-in the topic of the project.

**Project**

Set a follow-up activity for the students to share their views on what a united Europe means to them in a one-minute video. If you do not have enough time you may set the video production as a homework assignment.

> What does a united Europe mean to you?

Be creative and win a trip to Brussels by entering the competition on http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/video_competition/index_en.htm or just upload your video for others to enjoy in YouTube! It is important to offer even a small prize for the best video!
Online Sources and Materials:

- http://europesworld.org/2015/01/14/higher-education-europe-re-directed-toward-rd/#.VPsqZPmUfuM
- http://www.europarltv.europa.eu/bg/player.aspx?pid=3599e24a-b5a4-4582-b3 35-a43700f5fb42
Students’ Projects
“Kin”: A Christmas Story about New York’s Poor

Bill Templer

Let me suggest you read with students a classic yet little known New York Christmas story about the very poor, titled “Kin,” about an impoverished “old fiddler,” an ageing street musician out on the crowded street on Christmas Eve. It is taken from Neighbors: Life Stories of the Other Half (1914), stories of fiction but based on observed fact, by a famous social photojournalist, short-story writer and radical social reformer in New York, Jacob A. Riis (1849-1914). Riis, born and raised in Denmark, emigrated to New York at the age of 21, and after struggling seven years in crushing poverty, he became a police reporter for the New York TRIBUNE and later the EVENING SUN. Working on night-shift duty, he met many immigrants and their stories in the New York slums, ca. 1878-1913. He soon achieved fame as a sociographic analyst of the life worlds of poverty in New York, and
as a short fiction writer focusing on the impoverished NY working class.

The story “Kin” is one of his mini-fictions, 661 words, but a superb story for the upcoming holiday season. The chief protagonist is what the British call a “busker,” playing music to solicit money on the street, in the US known as a “minstrel” or “street musician.” One can ask: how does it reflect the widening gulf between rich and poor in New York in the 1890s? Is it relevant to situations of many Americans (and the world) even today? What is the meaning of “kin” as a single-word title? What is the message of the classic US Christmas hymn the violinist plays that so moves the crowd to suddenly act? Is this a story about family, perhaps the kinship of humankind? As Pascal (2005, p. 152) observes: “Riis realized that his greatest talent still lay in his ability to touch people’s hearts, to make them feel their kinship with the ‘other half’ and inspire them to action.” Is this a story about the need for solidarity, an active sense of people’s community, a world at peace — vs. narcissistic hyper-individualism, indifference, strife? New York-based feminist sociologist Nancy Fraser (2016, n.p.) talks about “social reproduction” vs. material production: “Social reproduction is about the creation and maintenance of social bonds. One part of this has to do with the ties between the generations — so, birthing and raising children and caring for the elderly. Another part is about sustaining horizontal ties among friends, family, neighborhoods, and community. (...) it supplies the ‘social glue’ that underpins social cooperation. Without it, there would be no social organization — no economy, no polity, no culture.”

**Empirical Data on the Text**

Download the tale [here](#). Angles on a very close reading are offered below.

- 669 words; sentence length average 20.2 words (a bit too long?)
- **Flesch Kincaid Grade Level** 8.31 (mid-8th grade, US primary school)
There are 51 word families at K-3 to K-10, 19% of the total lexis, including 20 word families at K-5 to K-7. So, the story is at points quite demanding in terms of less frequent literary lexis even high-intermediate students may not know. Here the VocabProfiling tool. The lexis profiling site www.lextutor.ca is a site all teachers should learn to use, esp. the VP-Compleat Input function, among VocabProfilers there. You can submit quite long texts and get an intriguing lexical-profile.
Introducing the Story

PRE-READING: Ask students what stories they know about Christmas in English, if any. What about Christmas carols, do they know any in English? How do they spend Christmas Eve? If they are not from a Christian family, do they observe the holiday in some way? Is there gift-giving in their family? In 2016, Day 1 of the Jewish Festival of Lights Chanukkah, always in late November or December — (8 days of candles) — begins at sundown Christmas Eve, a rare event. Many people observe this December 25 holiday around the world. What do students know about the tradition of Christmas koledari (Christmas carolers) in Bulgaria, Стани ми, стани нине, here performing on the streets of Yambol? How do they see such folk-cultural traditions? New Year’s Eve remains a huge holiday in Bulgaria, with survakane January 1st, still a common custom in numerous families, directly involving children, they love it. What does the tale title “Kin” suggest to students?

This story is about an ageing, penniless man playing a fiddle (simple violin) on the street, asking passers-by for money. Do students have experience with such musicians in their own town, perhaps with guitar? To set the mood for the story about a NY street violinist, show students this brief Christmas video in contemporary New York of violinist Lindsey Stirling performing “Silent Night” in the silent, brightly-lit Christmas streets. And this of “busker” James Bowen and his cat Bob.

Reading 1. Tell students: Read through the story once very quickly, noting any words that are unfamiliar to you, there may be even 10 to 20 lexemes you do not know. Mark those words. Do any students know the songs (there are three) mentioned in the story? Listen to them (cf. Music to Enjoy and Ponder below).
Reading 2. Reread the story. Take five minutes to write from memory a simple summary of the story in 30-40 words. The story itself is a flash fiction, five paragraphs, 661 words. It has no dialogue save for “Merry Christmas, friend!”

Questions about Plot, Language and Style

PARAGRAPH 1: What time of day is the story set in? Is it on a special day, how designated? Is the word “Christmas” mentioned at the beginning of the story? Where in space? Is the name of the city mentioned? What kind of weather prevails? Describe the old man. Is his music beautiful, artistic? Do the many people pay him any attention? Where is he sitting? What is the “elevated road”? What metaphors can you find in the first paragraph, figurative expressions or comparisons (images of flow ≈≈; as white as; pinched by; cracked and old like)?

VOCABULARY/SYNTAX: The first sentence has the phrasal verb “set in” – it is used for things that happen and may last a longer time. Examples: An economic downturn set in after Brexit. The rain set in and lasted until dawn. What are “coppers,” a lexeme now rarely used in the US? What is “bustling preparation”? The lexeme bustling is K-6 level, at 6,000-headwords. “Crowds thronged the sidewalks”— “throng” as a verb is K-7. Can students express this in simpler English? “Endless streams of carriages” – carriage is a K-4 word. What does it mean here? The verb “stir” is used two times in the first paragraph, at beginning and end, once intransitive, once transitive. What is the meaning? How does his fiddle sound? There is one phrasal verb in the paragraph, what is it? In Riis’ literary style, two sentences begin with a locative phrase followed by the subject noun: which ones?

PARAGRAPH 2 is introduced by a “traffic jam,” but note how that is phrased. How is the young woman described? Is she also poor? Is she waiting impatiently? What is the meaning of “indifferent throng”? What does the woman do? Is the old man
frightened, angry? If not, why not? What does she do with the violin before she starts playing?

VOCABULARY/SYNTAX: What is the difference between “street” and “avenue”? “The crush increased” – what is the meaning here? “Crush” is normally a verb, can you use it in a sentence? How is the woman described? What does “muse” mean, a K-5 verb? She hears the old man’s “violin.” Both “fiddle” and “violin” are used here, but with a subtle difference – what? What is the meaning of the phrasal verb “take in”? “A quavering note found its way ...” quaver is K-11, a very low-frequency verb. What does it mean? As in: He spoke in a quavering voice. The woman is lost in her “reveries.” “Reverie” is K-11 lexis. A simpler word is d---m. It occurs at the story’s end. What is the figurative meaning of “found its way” here? “A light kindled in her eyes.” “Kindle” is a K-7 verb, used here metaphorically – what is a synonym? There is an earlier phrasal verb in paragraph 1 synonymic with kindle in this sense, can you find it? She “ponders a moment.” What does “ponder” mean, a K-5 verb? There is a sequence of three quite long sentences: 34/21/ 37 words, can you identify these? Riis uses long sentences to describe unfolding action.

PARAGRAPH 3: Is she a good musician? What noises can be heard, is it a noisy street? What does “rattle and roar” mean? We hear “the calls of the cabmen and hucksters.” What is a cabman in this context and time? What is a huckster (K-16 word, very uncommon today except with a negative meaning)? Many hucksters are in the street, what are they doing (hint: selling xyz …)? How does the crowd react to her violin playing? Once again, a verb “stir.” How is it used in paragraph 3?

The young woman plays two well-known songs by Stephen Foster from the 1850s. First, she plays “Old Black Joe.” Do you know these sad classic American songs? You can hear them from links given in a section on music below, and discuss the texts.
“Old Black Joe” is about an ageing African-American man thinking of his friends and perhaps soon to die. It could be applied to the old fiddler perhaps. “Old Folks at Home” is about memories of family, friends far from home, by a man roaming and old. The chorus/refrain in the original is “All de world am sad and dreary, / Eb-rywhere I roam; / Oh, darkeys, how my heart grows weary,/ Far from de old folks at home!” Perhaps it also reflects the lonely fiddler on the pavement. “Old folks” here does not mean they are necessarily “old in age” but his earlier family and friends back home. They are not Christmas songs. How is the woman described as she plays? How does the crowd react? Note the parallelism: “every ear was bent to listen” – “every eye was turned upon the young player.” At the end of paragraph 3, there is a man in a “wide-brimmed hat,” who gives some money. This is perhaps a coded reference to a very famous man, see below. The refrain in “Old Folks at Home” uses the word “darkies,” which would never be used today. What does it mean? You can hear these two songs from links given in a section on music below.

VOCABULARY/SYNTAX: “strains” is used in music. What is the meaning? “Succeed” has a meaning here different from success – what is it? Riis uses alliteration for literary effect, rhyming of front consonants, like ‘rattle and roar’, ‘crossing was clear’ – look for other examples in the story. “Presently” here as time adverb does not mean “now” – rather, as an initial adverb it means “after a short while.” Find some metaphors in the paragraph. What does “it” refer to in: “it rose ... it made its way, and where it went ...?” Note the phrase “found its way” in paragraph 2 and “made its way” here, both referring to a musical sound. What verb is collated with “silence”? Here too there is inversion, a sentence where a locative “out upon the evening” is followed by the subject noun, “the familiar strains” a style feature of Riis’ literary prose. The sentence might also begin “Soon the familiar strains ... floated out ...”
PARAGRAPH 4: What has happened? The people are surprised because there is a “strange hold-up.” What is the meaning here? Hold-up often today means someone stopping a person and stealing their money, a mugging. The policeman stands “spellbound,” a very rare word, but what is the “spell” here in this context? There is a clearly religious intimation in the sentence: “In the hush that had fallen upon the world rose clear and sweet the hymn, ‘It came upon a midnight clear,’ and there hats came off in the crowd.” The song is sung with lyrics visible in a link given later below. The hymn’s words are actually reflected in the story, ask students to find this. Riis consciously echoed parts of the text. How does the crowd respond now? Why do some men remove their hats? What happens? Why is the woman crying? How does she depart? The fiddler receives many gifts -- as if brought to Jesus by the Magi, but here from the crowd. They know the song well.

VOCABULARY/SYNTAX: “play out” as a phrasal verb has a special meaning here, what is it? Note how Riis uses the verb “pour,” normally for liquids, he even has the collocation “were poured into his cup.” Again, notice the syntax: Locative phrase then followed by subject noun: “From street cars and cabs heads were poked ...” Notice also the alliteration. What is the meaning of “poke” here, K-4 level? People are very curious to know what is happening. Once again a reversal: locative, then verb, then subject: “In the hush that had fallen upon the world rose the hymn ...” “Upon the world” – why? It’s just a NY street. In the hymn, “world” appears four times!

PARAGRAPH 5: “The policeman awoke ...” Was he sleeping? “Business resumed its sway.” Sway here has two meanings rolled into one. One is a kind of metaphor. What is the old man thinking? He looks at his hoard. What is “hoard” here? This is a K-7 word, near the top of learners’ vocabularies. “The world moved once more, roused from its brief dream.” What does “rouse from” mean here? Why “world”?
Explain the meaning of the tale’s philosophical end: “But the dream had left it something that was wanting before, something better than the old man had found. Its heart had been touched.” What does the tiny pronoun “it” refer back to? “Something wanting before.” “Wanting?”—a special verb, give a synonym.

CONTRASTS: Contrasts infuse the story. Complete these (- = one letter):
- wealth ↔ p----y
- youth ↔ --d age
- fur coat ↔ w--n coat
- shopper ↔ pla--r
- noise and rattle ↔ beautiful s--g
- music ↔ busy rush of daily l-f-
- empty cup ↔ fu-- cup
- large crowd ↔ woman playing the vi----
- material culture ↔ artis--- culture
- business on the streets ↔ unusual ev--t
- Holy Eve ↔ ordinary days of the ye--
- reality↔ dr--m
- indifference ↔ generos---
- old man ↔ indifferent thr--g.
- fiddle ↔ v--lin
- noisy crowd ↔ h-sh
- male fiddler ↔ f--ale violinist
- materialism ↔ the Christmas spir—

GENERAL QUESTIONS: How did the students relate to the story? How great a challenge was the lexis? Do they want to read more by Riis? Do people in their neighborhood help poorer pensioners and others much younger at year’s end? Poverty now haunts Bulgaria, many aged 15-29 are in stressful living conditions.
Millions of refugee children are celebrating Christmas in great hardship in 2016.

Homework Creativity

WRITE A LETTER: Imagine the woman goes home and then writes a letter to her sister telling about this experience in the crowded streets of Manhattan. WRITE A DIALOGUE: The old man goes home and tells his wife what happened. Write a brief dialogue. Give the man a name.

WRITE A SHORT POEM: (1) a person who was in the crowd and saw what occurred, and was very moved by it writes a short poem about this “happening” on a crowded street crossing near the elevated. (2) The old fiddler writes an “I am” poem thinking about his life and himself, and how now he is out in the street to survive. He was not always a kind of beggar playing some tune (see Christensen 2015; Christensen & Watson 2015).

Music to Enjoy and Ponder

Have students listen to/discuss the three songs mentioned in the story. (1) “Old Black Joe” sung by Robert Shaw Chorale. Full lyrics are here. (2) “Old Folks at Home” (“Suwannee River”) sung here by the Finnigans: The original lyrics here. This river flows through northern Florida. A superb rendition from 1918, sung by Ernestine Schumann-Heink (1861-1936), one of the world’s famous Austrian-American contralto opera singers a century ago. Both these songs by Stephen Foster, written in the 1850s, are set in the world of slavery in the American South. (3) “It came upon the midnight clear” is a classic US Christmas hymn about angels and their harps, as an angel appeared to the shepherds at Christ’s birth (Luke 2:8-20); here in a rendition by Bing Crosby. The lyrics of this 1849 hymn have a very close connection with the story, analyze this! Excerpt: “The world in solemn stillness lay/ To hear the angels sing (...) And still their heavenly music floats/ O’er all the weary world (...) And man, at war
with man, hears not/ The love-song which they bring;/ O hush the noise, ye men of strife,/ And hear the angels sing. ...” Riis may well have been inspired by the hymn to write the story, based on a Christmas Eve happening in the NY streets he actually witnessed. See, Rembrandt’s etching. The hymn, though focused on the announcement of Christ’s birth by angels, is clearly also a fervent anti-war song, pleading for peace, perhaps in reaction to the just-ended Mexican-American War of 1849, which many Americans opposed, and still a powerful hymn against war.

Ernestine Schumann-Heink (1861-1936) sings “Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht,” a lullaby for Christmas from her native Austria that she in fact made very popular in the US as “the” Christmas song: a recording in NY from 1910. Ernestine became an American citizen in 1908. Ms. Schumann-Heink, from a mixed Catholic-Jewish background, sang this song in German and as “Silent Night” on US national radio every Christmas from 1926 to 1935. You can read her biography at the link site.

A STREET MUSICIAN IN NYC: students can watch the famed violinist Lindsey Stirling in the NYC subway at 14th St. before Christmas; here playing a Christmas hymn in a winter snowscape; and Lindsey with “Silent Night” on the NY Christmas streets. Explore the many comments on this song video, discuss some in class.

**Children’s Poetry for Christmas**

POETRY: here 50 Christmas Poems for Children (1923), beginning with “The Carol of the Poor Children.” Read the simple poem with learners, discuss its points and structure. Where are these children, when? They are very young, yet in some ways like Riis’ “old fiddler”— in what way? Other poems can be perused, invite students to explore. They could do a group recital of a poem they like, or write something about a poem that speaks to them, their hearts. Or compose a poem.
Introducing Jacob A. Riis: the Man and His Work

If you like, before or after reading and discussing the story, you can introduce the author Riis to students with a brief biography in simple VOA English (+ MP3), which also contains extracts from his 1901 autobiography, The Making of an American. Here another biography. Here an article about Riis’ photographs of the poor in NYC from the 1880s on. Show students this iconic photo. His most famous book is How the Other Half Lives (1890). Here some videos about Riis and his work. His The Children of the Poor (1892) is a classic pioneering socio-ethnography of children in grinding poverty in NYC, many of them immigrants.

As mentioned, there is a subtle reference in “Kin” to a “man in a wide-brimmed hat who had been listening intently,” probably to NY Police Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt (1895-97), known for his “wide-brimmed hats.” Roosevelt rose to governor of New York State in 1898. Riis had a close relationship with President Roosevelt (1901-09), and published a campaign book on his friend in 1904.

Riis’ striking fictional stories, based on observed fact, are generally not known among most English teachers today, yet “enjoyed a considerable vogue in their day” (Tuerk 1980, p. 259). Riis learned to write literary English as an L2 later in life in New York, an “immigrant fictionalist.” As Riis stressed in the preface to Children of the Tenements (1903): “… none of the stories are invented. Nine out of ten of them are just as they came to me fresh from the life of the people.” Tuerk (1980, p. 263): “During the early 1900s his best-known tales were his Christmas stories, with his simplistic messages that, no matter how hopeless they seem, things will get better and that out of the most terrible of circumstances goodness can grow.” “Riis’ literary publications are a mode of “critical realism” of life in widespread poverty in what historians call the “Gilded Age.” Some Americans see another “Gilded

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Age” today, with huge gaps between the wealthy elite and all the rest, the 99%; the Occupy movement that erupted in autumn 2011 was all about this. My home town Chicago remains an icon of racial discrimination, street violence, also in Camden/NJ: 12-yr-old Marcell’s story is a great video. Discuss it with students!

Other Christmas Tales by Riis

Riis’ last (posthumous) book contained 19 short stories, Neighbors: Life Stories of the Other Half (1914), several of which center on Christmas. One unforgettable tale is “His Christmas Gift,” also worth reading with students, a truly extraordinary tale of near-murder and forgiveness, based on actual fact, i.e. a New York immigrant criminal trial. There is also the story “The Snow Babies’ Christmas,” set in a TB hospital on Coney Island. Riis writes in Neighbors (1914: pp. v-vi) that the stories “... have this in common, that they are true. For good reasons, names and places are changed, but they all happened as told here. I could not have invented them had I tried.”

His book Children of the Tenements (1903) also contains a number of Christmas stories. “The Rent Baby” is the lead story in the collection, about a very poor Jewish peddler and his family (immigrants from Austria), and a nameless “rent baby,” living in a poisonous cellar in the New York tenements, their terrible ordeal on Christmas Eve — with a happy ending on Christmas Day, despite the anti-Semitic innuendos and slurs against Adam as a Jew. Other Christmas stories there: “What the Christmas Sun Saw in the Tenements,” “Little Will’s Message,” “The Little Dollar Christmas Story,” “The Kid Hangs Up His Stocking,” “Nibsy’s Christmas,” and the long tale (9,635 words) “Merry Christmas in the Tenements.” Another book of Riis’ tales is “Out of Mulberry Street: Stories of Tenement Life in New York City” (1898). Many of these short stories and others are reproduced in Riis, “Christmas Stories” (1923), recently also reprinted. Most are available in cheap reprints. See, also Templer (2016) on utilizing Riis’ sociography and stories in EFL pedagogy.
In terms of social-aesthetic engagement, Tuerk (1980) stresses that Riis deserves “to be placed beside [Stephen] Crane because of his subject matter” (p. 263), and comes close to the “critical realism” of the great William Dean Howells, whose later work “truthfully reports warped and maladjusted social relationships” so that they can be dealt with, improved (p. 261). Howells also published “Christmas Every Day and Other Stories Told for Children” in 1892, made into a Christmas movie.

**Tales of Terrible Suffering**

The lead story in Riis’ “Neighbors” (1914), “The Answer of Ludlow Street” (1,359 words), is a shattering short tale about impoverished Jewish immigrants and suicide in New York. It offers a powerful contrast to “Kin,” which follows it in the book — as does the short-short “When the Letter Came” (861 words) about a poor German immigrant inventor who also commits sudden bitter suicide. More broadly, here are many classic ‘very short’ stories for American students. Enjoy!

**Friedrich Trump, Donald Trump’s Grandfather**

An intriguing connection with the world that Riis described and photographed in the tenements on the Lower East Side is the remarkable grandfather of President-Elect Donald Trump, Friedrich Trump (1869-1918), who emigrated in 1885 at the age of 16 from tiny Kallstadt in the German Palatinate (Pfalz) to New York City, working six years as a barber in a German-owned barber shop, and living initially with his older sister Katharine and her husband Friedrich Schuster (ditto from Kallstadt) in a tenement at 76 Forsyth Street (Blair 2000: 25, 33, 37), then a neighborhood with many poor immigrants from Germany, including from the Pfalz. This was an area of the Lower East Side Riis knew very well. Widmer (2016) describes Friedrich Trump’s early life.
and adventures: he soon made a small fortune as a hotel and restaurant manager, laying the financial basis for his son Fred Trump (1905-1999, born in New York), Donald Trump’s father, who with the initial help of his widowed mother Elizabeth (1880-1966), likewise from Kallstadt, later built up huge wealth in real estate. The tragic Riis story “When the Letter Came” is about an impoverished German immigrant living on Forsyth Street, who in despair kills himself, set perhaps near to where Friedrich Trump and his sister Katherine first resided. Donald Trump’s mother Mary Anne MacLeod (1912-2000) was an immigrant from abject poverty in Scotland, who emigrated from Tong on the Ilse of Lewis in 1930, working in NYC as a domestic, and married Fred in 1936.

**Honing Visual Social Empathy and Literacy**

Below are two photos by Riis of homeless kids on New York’s tenement streets. What do they try to express? Like other texts, photographs are selective representations; they frame and construct arguments about the world (Pink 2006; Devitt 2013). Here Riis’ photo of an impoverished Jew on Sabbath eve, living in a coal cellar in NY (ca. 1890), and a peddler also surviving in a basement at 11 Ludlow St. Here a cheap “5 cents for the night lodging hall,” 1889 — iconic immigrant poverty captured on film.

![Street Arabs [homeless kids] in their sleeping quarters](Street Arabs [homeless kids] in their sleeping quarters Riis, *New York 1890*)

![Street Arabs sleeping in Mulberry Street](Street Arabs sleeping in Mulberry Street From Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, Ch. XVII)

**VISUAL LITERACY:** Present these photos/drawings below and ask students to discuss

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and describe what they see. The elevated road is clear, with its pillars, as in “Kin.” The bustling crowds, the carriages, the “throng.” Evictions of the poor? What else do we see? How do the children feel, the mothers? Inability to pay rent and evictions were common in the tenements. Here a classic drawing of a landlord demanding rent from a poor family. For many other images of and text on NYC tenement life and its hardships, see the detailed article by Maggie Blanck. Students can click on the image hyperlinks below to get a larger, more detailed copy. Here a Riis photo of “Little Italy” on Mulberry Street (1900) and “Jewish” Hester Street (1907), and a Riis photo (maybe?) on “Hebrew” Mulberry Street (1907).

Third Avenue Line of the New York Elevated, ca. 1910

Mulberry Street, Lower East Side, photo by Jacob Riis, 1907

Tenement eviction, Scribner’s, June 1892. Collection M.K. Blanck
Tenement eviction, Harper’s Weekly, 1 Feb. 1890 M. Blanck

Explore Riis’ other tales too, experiment with them in class. Recommend to
colleagues and students. His fact-based compelling social fiction, too long ignored in ELT, deserves (re)discovery (Yochelson & Czitrom 2007; Pascal 2005). Most stories are just a mouse-click away. And also read O. Henry’s classic Christmas tale set in New York, ‘The Gift of the Magi’ (1905), see Templer (2014) for a discussion of the story, a Hollywood film version is likewise linked there. Весела Коледа!

References


The inclusive aspects of the CLIL approach.
A resource for teaching foreign languages to learners with special educational needs: The case of the Italian schools

Carmelina Maurizio

The inclusive dimension of the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach (Marsh, 2002) in the teaching of foreign languages is still little known and explored, but if we analyze the fundamental ideas that support the pedagogy driving CLIL and the main characteristics of inclusive teaching, we will find a direct relationship between the two and a match of their intents and purposes.

What does teaching in an inclusive way mean (Beaudoin, 2013)? How could the main aspects of a CLIL approach be considered inclusive (Jimenez, 2014)?

The following two short lists attempt to demonstrate a number of contact points between the inclusive educational approach and the CLIL one.

1) Teaching in an inclusive way means:

- Individualizing and making education accessible;
- Customising the content;
- Exploiting previous knowledge;

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- Creating a motivating atmosphere for learning;
- Promoting critical thinking (Facione, 2011);
- Respecting different and multiple intelligences (Strauss, 2013);
- Planning and designing teaching units;
- Promoting and adding value to the different learning styles (Felder, Spurlin, 2005);
- Encouraging multi-channel learning; using, for example, video, tables, charts, diagrams;
- Promoting cooperative work;
- Using ICTs (Information and Communication Technology).

2) CLIL main characteristics are based on:

- Stimulating cognitive flexibility;
- Using realia and objects, causing multi-sensory learning, using video, tables, diagrams, charts;
- Providing a good planning of teaching units;
- Fostering cooperation and exchange of materials;
- Providing several tools for learning to enable everyone to achieve the objectives;
- Building structured and accessible activities;
- Promoting inter-cultural learning, adding value to different viewpoints;
- Creating an atmosphere that motivates learning;
• Linguistic scaffolding that includes specialised vocabulary, key foreign language structures, and grammatical features information on subject-specific text type conventions and structural features (Wielander, 2012);

• Allowing the learner to customise the content;

• Integration of technologies (Maurizio, 2016);

The points on the above lists seem to show the effectiveness of CLIL in promoting the learning of a foreign language and ask teachers, from primary to secondary school, to consider it as an important opportunity to teach in an inclusive way.

CLIL also has positive effects on subject acquisition and on the learning of the foreign language, putting in evidence a more complex and accurate use, for example, in reading proficiency, in incidental vocabulary acquisition and in the pragmatic and discursive competence, levelling differences in attitude and achievement (Perez Canado, 2012). But what is more, it is demonstrated that there is an improvement in the receptive skills, acquiring discipline-specific terminology and mastering grammatical aspects of the language. CLIL also contributes to higher gains in learners’ self-confidence and multicultural competence with a high level of reflection (Aguilar, Rodriguez, 2012). Furthermore, because successful employability in Europe is more and more dependent on how well students are prepared linguistically and interculturally to enter the internationalised labour market (Rasanens, 2008), it seems highly relevant that CLIL offers a strong motivation for everyone to learn foreign languages.

The Italian Case

The recent Italian national legislation (Law number 170/2010) on Special Educational Needs and Specific Learning Disorder stresses in several places the need to adapt education and the respective strategies in order to create educational inclusive
opportunities, promoting the use of individualised and personalised teaching, with effective and flexible forms of school work, which also take account the particular learner characteristics, such as bilingualism of immigrant students, for example, adopting a methodology and an adequate educational strategy (Law 170/2010, section 5, paragraph 2). In addition, through the introduction of the Law Guidelines, the Italian legislators urge the implementation of educational and teaching strategies which should always take into account the uniqueness and complexity of each person, his/her articulated identity, aspirations, capabilities and fragility, in various stages of development and training (Guidelines for the right to education of pupils and students with Specific Learning Disorders, attached to Ministerial Decree 12 July 2011, Introduction, p.2).

Finally, it is worth mentioning the Ministerial Circular no. 8 March 2013, which further emphasises the need for a personalised and individualised teaching and the adoption of inclusive teaching strategies.

**Conclusion**

In this context, therefore, the CLIL approach (D. Coyle, P. Hood, D. Marsh, 2010) and its wide range of educational solutions, applicable to any class since primary school, seems to be a very powerful resource (Daloiso, 2011). It could allow foreign language teachers to successfully achieve various educational goals, related to the learning process and results which will break the frames of mind and the barriers to teaching foreign languages, English in particular, to students with special needs (Lotti, 2010; Maurizio, 2014). This is certainly an educational challenge that requires all teachers, of course not only the foreign languages ones, but also subject teachers, to follow a specific training, especially focused on aspects of the CLIL approach, to be able to make all students protagonists of the learning process.
(This paper is based on a talk “CLIL4ALL: the inclusive aspects of CLIL” presented at Focus on CLIL – LAKMA International Conference, Vilnius, Lithuania, October 2015)

References


The conference of our partners and friends from ATECR was held on 9-10 September 2016 in the Professional High School of Electrical Engineering. The school is situated in a beautiful, impressive building in the centre of Prague and was an excellent choice for a teachers’ conference venue. The international participants could feel the atmosphere of the Czech school and the local teachers felt at home. There were almost 200 education professionals from the Czech Republic, Croatia, Lithuania, Austria, the Philippines, Poland, Greece, the USA, the UK, Slovakia, Moldova, Hungary, and Bulgaria.
The opening ceremony and the first plenary were held in the assembly hall of the Faculty of Pedagogy of Charles University. The atmosphere was welcoming and warm.

Šárka Dohnalová, the first plenary speaker, spoke about language as the tool of the tools for including everyone in the classroom and focused on the problems of dyslexic learners. This radiant lady managed to capture the audience’s attention by introducing the issue from a very personal viewpoint. The other two plenary speakers were Louel Ross Calleja, who considered the native vs. non-native speakers and teachers issue, and Ben Dobbs, who shared a more practical approach to international communication and learners’ needs.

The main conference topics included Matriculation Exams, Business English, Very Young Learners, CLIL, IT in ELT, All Skills. The Czech teachers were very active and were not afraid of presenting and sharing their observations and problems, or exchanging good practices. The constructive and meaningful discussions continued in the coffee breaks and at the cocktail party. Among the presentations I attended were

S. Bozinovic discussing rubrics and providing colleagues with useful tips and resources

Ben Dobbs on “Creating Realistic Tasks for the Business English Classroom”
J. Hlavsova discussing the use of proverbs with teachers from Europe

For more information and pictures visit [http://atecr.weebly.com/photos.html](http://atecr.weebly.com/photos.html)

The impressive materials exhibition in the corridors on the three floors of the school
Our representative with the Lithuanian representative on the left and the vice-president of ATECR in the middle

Participating in conferences and other events of professional interest always gives you the opportunity to become familiar with another culture, people, and lifestyle. Thanks to this fruitful conference in the Czech Republic I met a lot of colleagues from Central Europe, became familiar with Czech traditions and society, did some sightseeing in Prague and found out why a hundred years ago it was called Little Paris.

Good luck to all prospective conference participants!
Across the Borders – over the Boundaries – beyond the Limits: Impressions from the 25th International IATEFL Poland Conference

Zarina Markova

The best way to begin an academic year is ... with a conference! And it is even better if this conference is in Poland, a country I still associate with the lively workshops, engaging talks, evening bonfires, songs and dances during my first ELT training course abroad many years ago. Such were my thoughts while I was crossing borders on my way to Szczecin, where the 25th Jubilee IATEFL Poland Conference was about to begin. My expectations were high, and I was not disappointed, for the conference proved to be a truly inspiring, memorable event. It took place at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at the West Pomeranian University of Technology, a modern building on the outskirts of Szczecin, which offered all the facilities necessary to accommodate nearly 800 participants, presenters, sister organisation representatives, publishers and other language service providers from fourteen different countries.
The conference programme catered for every taste: 110 talks and workshops on topics related to psychology in language learning and teaching, multilingualism, drama and literature in ELT, language assessment, CLIL, teaching English to young learners and to students with special educational needs, technology and language teaching and learning, English language teaching management. Additionally, there were eleven live lessons, a public speaking contest and debates, quizzes and a theatre show – together with the eight talks and workshops during the pre-conference event, they all added to the variety of the forum, but, at the same time, made the choice of what to attend really difficult. Unsurprisingly, talks by the internationally renowned speakers David Nunan, Hugh Dellar, Jamie Keddie, Margorie Rosenberg attracted the most attention. I had chosen to see as many Polish presenters as possible, though, and this led me to several interesting sessions.

The first one was the grand finale of a public speaking contest for students aged 12-19 which was organised by IATEFL Poland. During the finale, the regional contest winners, divided in two age groups (middle school and high school), presented their ideas of the school of the future. New technology, multiculturalism and active collaborative learning were common characteristics of the young contestants’ visions. They were shared with care, optimism and passion, which created a very positive
atmosphere and led to a big round of applause for the contestants, their teachers and the contest organisers.

My second choice was Alexandra Zaparucha’s live CLIL lesson *History of Canterbury Cathedral*. I had already met Alexandra – as a presenter at the 25th BETA conference in Plovdiv she had impressed everybody with her energy, professionalism and an unbeatable sense of humour. I can only add that she lived up to expectations and taught a really informative and energising live lesson. Next came *Spire, aspire, inspire! Enhancing creativity in producing language content* – a workshop in which Edyta Socha and Justina Madry shared their experience in using speaking and writing activities to boost learners’ creativity. It was followed by *Teaching English to young learners – theory and practice*, where Ewa Szymkowiak and Urszula Kropaczewska engaged the participants in a number of activities aimed at enhancing young learners’ language skills.

After these hands-on, practice-oriented sessions, I felt I needed a change, so my next choice was Grzegorz Spiewak’s semi-plenary *How to make language learning visible and effective*. The beginning was promising – Grzegorz started with an overview of the findings of John Hattie’s meta-study on the impact of various influences on students’ achievement, and then went on with illustrations of how these findings can be
implemented in practice. It was perhaps unfortunate that all the illustrations explicitly led the audience to a coursebook series, which, in my opinion, spoiled the otherwise excellent talk. The point-blank promotion of teacher training courses, coursebooks and other foreign language services seems to have been one of the features of the Szczecin conference. I was not able to find out if the Polish teachers approved of it or not. Yet, it would be discouraging if this is the future of ELT conferences.

Fortunately, there were other, non-promotional sessions, whose presenters simply shared their learning paths, insights and project findings with their audiences. A very informative talk, *Teacher assessment literacy as an impediment to valid testing*, was given by Asma Maaoui, a Tunisian colleague, who reported on a study that explored the assessment literacy of EFL teachers in three countries of the Maghreb. Another enjoyable talk was *Oxford style debate in your language classroom*, delivered by Grzegorz Nawrocki, who discussed how language students could be taught to argue for and against a given topic focusing on logic, research and rhetoric, and what effect such debates had on their speaking skills. Still another stimulating talk was *Lesson jamming (lesson planning in groups)*, where Tom Heaven shared his experience with *Lesson Jams* – sessions in which teachers exchange ideas, knowledge and energy while planning collaboratively lessons from scratch. As there were too few participants in the room, we only experienced the lesson jamming second hand, but, nevertheless, the session was really engaging and thought-provoking.
My own talk about the challenges of creative writing with young learners was in the last slot on Friday evening, when five more talks, a live lesson, a theatre show and a sightseeing tour were also competing for participation. Still, thanks to a few genuinely interested participants, the talk turned into a worthwhile and satisfying experience followed up by online correspondence on issues of mutual interest.

A fine supplement to the conference sessions was the social programme with its many opportunities for mingling, informal discussions and fun. Apart from the sightseeing tour mentioned above, there was a jubilee dinner on Friday, a Saturday morning run, Saturday evening entertainment with Swing Lovers and Hugh Dellar’s Band, a number of quizzes and raffles, all of which widely enjoyed. Add to this the summery weather and the pleasure of discovering new places, making new friends, learning new things, and you will understand why the 25th IATEFL Poland Conference was such an uplifting experience.

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I would like to thank BETA and IATEFL Poland for sponsoring my participation and encourage BETA members to apply for funding to take part in the conferences of partner associations across Europe.
The Art Class 2

In the Monday night art class
a group of incongruous humans
is shuffling in

The eighty-seven year old Russian
formerly a famous eye surgeon
has brought a samovar with him

The teenage Ethiopian
too beautiful for description
comes in with a wooden African mask
large and unusual

A woman, seven months’ pregnant,
rummages in her back pack
and discovers a slashed orange
she thought had been eaten
by one of her children

A soldier, an officer,
an expert at computers,
finds a banana he thought he’d discarded
most of it has browned
but some is still yellow
Now six women and three men,
the hues of their skins and origins
a palette of autumnal colours,
squint in absorbed diligence

attempting to capture the brilliance
of the objects displayed
on the table in front of them
which now and again seem to squirm a bit
uncomfortable as they must be
in the spotlight’s heat

from time-to-time
when the students are absorbed
in the concentration of shading
and erasing and correcting

I, the instructor, am almost certain
I see the samovar and the African mask
exchange bemused glances
and think I hear them musing:
what curious characters,
these would-be artists

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Take a minute to take our survey
Thank you!
Take the survey here

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Small-scale, teacher-led Research Project

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• 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

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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

Daniel Xerri - 'A Myriad Views on Creativity', 3 December 2016, 3pm GMT

For further information, visit:
http://www.iatefl.org/web-events/webinars

SIG Webinars

David Little - 'Learner Autonomy and the educational inclusion of primary pupils from immigrant families'

10 December 2016, 9am 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
For 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

Writing for the BETA-IATEFL E-Newsletter

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

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

What exactly do you have to do?

If you feel you have something you would like to share:

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

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

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

• The length of your article may vary - short contributions of 300 – 800 words are as good as long ones.

• Electronic submission of your article is preferred to the following e-mail address: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com

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

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

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

• About 50 words of biographical data should be included.

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

• Referencing should follow the APA referencing style.

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

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

• Tables, figures or diagrams should be numbered accordingly and included in the relevant part of the text. Each should have an explanatory caption.

• The editors will not return any material submitted, but they reserve the right to make editorial changes.

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

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

We are on the web:

http://www.beta-iatefl.org/

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