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Cover photo credit: Reneta Stoimenova, Bulgaria
Dear Reader,

Welcome once again to the BETA-IATEFL bi-monthly e-newsletter!

In keeping with the spirit of the previous issues, this edition captures various perspectives on language learning and teaching. It also features up-to-date information about the approaching BETA & FIPLV 2017 conference in Varna and other Forthcoming Events in the World of ELT.

Happy reading! And if you like this e-newsletter, please feel free to share it with a colleague.

Sylvia Velikova
Issue Editor
Terrae Incognitae: Learner Autonomy and Gamification


Christian Ludwig

We have witnessed a growing academic interest in the study of foreign language learner autonomy across the globe since Henri Holec’s seminal work Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning (1979/1981). Especially with the rise of new media, learner autonomy has also become an integral part of discussions of the impact and consequences of using technological tools in the classroom (see Reinders & White 2016: 143-154 for a critical overview of the relationship between learner autonomy and technology). While “[e]arly thinking considered a direct and often one-directional impact of the use of technology on learners’ independence by providing them with access to resources and the possibility of working at times and in locations of their own choosing” (Reinders & White, 2016: 143), research has shown that the relationship between learner autonomy and technology is bidirectional; the skilled

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use of technology requires a degree of autonomy and the “impact of technology is [also] changing our understanding of learner autonomy [...]” (ibid.).

The present article contributes to this discussion by investigating the role of video games in supporting students to develop their language learner autonomy. Virtual realities (for a discussion of virtual realities and their potential for community building see Schwienhorst, 2002) created by digital games are ubiquitous in contemporary popular culture (Steinkuehler, 2004). Moreover, digital games and online communities, associated closely with massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs), have a long history (cf. ibid.) in the computer-assisted language learning (CALL) community. However, as Steinkuehler (2004: 521) emphasises, “there is a paucity of research on the phenomenon as an important site for learning”. In contrast to the few existing studies which have researched the effect and effectiveness of using digital games for language learning purposes (see f. ex. Thorne et al., 2009; Suh, Kim & Kim, 2010; Thorne, 2012; Peterson, 2010, 2012; Rama et al., 2012), I take a slightly different orientation by exploring the impact of game mechanics – applied in the non-gaming context of the classroom – on the development of learner autonomy. Game mechanics can be defined as the underlying rules and principles of video games, which maintain the player’s motivation and engagement in the game. Drawing on Paul Gee’s (2007) set of 36 principles inherent to (successful learning via) video games, I will discuss how the underlying principles of games, applied in a non-gaming context, can help to create an atmosphere in which the learner is valued as an individual and actively engaged in their own learning. This contribution is divided into three parts: first, I will discuss the concept of learner autonomy, mainly focusing on its social-interactive dimension. In part two, I will take a closer look at some of the main ideas of gamification, generally understood as the integration of underlying (video) game rules and principles in non-game contexts. Finally, I will discuss the relationship between game mechanics and learner autonomy and will examine
selected gamification principles with regard to their potential to enable learners to develop their foreign language autonomy.

Learner autonomy has become a buzz word in the field of education in general, and foreign language learning in particular, especially with the rising demand to equip students with the necessary skills, competences and strategies to live and work as life-long learners in an increasingly globalised world. Based on Holec’s definition, it is widely agreed that autonomous language learners

- determine the objectives of their learning
- define the contents and progressions of the lesson
- select the methods and techniques to be used
- monitor the acquisition procedure
- evaluate what has been acquired (Holec, [1979] 1981; Little 2016)

Holec ([1979] 1981: 3) defines learner autonomy as the “ability to take charge of one's own learning”. In other words, learner autonomy is not about “specific knowledge the learner possesses but rather, a capacity that allows him to direct his own learning” (Summer, 2010: 8; see also Little, 1991: 4). According to Little (ibid.), autonomy is a “capacity — for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action”. However, Little defines autonomy not merely in terms of capacity, but rather as something that “involves both an individual-cognitive and social-interactive dimension” (Kohonen, 2003: 3; see also Little, 2001: 45-56). Put differently, developing and exercising one’s autonomy is “a social event that does not take place in a void” (van Lier, 2008: 164). This view of learner autonomy as an individual-cognitive as well as social-interactive construct was also put forward by the 1990 Third Nordic Workshop in Bergen, which resulted in the following definition of learner autonomy:

Learner autonomy is characterised by a readiness to take charge of one’s own learning in the service of one’s needs and purposes. This entails a capacity and willingness to act independently and in co-operation with others, as a social,
responsible person. An autonomous learner is an active participant in the social processes of learning, but also an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already and uniquely knows. (Trebbi, 1990: 102)

In the following, I will briefly discuss the concept of gamification. The idea of involving students in designing, creating and playing (video) games to initiate foreign language learning is anything but new to educational research. Gamification, however, goes beyond the simple design or use of games. It encourages teachers to use elements of video games to make a task more interesting and, therefore, enhances engagement by using game mechanics (cf. Marczwesky, 2013: 4), thereby facilitating (foreign language) learning. It has also become a successful motivating strategy in the business world in that it can both motivate employees and retain customers (see Fig. 1).

![Gamified Tabasco Nation website](image)

Figure 1: A gamified Tabasco Nation website

The term gamification was coined by Nick Pelling in 2002 and is familiar to most of us from a non-learning context. Gamification, in very simple terms, puts forward the idea of using (video) game design techniques and elements in non-gaming contexts. The idea of designing learning environments and tasks based on game principles was introduced at the end of the 2000s mainly through the work of Paul Gee (2005; 2007).

In the following, I will have a closer look at the idea of gamification in foreign language learning and examine some of the ways in which game mechanics can contribute to the development of learner autonomy, and vice versa. In more general terms, the
idea of the gamification approach is to meet the challenges of the gaming generation. According to Prensky (2008), the current generation of students is different from previous generations of learners in that they process and deal with information differently than the way in which previous generations did. Their ability to decode and interpret visual information as well as develop images, based on their visual spatial skills, is only one characteristic of the digital millennial generation. According to Prensky (2008: 52) one of the main reasons why video games keep players engaged is that the learning principles built into them require players to make use of their 21st century skills in order to complete a game successfully.

![Diagram: Prensky’s learning principles (2008)](image)

Both gamification and learner autonomy, however, have remained elephants in the room in areas such as curriculum design and lesson planning. In the remaining part of this article, I will bring the two diverging conversations together and demonstrate that making use of gamification strategies for task design in order to promote students’ foreign language learning autonomy can be a successful endeavour.
According to McGonial (2011), voluntary participation is one of the core elements of games.\(^1\) Erroneously, and to its detriment, autonomous learning is often “mistakenly thought of as being some sort of ‘laissez faire’” (Littlemore, 2001: 46).

Quite in contrast to this view, the autonomous classroom is a highly organised learning environment (cf. Dam, 1995 for a practical description of the autonomous classroom), in which choices are bounded by strict rules and clear parameters with all learners following a plan jointly developed with the teacher in order to learn within curricular guidelines. As already mentioned, Paul Gee suggests a set of 36 principles that are built into good video games in his book *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*. Drawing on the work by Dam (1995), I will elaborate on some of those principles by explicitly or implicitly referring to learners who take a (pro-)active role in their own learning.

In her 1995 book Dam describes her motivation to implement learner autonomy as follows:

> I was up against the tired-of-school attitude this age group often displays, as well as a general lack of interest in English as a school subject. In order to survive I felt I had to change my usual teacher role. I tried to involve the students – or rather I forced them to be involved – in the decisions concerning, for example, the choice of activities and learning materials. (Dam 1995: 2)

Instead of reacting to stimuli of the teacher, Dam (1995) suggests that learners should be actively involved in their own learning, therein keeping with constructivist tradition. The resemblance with Gee’s “Active, Critical Learning Principle” becomes immediately apparent. He states: “[a]ll aspects of the learning environment (including ways in which the semiotic domain is designed and presented) are setup to encourage active and critical, not passive, learning” (2007: 41).

\(^1\) The three core elements are: rules, goals, and feedback.
Both Dam and Gee assert that *mastery*, to use gaming terminology, “is an important motivator for game players […]” (DeMaria, 2007: 55). While a “Mastery Principle” *eo ipso* is absent in Gee’s work, he explicitly refers to the idea of mastery in both the “Achievement Principle” and the “Ongoing Learning Principle”. According to the “Achievement Principle”, the “distinction between learner and master is vague […]. There are cycles of new learning, automatization, undoing automatization, and new reorganized automatization” (Gee, 2007: 223; see also fig. 3). Furthermore, the “Ongoing Learning Principle” states that for “learners of all levels of skill there are intrinsic rewards from the beginning, customized to each learner’s level, effort, and growing mastery and signaling the learner’s ongoing achievements” (*ibid.*). In her simplified model of developing learner autonomy, Dam emphasises that learners should be actively involved in all decisions concerning their own learning, i.e. planning what to do, carrying out the plans, evaluating the insights gained, and new planning. These decisions are made in a continuous process of negotiating a dialogue between teacher and learners (cf. fig. 3; see also Dam, 2008: 14).

![Figure 3: Developing learner autonomy – a simplified model (Dam 2008: 14)](image)

Dam’s model closely resembles Gee’s “Probing Principle” (2007: 223), which purports that “[l]earning is a cycle of probing the world (doing something), reflecting in and on this action and, on this basis, forming a hypothesis; reprobing the world to test this hypothesis; and then accepting or rethinking the hypothesis”. Both Gee and Dam
suggest a quasi-action research cycle which encourages learners to enter a perpetuating process of action, reflection, and new action.

Choice is an important element of (digital) games as they rely on the gamer to make choices. Dam and Gee stress the importance of giving students the opportunity to make choices, both as a condition *sine qua non* for and as an outcome of autonomous/gamified learning environments. The “Multiple Routes Principle”, just to mention one prominent example, expresses that there are multiple ways to make progress or move ahead (*ibid.*) Especially in today’s diverse, and at the same time, standards-based classrooms, choice is essential to create and maintain engagement in inclusive learning environments. Choice provides learners flexibility in how, what and when they learn as well as how to evaluate their work. Legenhausen and Dam (2013: 120) state that

> “the autonomy classroom and the principles behind autonomous learning are a possible answer to inclusion” and that “the possibilities for choice between a number of equally valuable contributions to the overall learning undertaking of the class have managed to [...] engage the interests and needs of *all* learners by allowing them to make their own choices and thus by letting them bring their own diverse identities [...] (*ibid.*: 128)².

Multi-route learning is difficult to achieve in a traditional, teacher- and textbook centred classroom. Gamified learning environments, which provide learners with the freedom to make their own choices according to their interests and abilities, may enhance students’ positive learning experience.

² Suffice it to say that Dam and Legenhausen emphasise the importance of giving learners the opportunity to express their identities in the autonomy classroom. This is also expressed in Gee’s “Identity Principle”, which states that “[l]earning involves taking on and playing with identities in such a way that the learner has real choices (in developing the virtual identity) and ample opportunity to meditate on the relationship between new identities and old ones. There is a tripartite play of identities as learners relate, and reflect on, their multiple real-world identities, a virtual identity, and a projective identity” (2007: 222). Readers who are interested in the complex interplay of learner autonomy and identity are referred to Benson & Cooker 2013.
On a slightly critical note, it is worth mentioning that the simple incorporation of gamification principles into traditional lesson designs is unlikely to promote learner autonomy. When taken out of the video game context, game mechanics such as reward systems, e.g. play a game or have a few minutes free browsing time off or online, and leaderboards, may even have the opposite effect and prove to be detrimental to students’ motivation and engagement. In order to prevent this from happening, asking students to complete the same tasks with slight changes in the reward system is not enough. Moreover, gamification is only beneficial to classroom and activity design if the relationship between the design and the final goal(s) are understood. Gamified do-as-if activities “whose defining feature is ‘a suspension of disbelief’” (Legenhausen, 2017) will most likely not result in better (long-term) learning as “communicative interactions are authentic if the learners are allowed ‘to speak as themselves’” (ibid.).

We may conclude that technology in any classroom should be more than a piece of hard- or software. Instead, it should enable students to acquire the foreign language in an authentic and collaborative learning environment, in which they set their own learning goals, create their own contents and evaluate their learning outcomes. As far as the development of learner autonomy is concerned, “the idea that technology would single-handedly serve the pursuit of autonomy by providing learners with powerful tools that would enable them to control their own learning without the help of a teacher” (Reinders & Hubbard, 2013: 360; see also for a critical discussion of CALL and learner autonomy) appears to be a Potemkin Village rather than a realistic, desirable idea.

The aim of this article was to offer a very brief but hopefully inspiring and different view on how technology can influence foreign language learning and to show that if
we gamify classroom learning, we simultaneously support our students in developing their foreign language learner autonomy; two elephants which more than just happen to be in the same “enclosure”. Gamification does not mean to encourage students to play video games, but to base classroom design on the core mechanics of video games. This shift demands us to rethink the traditional ways in which we engage our students in our lessons. Gamified (autonomous) learning environments, should not simply engage students, but require students to make meaningful choices which, in return, lead to a meaningful interaction, or as Salen & Zimmerman describe it, “choice and system’s response is one way to characterize the depth and quality of interaction” (2004: 61). I would like to conclude with a quote by DeMaria (2007: 55) on the power of video games, which reminds us of how important a sense of achievement is for all learners and how we as curriculum designers, programme leaders, and teachers can help making this happen by integrating “high tech” in every learning environment, even in those we refer to as “low tech”:

In video games, people play characters who are almost always endowed with the abilities needed to master every challenge. Games are set up so that people can ultimately succeed, although they may occasionally meet challenges that are harder than others. [...] Video games, through their structures of goals and rewards, and their careful control of difficulty, enhance players’ belief that success is possible. [...] For some players, video games provide the most empowering experience in their lives. [...] Ultimately, perhaps, success in something is better than success in nothing.

Acknowledgement

While preparing my presentation, I was increasingly fascinated by the intriguing relationship between learner autonomy and game mechanics. Therefore, I am grateful to the conference organisers who made this discovery possible. Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski was a memorable venue for an unforgettable event. The
event inspired me, and I am sure most of us, to reflect on the potential of technology in our increasingly high-tech world.

**References**


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**Images**: https://pbs.twimg.com/media/BgKbnyGCYAA7bBk.jpg
What Not to Do to Get Students Reading

Mark Bartholomew

Mark Bartholomew has worked in many areas of education from EFL to vocational training, universities to secondary schools, and in just as many locations: Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, to name but a few. At present, he is a consultant to Nisantasi University in Istanbul and working on his free website www.readlistenlearn.net, which aims to promote reading and listening in English among (young) adults.

First and foremost, let’s begin by outlining what extensive reading is NOT.

Many teachers treat reading as a means to teach difficult vocabulary along the lines of “Can you think of synonyms for the word ‘tedium’ in line 37?” or to reinforce an input session on a grammatical structure. Krashen (1987), among many others, however, argues that it is very difficult for teachers to inculcate a joy of reading in their students when their real goal is to highlight proper use of relative clauses from the chosen text. Harmer (2013) discusses research supporting the view that intensive reading, with a view to linguistic analysis, uses a different part of the brain from that which comes into play when people are reading for pleasure. In other words, reading is not just reading: it depends on the purpose behind it. Extensive reading, then, should not be a vehicle for improving students’ grammar or teaching new words.

It is, then, not surprising that Krashen’s well-known formula of $i + 1$ – that teachers need to grasp their students’ level of understanding a foreign language and then ensure that input in lessons is comprehensible to them (1988) is reversed when it
comes to reading. Here, Krashen (2003) argues that $i - 1$ is more appropriate. If students are to enjoy reading, then texts with difficult vocabulary and structures which are for them hard to understand are unlikely to achieve that goal. He, therefore, suggests that students should read below their current level of linguistic competence.

There are many different ways to determine if a book is suitable. One is the five-finger test. A student holds up her hand with all five fingers extended and drops one every time she encounters a word she does not know. If she has not finished the page with at least one finger still standing, then the book is probably too difficult for her to enjoy. Time to move on to another book! Extensive reading does not mean hard labour!

Bamford and Day (1998) along with Krashen (2004) go one step further. They suggest that teachers should not pressure students into reading “approved” texts. Much as it may dismay lovers of good literature – and I am one of them – there is no evidence that the quality of the language read or the message conveyed by the author have a similar impact on the reader’s language acquisition as the sheer volume of what she reads. Put another way, if a learner wants to read graphic novels, full of blood and guts, or a romantic page-turner, where the young princess finds her Prince Charming, this is just as likely to improve their reading skills and overall linguistic development as George Orwell’s 1984. So, we arrive at another maxim about what extensive reading is not: teachers should not dictate what students read but let them choose whatever interests them.

Then, there is the understandable temptation on the teacher’s part to encourage students to read ever more complicated texts, perhaps because for us they are more interesting. But it is also true that I, despite my earlier boast that I am a reader of literature with a big L (McRae, 1994), am more likely to read a detective novel on a
plane than I am to tackle a research paper or a nineteenth century classic with sentences averaging seventy words.

This goes for L2 learners as well (Day et al., 2012). There is a wealth of evidence that students reading books way below their level of linguistic competence do not do so for long: they move on to more complicated works. Perhaps, the lower level texts help to ease them into more demanding ones; maybe they need the confidence that they can understand English books before they feel comfortable with harder language. This gives us yet another guideline as to what extensive reading is not: teachers should not use extensive reading as a goad to more complex texts. Letting students choose applies just as much to language level as it does to content.

Finally, English teachers as lovers of the written word – and, if they are not, then they are in the wrong job – sometimes have a fetish for the printed page. I confess that I too am guilty. Yet, there are students who are put off reading by books themselves – perhaps because of being forced at school to struggle through Shakespeare in the original, understanding only one idea in ten. But does it matter greatly if they prefer to read on a screen? (There is some research that it does, by the way: see Myrberg & Wiberg, 2015, for example, who suggest that learning from a screen is less educative than from the printed page for psychological reasons.) I think, though, we have to go with learner preferences here, whether these are to do with convenience, such as being able to check email simultaneously or carrying around something as light as an ipad or phone rather than a weighty tome, or simply not liking paper. So, a final dictum: extensive reading is not about books but reading through whatever medium.

In my next article, I will write about how we can get students to read in the first place and will look at classroom and whole school activities that may turn students on to reading.
References


It Can Take No Tech to Kill a Mockingbird

_Congratulations to Reneta Stoimenova,_

_the First-prize winner in the 8th round of BETA competition - 2016!

RENETA STOIMENOVA has graduated with an MA from the University of Veliko Turnovo in the parallel study of the English and Bulgarian languages and literatures. She has had a couple of post-graduate studies in EFL teaching methodology in Bulgaria and a number of methodology development trainings in the UK. Reneta is especially interested in literature teaching and ICT in the foreign language classroom. Among her latest interests is teaching with drama, for which she received training at ICP Exeter in the UK and at a puppet workshop in Lille, France. She teaches English as a FL to the students of the Foreign Language School in Targovishte. She is a favorite among her students for being open-minded, innovative and fun, and for organizing various extra-curricular 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: [https://sites.google.com/site/webquestbulgariavsengland/home](https://sites.google.com/site/webquestbulgariavsengland/home), and a theatrical performance in English on a train in Bulgaria: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78RQKcEWQK0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78RQKcEWQK0)

In the wake of the 2016 Plovdiv conference and in tribute to Harper Lee, the news of whose sudden death reached me during the preparation of the teaching activity that follows, I would like to share with all those whose heart is in literature my 1st-prize-winning lesson in the 8th round of BETA competition.
Apart from the tape recorder, the teaching strategy deliberately features no technology at all, as can be seen from the youtube video I have uploaded to show the individual stages (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMle5gcZnxE). As well as a non-tech literature lesson, the activity is also designed as open practice, highlighting group work. What you actually need is a working audio device and that one personal Colin Firth that will make you do the rest 😊.

LESSON PLAN

**Teacher:** RENETA STOIMENOVA  
**Age of students:** 17-year olds  
**Level:** C1  
**Lesson:** American literature: TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

**Teaching aids and materials:**

1. Sources: The National Endowments for the Arts Big Read site at: http://www.neabigread.org/books/mockingbird/
2. To Kill a Mockingbird, Reader’s Guide, The Big Read (available at the American Corner)
3. To Kill a Mockingbird, CD, Audio Guide, The Big Read (available at the American Corner)
4. Billie Holiday’s song “Passion Fruit” in interpretation of Nnenna Freelon (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnbsSuybOU0)
5. Harper Lee’s framed picture (see video)
6. Framed picture of the map of the USA (see video)
7. Colour pencils and paper
8. Cultural realia representing different ethnic/religious practices, in my case it was hats, such as:
   a) a Jewish kippa
b) a Turkish folk cap  
c) modernistic cap sewn from a hand-woven cloth from the Bansko area  
d) a Rastafari hat  

9. Handouts - five groups of reading comprehension questions on the articles about:  
   a) Harper Lee – short bio  
      [Link to the Harper Lee short bio]
   b) Introduction to the book  
      [Link to the Introduction to the book]  
   c) The Great Depression  
      [Link to The Great Depression]  
   d) The Jim Crow South  
      [Link to The Jim Crow South]  
   e) The Civil Rights Movement  
      [Link to The Civil Rights Movement]

10. A set of listening comprehension questions on track #2 from the CD in 3.  

11. Homemade American breakfast biscuits and the respective recipe.  

12. Link to the online eponymous film at: [Link to the Mockingbird film]

For individual preparation of the teacher:

13. USA’s Southern States:  
    [Link to USA’s Southern States]

14. Causes of the Civil War:  
    [Link to Causes of the Civil War]

15. Black Leaders During Reconstruction:  
    [Link to Black Leaders During Reconstruction]
Background of the learners:

Twenty *Mitropolit Andrey* Foreign Language School 12-graders, with intensive study of English as a first foreign language, in their American literature class.

Main aim:

The aim of the lesson is two-fold:

1. To introduce the students to Harper Lee’s modern classic *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the light of the moral of the book viewed from the cultural and historical perspective of 20th-century America.

2. To showcase the basic principle of group work to fellow colleagues teaching English as well as other subjects; the lesson was announced as open to the wider public and to all interested in American culture, as the lesson took place outside of school at the American Corner in Targovishte’s Regional Library.

Besides, the lesson was planned as interdisciplinary for it involved music and drawing in some of the tasks, and for the specific historical and geographical information in the introduction and the comments of the teacher between the tasks.

<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. Introduction to the topic by the teacher in a way provoking interest on the part of the students.</td>
<td>1. Groping about the level of information the students have about either Harper Lee or the book. It instantly became clear that the class had no information whatsoever about either of them. 2. Provision of basic information about the topic and why we should talk about the book.</td>
<td>1. A whole-class activity on the pattern of asking a question / receiving an answer and a short lecture delivered by the teacher.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Division of the class in 5 groups, each with handouts about the topics for</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Working in groups in order to learn to analyze Group-work activity.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
discussion in 9 above plus a respective set of reading comprehension questions; each group should choose a speaker to report on their set of questions for discussion.

2. Extraction of factual knowledge about a topic acting as a building brick in the general construction of the idea about 20th-century America and the place of Harper Lee in it. As it appeared that the students had no preliminary cultural knowledge about the topics of discussion, they had to create the overall picture by gradually putting together the information derived from each reporter.

3. In keeping with the spirit of universal humanity of the book, the teacher exhibits a set of different ethno hats and explains that each group reporter should choose a hat, put it on his/her head and thus speak about the findings of the group.

4. Reporting of the findings of the 5 groups by individual reporters chosen by the group; short clarifying comments by the teacher at the end of each report.

5. In relation to the last 2 topics of discussion and especially in regard with the segregation law of the South, the teacher writes 3 key words on the board (fruit, hanging, tree) and tells the students that they should draw their group picture using the images and summarize the key points of information in a given text by agreeing on the final product of discussion.

2. Adding a livelier accent to the course of the lesson.

Learning about the main topics of discussion:
- Harper Lee as an author
- The plot of the book
- The Great Depression
- The Jim Crow South
- The Civil Rights Movement

1. Exercise of the ability to comprehend listening material and express it in a certain non-verbal form.
2. Adding a creative and more personal perspective

Slow jazz (Nnenna Freelons’ Blueprint of a Lady) as a background.

Teacher asks questions about the type of hats and explains what they are. Also, he/she may explain why it is desirable to deliver the findings of the group with a hat on.

Individual oral reports by students.

Groupwork listening and drawing activity.

B E T A E-N e w s l e t t e r I s s u e 2 7
26 | P a g e
created by the given words while listening to Billie Holiday’s song “Strange Fruit”. The prop words are part of the lyrics of the song.

6. Explaining the general picture derived from the song. Setting the homework assignment: Guess how close you have been to the book by watching the film at: http://www.moviesub.net/watch/to-kill-a-mockingbird-1962/3962.html

The lesson ends with a treat to homemade American breakfast biscuits, so typical of the 30s in which the novel is set, and a recipe about how to cook them.

The film starring Gregory Porter will conclusively shape the rough notion about the book formed by the students during the lesson and can serve as a starting point for a follow-up discussion on the Listening Comprehension task attached to this lesson plan.

The biscuits give additional cultural flavor to the atmosphere of the event.

The key stages can be viewed on the Youtube video of the lesson: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMle5gcZnxE

Media coverage:
ДА УБИЕШ ПРИСМЕХУЛНИК И В ТЪРГОВИЩЕ:
http://www.flsma.info/

APPENDIX

Reading Comprehension Questions (5 groups):

1. Full name and date and place of birth
2. Details about father
3. The author’s personality as a child
4. The author’s favorite subject at school and whom she wanted to look like
5. University studies and activities at the University of Alabama
6. Her life in New York
7. The title and the publication date of her book
1. What is the Great Depression?
2. Time of occurrence
3. Causes of the Great Depression
4. When did Harper Lee experience the Great Depression?

1. Name of the book and author
2. Main characters you can deduce from the text
3. The 2 plot lines of the book
4. Themes discussed in the book

1. What is the law of Jim Crow?
2. Which particular states did it appear in?
3. Why was it called “Jim Crow”?
4. Which famous group of organized mob violence does the article mention?
5. Describe briefly the case of racial injustice that has a close relation to the plot of Harper Lee’s “To Kill a Mockingbird”?

1. What is the Civil Rights Movement?
2. What are the fundamental democratic rights?
3. When and how did the Civil Rights Movement in America begin?
4. What measures did the Southern states take to prevent the black population from voting?
5. How were blacks segregated (separated from the white population)?
6. Who is the leader of the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s?
7. When and how were the civil rights of all Americans established?
Introducing a Classic Lesson Plan for Two Texts on Discrimination

Bill Templer

This article presents a brief, incisive teaching unit on discrimination from the Global Issues SIG Newsletter by the late Israeli EFL educator Esther Lucas, who saw “teaching as a political act” (Ridder, 2012), focusing on a famous short poem by the African-American poet Countee Cullen (1903-1946) and a brief story by a young ethnic minority woman Vesna, aged 18.

Exploring the topic of bias and discrimination is integral to bringing “creative, critical and compassionate thinking into ELT” (Pohl & Szesztay, 2015), a guiding aim inside the Global Issues SIG (GISIG) in IATEFL—where all are committed to including (whenever possible) current critical issues into EFL classrooms, under the motto CARE GLOBAL TEACH LOCAL! and ENGLISH FOR CHANGE. The GISIG Pre-Conference Event at the IATEFL conference in Glasgow 3 April 2017 centers on English in an unstable world, exploring aspects of “English for peace,” “global citizenship education,” teaching social empathy through films, new approaches to intercultural education, enabling EFL access for refugees, the Hands Up Project in Gaza, HeartELT, the NO Project.

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Promoting attitudes of tolerance toward the “Other” and consciousness about what is “discrimination,” prejudice and social exclusion, “marginalization” in any society is a central concern which the present brief lesson plan by Esther Lucas addresses. 

Margit Szesztay (Vice-President of IATEFL) has noted: “my main aim as an educator is to encourage a critical, non-conformist stance in my students. Encourage them to shake off social conditioning, see the world around them with fresh eyes, question taken-for-granted assumptions.” We can all agree: where we can achieve that aim is important inside TEFL. It is all about expanding our moral universe and that of our students, through “cognitive empathy” (Krznaric, 2012). You do not have to be a member of IATEFL or GISIG to follow and learn from GISIG’s work. This brief 2015 video interview with Margit Szesztay is a very thoughtful overview of GISIG’s concerns. You can teach Esther’s Lesson Plan and supplement it by ideas and links I have added below. Sampredo (2006) offers ideas for making global issues more local, “glocal” and relevant. Sampredo & Hillyard (2004) is an excellent textbook with 45 activity units. FILM ENGLISH is also great.

Esther’s Lesson Plan on Discrimination

The following two exercises are samples from the teaching work of Dr. Esther Lucas (1918-2011), one of the founding members of IATEFL GISIG. Esther was also a member of the Global Issues SIG Committee and Newsletter Editor for the Newsletters No. 14–19. The exercise comes from issue No. 16, October 2004. It is a prime example of her teaching style and on the ways she always employed open-ended methods to make things adaptable for all levels and for nearly all audiences. Esther was a lifelong member of UNICEF, whose educational aspects she furthered all her life. In 2009 she was awarded the special lifelong achievement award of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network
(ASPnet), given in recognition of Esther’s contribution to the promotion of education, in favour of a “culture of peace, non-violence and international understanding”. It was a pleasure and a great privilege to have been able to work with her as a colleague and to promote GISIG’s aims in the teaching world.

--Wolfgang Ridder, Global Issues SIG Committee member, IATEFL

LESSON PLAN FOR TWO TEXTS ON DISCRIMINATION

(ESTHER LUCAS)

Questions for discussion before reading the first text:

• You are going to read a short poem about discrimination. Do you know what discrimination means? Give an example.

• What effect does discrimination have on the person discriminated against?

• In the past, black people were officially discriminated against in America and in South Africa. What do you know about those periods?

• Is there discrimination in your country? Explain.

• Suggest ways of getting rid of discrimination.

• INCIDENT

(Countee Cullen, 1903–1946)

Once riding in old Baltimore,
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee;
I saw a Baltimorian
Keep looking straight at me.
Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me "Nigger".
I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That’s all that I remember.

Questions after reading the poem:

- How soon after the incident, do you think, the poem was written? Is the writer a boy or girl or man or woman. Why do you think so?

- A Baltimorian is a native of the city of Baltimore. Where is this city? What was the writer probably riding in? What makes you think so?

- How did the writer feel about visiting Baltimore?

- How did you feel when you finished reading the poem?

- Why is the poem called “Incident”? How is it connected with discrimination?

Vocabulary:
Find a word or phrase in the poem similar in meaning to the following words:

a) happiness  b) directly  c) not at all  d) stuck out  e) all  f) till

Writing:
Imagine you are the black boy’s father or mother. Write a letter to a friend explaining what you said to your son when he told you about the incident.

OR
Write a dialogue between the father or mother and their son after the incident.

VESNA’S STORY

Vesna is a Roma (Gypsy) girl. This is her story:

“I saw a job for a sales assistant advertised in the window of a clothes shop. They wanted someone between 17 and 20. I’m 18, so I went in and asked about the job,
but was told by the manageress to come back in two days because not enough people had applied.

I returned twice, and was always told the same thing. Nearly a week later I went back to the shop. The job advertisement was still in the window. The manageress was too busy to see me, but I was told that the vacancy had been filled. After I left the shop I was so upset that I asked a non-Roma friend if she would go in and ask about the job. When she came out she said that she had been asked to come for an interview on Monday.”

**After investigation, this was the manageress’s response:**

“I felt that Vesna would find it difficult to work here, because of the distance she would have to travel to work each day. It would be an eight-mile journey on two buses; it makes it very difficult to run the shop if staff are always late. I’d much prefer to appoint someone from this area. The person to whom I offered the job seemed just right.”

**Points for discussion:**

- Do you think Vesna was right in turning to her non-Roma friend? Why?
- What do you think about the manageress’s response?
- What do you think happened in the end?

**This is what happened:**

Many countries have laws against unfair discrimination. Vesna took her case to a special European court that enforces the law about discrimination. The court agreed that she had been discriminated against. Several other people who lived far away from the shop had been interviewed. The girl who got the job was only 16, white, and lived the same distance from the shop as Vesna. The shop had to give some money to Vesna for the injury to her feelings.
Further discussion:

- Was Vesna unfairly discriminated against because she was a woman or because of her ethnicity, or both? Explain.
- Could this kind of discrimination happen in your country? What groups of people might be discriminated against?
- How do you feel about this kind of discrimination?
- “Ignorance encourages prejudice and makes discrimination possible”. Do you agree with this statement?

(Adapted from: First Steps, Amnesty International 1997)

Lesson Plan: [http://goo.gl/fwg4dr](http://goo.gl/fwg4dr)

More on Racism, Discrimination, Diversity

For starters, show and discuss 3 short videos about racism. This is a video on “How do you spell discrimination?”, and this is another one on diversity. How do students in your school view others from an ethnic or religious minority, like Vesna? What country was Vesna probably in? On discrimination of Roma in Europe, students at CEFR B1/B2 can read this. Teachers might explore a more comprehensive report: Segregation of Roma Children in Education from the European Commission (2007). There are many videos about the problems poor Roma children face across Europe; see also Templer (2012, pp. 39-40). Teachers can browse and choose something to discuss. Thousands of poor, vulnerable Roma were made “homeless” in France in 2016, why? What do students think? On racism in Baltimore schools, there is a video report on an incident in 2016 from a Baltimore school. What is the “n-word” foregrounded here? What is “hate speech”? Countee Cullen’s poem is narrative about his own memory of the “n-word” as a small boy, aged 8, an experience in his own life in 1911. Baltimore in 1911 was a very racist, segregated city, but many
problems still exist there. The Aljazeera report on “Educating Black Boys” in Baltimore today is very insightful, and it is worth watching for teachers and B2 students. An article on the neglect of schools in Philadelphia and a project students developed in response amplify student voices and their “stories” through art on the walls. There is also an article from Fox News about “racist graffiti” and “hate crimes” in the United States today that is worth discussing. Some think President Donald Trump is making tolerance toward various ethnic and religious groups more difficult, others clearly support him. The US is very divided today. Ever more Americans are now joining various socialist groups and political parties in the US. People from all walks of life have been protesting across the country. And women have also been speaking out specifically, including school girls and college students. Students could watch and discuss this video. What are they protesting against? One of the extraordinary success stories of a Black woman entrepreneur in the US is that of Madam C. J. Walker (1867-1919): ask students to read this article in simpler VOA English and watch the brief video about the business of hair products for African-American women she built across the US, becoming a millionaire. February is Black History Month, which is a focus in US schools (see a multitude of resources). American teachers and students, BlackLivesMatter and other groups are protesting against the newly appointed Education Secretary Betsy DeVos. Ask students to read an article, watch this informative TYT video. Why is Betsy DeVos so controversial?

Poet Countee Cullen

Countee Cullen (1903-1946) is an African-American poet, worth exploring further in intermediate classes. Teachers/students can find 28 poems by him here, also recited. Students can choose which 2 or 3 poems they like best, and why. They could do a recitation of a poem in a group of three, lines divided among the students. So, a class could present several Cullen poems, each recited by a small group of students. There are more poems by Countee Cullen. What are his themes?
Honing Social Empathy

Introduce social empathy to students watching and discussing this superb video from MindShift. In energizing social empathy and empathic insight, a broader core social-empathic pedagogical technique is “interior monologuing,” as developed especially by Linda Christensen (2000; 2009) at Rethinking Schools in the states. The “interior monologue” is a powerful tool for sharpening students’ social imagination, as they attempt in imagination to enter the minds and hearts of others, either from fiction or reality, and to deepen their sense of empathy with those imagined individuals in their situation, such as people suffering discrimination like the narrator in “Incident” and the teenager Vesna, or refugee children and youths fleeing from war or a disabled Israeli Arab Bedouin woman, Ghaytha, aged 100, rendered homeless by Israeli bulldozers and police. Students can imagine getting into the mind of another—from fiction, the news, real life, or the point of view of an animal or even the imagined mind of a material object—and writing a short monologue or dialogue poem, a letter, a diary entry or a spoken poem or reflection. Roman Krznaric (2013, min. 0:50-1:05) defines empathy as “the art of stepping into the shoes of another person and looking at the world from their perspective ... It’s about understanding where another person is really coming from.” He dubs this ability “outrospection,” and talks about the “global empathy deficit” and the need for an empathic “revolution in human relationships” (min. 1:50), stressing that “our brains are wired for empathy. We are Homo Empathicus” (min. 2:55). Krznaric (2012) also focuses on social empathy, and the key dimension of “cognitive empathy,” (see his blog). He also looks forward to “moments of mass empathic flowering” that can transform our very moral economy (Krznaric, 2012: min. 5:46). Compare Rifkin (2010) with Krznaric (2012; 2013). How do their theories of empathy relate to xenophobia, discrimination, war? What is “collective empathy” (Krznaric, 2012, min. 5:30)? On interior monologuing, see also Templer & Tonawanik (2011), including many examples, such as a monologue about war, and another: “children as labourers.”
An excellent further exercise attuned to getting students to see each other as persons and gain a real voice is Linda Christensen’s “Where I’m From: Inviting Students’ Lives into the Classroom,” where learners are encouraged to write a short poem about their lives, about the worlds from which they come, local or distant. Cullen’s poem “Incident” is a bit like that. Her relevant chapter from Christensen & Watson (2015) is downloadable here. To finish, you might show and discuss “Teens talk about diversity.” Do we want more diversity? Why?

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The late Dr. Esther Lucas long campaigned for tolerance toward one & all in Israel, “international understanding,” and against all forms of discrimination anywhere—“empathic bonding” between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs. Some Israeli political geographers, like Prof. Oren Yiftachel (2006) at Ben-Gurion University in Beersheva, believe new alternatives are crucial. His vision is of a “gradual binationalism”: Israelis and Palestinians building together a mutually tolerant future in Israel/Palestine, grounded on social justice and equity, two states merging through a chemistry of reconciliation step-wise into one. Education for binational togetherness would be central in that project. Krznaric (2012, min. 4:30-5:27) talks about a group of Jewish Israelis and Arab Palestinians, “The Parents Circle,” a grassroots, peace-building network dedicated to energizing empathic solidarity, tolerance, reconciliation, genuine deep bonding.

In conclusion, as Sampedro (2006) reminds us: “in essence, Global Issues in the ELT classroom is about opportunities, wide avenues and personal choices—opportunities to promote awareness, interest and engagement in a number of ways; and the choice to be part of a world teaching community where money and profit do not take precedence over real education, social justice and life itself.” EFL education hands-on—aimed, while teaching and learning a language—also toward transforming the moral universe of both teacher and learner. One key focus for all learner ages is
modern-day slavery and “the dark ingredient in your chocolate,” child labor in hazardous conditions on cocoa farms (show students this video). Regarding the “glocal” here and now, see also “Rethinking GI in Central and Eastern Europe” (Templer, 2012, p. 43) and the A-1 video in “Getting Started Online” (ibid., p. 38).

References


World Languages and Religions: A Bilingual Lesson in Bulgarian and English

Milena Cherneva

On 8th December 2016, we, a teacher of English (Milena Cherneva) and a teacher of Geography (Vasil Ranov), conducted an open bilingual lesson in English and Geography with 10th-grade students (age 15-16, CEFR B2 + in English) at Geo Milev English Language School, Ruse. The lesson was taught in Bulgarian and English. Teachers of English, religion, geography and economics from the Ruse region attended the event.

As creative professionals, we are always open to new teaching ideas, to sharing our experience with colleagues and learning from their feedback. Therefore, we decided to design this interdisciplinary lesson by integrating teaching methods and analytical frameworks from more than one discipline – language teaching, geography, religious studies, etc. The main aim that guided our methodological decisions was to increase students’ awareness of the idea of multiculturalism and their ability to understand and respond to the challenges associated with cultural and religious diversity. There were two specific objectives that we hoped to achieve: to discuss the idea of language and religion as defining one’s cultural identity; and, to familiarize students with the Indo-European Language Family and five major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity,

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Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam). The main tools for achieving the planned aims and objectives were: project-based tasks, giving the students a sense of achievement; visually appealing teaching techniques and materials; introducing new vocabulary in context. The teaching aids and materials can be summarized as follows: a PowerPoint presentation; handouts: maps of Europe; posters and costumes, produced by the students.

Two weeks before the lesson, students were given the task to conduct research on the topic of the lesson, as well as to prepare posters, presentations and costumes, illustrating the five major world religions and providing information about the world languages.

The lesson was divided into two parts: Part I. World Languages and Part II. World Religions.

The warm-up activity in the first part was a discussion in Bulgarian and English, through which the teachers elicited answers to the question: What European languages are widely spoken all over the world? The activity aroused interest in the topic and focused students’ attention on the main aim of the lesson.

To provide further background to the topic, the teachers presented the Indo-European Language family and the three main language groups in Europe (the Slavic, the Germanic, the Romance languages). A PowerPoint presentation was used, as well as posters, representing the Indo-European Language Family, that had been previously prepared by students in the process of their own research.
To facilitate students’ deep understanding of the topic, at the next stage of the lesson, the teachers set a **pair-work task**: with the help of some Geography textbooks and maps students had to identify which languages belonged to each group.

After that, other language groups were mentioned and **the link between language and religion** was introduced.

**The second part** of the lesson provided space for students’ understanding of the five major world religions, mentioned above, through **self-prepared presentations**. The students spoke about each religion as they illustrated its traditions, using their own **visual materials** and **costumes**. This stage of the lesson was very exciting not only for the students but also for their teachers and observers. What is more, the learners who had prepared the presentations seemed to have been inspired to demonstrate the need for tolerance of different religions and cultures. Besides, completing the project-based tasks gave the students a sense of achievement and motivation.

**Teaching new vocabulary (geographic terms)** was incorporated into the two stages of the lesson without putting special emphasis on it.

At the end of the lesson the students were involved in **a class discussion** about the importance of studying a foreign language and how this helps us to be more successful in communication with representatives of different cultures. The activity stimulated additional consideration of the topic and lead to the conclusion that people have different religions and speak different languages but they should not let this divide them and that we all should be: **United in diversity!**
Exploiting Life-like or Real-life Situations to Enhance Business English Learning

Helena Jošt

Abstract

The article presents an overview of various methods of teaching business English that try, to the greatest possible extent, to realize the necessity of simulating real life and/or of creating (something for) life itself. This increases the efficiency of the acquisition of important foreign language communication competencies that facilitate students’ entry into the international trade business processes.

Keywords: Business English, illusion of real life, real life

Introduction

The basic guidance of my teaching is summarized by the words: “Life is interesting and intriguing, but whenever it enters a course book or any other teaching material,
it inevitably becomes dull and unappealing. The biggest challenge to a conscious teacher, therefore, is to create as many times as possible the illusion of life-like situations if not entirely real life itself”.

This attitude to teaching is based on nearly two decades of my active participation in international business and my involvement in various forms and stages of business operations, many of them very complex. Experiences, acquired through this, did not contribute only to the widening and consolidation of English business vocabulary, but also to an overall understanding of business processes and concepts. This is particularly useful due to the fact that in the case of vocational college students it is not a matter of business-experienced students (job-experienced language learners), but in the majority of cases of students with little or practically no job experience (pre-experienced / low-experienced learners) (Mark Ellis, 2000), who “gain their knowledge of business largely from books; as a result, their knowledge is incomplete and theoretical rather than practical” (Sampath & Zalipour, 2007:1). In this particular case, therefore, one more reason to take into consideration the fact that the most efficient approach in a classroom is to use techniques and strategies that can, to the greatest possible extent, help elicit authentic business situations in which students succeed to understand business concepts and practice communication skills.

Sampath and Zalipor further on rightly state that “learning business English is much more than learning business processes, or language; it is learning communication skills within authentic business contexts” and that “creating real-life situations is a great way to prepare our students for the business world” (Sampath & Zalipour, 2007:13). We cannot but agree also with Zhang (Zhang 2007: 399), who goes even further on with this, by stating that teaching Business English today is more about cultivating “business expertise rather than just teaching language skills”.

The most valuable source material for teachers in this task is the Internet. The virtually unlimited influx of authentic and constantly updated material can always, to
a very great extent, enrich the lessons and raise students’ motivation. It is either possible to download it or use it exactly as found on the web (authentic), or, if a situation so requires, it can be appropriately modified for specific learning needs (tailor-made material) (Sampath & Zalipour, 2007: 1).

The room for putting this concept into practice can be found in the second year of the study at our college, when students majoring in economics, are offered, as a substitute for the oral part of the examination, various non-conventional forms of the fulfilment of their study obligations, each of them exercising, to the greatest possible extent, the creation of the above-mentioned illusion of real life or the creation of (something for) life itself.

**Creating the illusion of real life**

The illusion of real life is, for example, being created with group role-play forms of language work like:

- **Simulation of a business meeting**

  The communication form itself requires collaborative work of several students together: in the preparatory, implementation and follow-up phase. So, for example, the student appointed a chair of the meeting has to first carry out certain pre-meeting activities (e-mailing to all participants invitations with a detailed agenda, the venue, the time, the minutes-taker, etc.). Furthermore, for an effective joint preparation of the meeting text, students benefit from the option of the mutual creation of the documents in the so-called “shared” use (e.g. via Google drive word-docs processor), which enables a simultaneous, direct “on-line” entry, and a view of the common emerging text by all participants on the task (and the lecturer). At the same time, this enables students’ direct access to useful English phrases for running a business meeting stored there. After the conclusion of the meeting, students have to prepare
and distribute the so-called “action minutes”, reflecting the outcome of the meeting and the due dates and the attendees in charge for the realisation of the actions to be taken.

- **Simulation of contractual negotiations**

The preparation for the implementation of this method of work takes place over the two years of study. In the first year of study, students become familiar with the basic terms and concepts of business doing (from enquiry, quotation, order, order acknowledgement, delivery, invoicing, payment, etc.). In the second year, the subject is deepened by learning some of the most important business doing elements (e.g. Incoterms, methods of payment in international trade, claims) in order to prepare them for the most demanding part, the work with a contractual text. Different stages of language work with texts (“skimming” or “reading for gist”, “scanning for specific information”, matching, detailed reading) are stepped up to the role play – the simulation of contract dealing, the most creative part of the engagement of students. First of all, each student, in accordance with some of the lecturer’s constraints, supplements the contractual clauses with the missing data (e.g., company name, the scope of delivery, the contract price per unit, total price, delivery, acceptance, the time and manner of payment, and other terms). Then, students in two groups of which one group representing the buyer of goods and/or services (Purchaser /Client), the other the seller of the goods/services (Seller /Service Provider), simulate negotiations for reaching an agreement on the contract terms, which will lead to a successful “conclusion” of the deal. The “negotiations”, of course, do not by far happen in flawless English but are dynamic and interesting. Students are apparently enjoying to match the “opposite party” with arbitrary numbers and data; so, this brings in a lot of positive work energy, vividness, and spontaneity, and makes language difficulties less disturbing and noticeable. Negotiating “heat” reaches a climax after the final coordination and/or administration of the contract articles,
followed first by “the initialling” then by the “signature” of the contract by the “authorised” representatives of either party.

**Creation of (something for) life itself**

Some other forms of work, on the other hand, are actually life itself (or should I rather call it for life?). Namely, they can have a direct effect on students’ real life, as students conceive and develop something that is or will be, later on, directly used in their job or professional career. Among these, the following could be mentioned:

- **Creation of a profile on one of the business and employment-oriented social networks**

  Students most often choose to use Linked-In to create their profile on which they list their educational achievements and working experiences. The network helps create and grow a circle of one’s own professional and business connections, through which you can get the opportunity to new connections and thus also to ever new business and career opportunities. In addition, you can directly seek opportunities, as companies, among many other things, notify business offers and job recruiters post job vacancies.

- **Preparation of a CV**

  Actually, it involves the on-line creation of a complete set of employment documents linked to the EU CV (for example, EU Skills Passport, Language Passport, European Mobility, Diploma & Certificate supplement) to be used for students' attempts to find themselves an appropriate employer /study opportunity.

  It is also important to note that the forms of students’ work in English as described above are interoperable and interchangeable, which in practical terms means that with a simple method of importing/exporting, it is possible to upload the prepared
texts, and/or whole files on either of the two portals, depending on the actual current need.

- **Participation in free on-line courses**
  Students can decide to attend one of the numerous courses in English language offered by reputable world universities (MOOCs - Massive Open On-line Courses) with a chosen provider (e.g. Coursera). There they can choose from a variety of sciences, topics, dates of participation, duration of the course and so on, depending on their own preferences and language skills, and more importantly on their career ambitions. As a proof of their participation, they present to the lecturer and fellow students a brief summary of the acquired content.

  It is particularly important that a student can make reference to the information on the completion of a course in the ready-to-use social networks profile or incorporate it into the prepared CV.

- **Mixed forms of work**
  As a form of work that features the characteristics of both, a simulation of real life and a creation for life itself, is the preparation and presentation of a business idea or plan by an “entrepreneur” (one student) in front of a “wealthy investor” (a group of students from the same study group) with the purpose of obtaining a certain financial amount for the implementation of their business project (the so-called “pitch”).

  Under the supervision of the lecturer, a student has to prepare a presentation text of a business idea, which must contain certain standard data, such as the name of the entrepreneur and the company, description of an idea/ product/ service to be marketed; target consumers (e.g., type of person and age range), so far taken marketing research and actions, investment value, profitability assessment. The “beauty” of these presentations is that not so rarely they involve a student’s actual business idea or plan (for example, the marketing of an imported premium Swiss chocolate line; a real estate business on the Mediterranean coast; ski and
snowboarding wax and waxing kits); that is why, in this respect, the described method of class work, as mentioned beforehand, belongs to real life itself. On the other hand, the money involved in the “pitch”, of course, is just imaginary, so the learning situation is, in this respect, just a matter of a real-life simulation only.

Then, the students, one representing the entrepreneur and the others (usually a small group of three members at the most) representing the investor, simulate reaching an agreement on the conditions and the value of an equity stake from the part of the “investor”. The basic vocabulary for this interaction is, as with the above-mentioned simulation of contract negotiations, drawn from the previously acquired vocabulary from the chapter Meetings and Negotiations and brings about a lot of students’ commitment and, consequently, a lot of improvisation and, to a great extent, relaxed, uninhibited communication in English language.

Advantageous effects and concluding remarks

The positive effects (not all of them appearing with all of the above-mentioned items) of the described teaching methods are, undoubtedly, multiple and heterogeneous. I will limit myself to mention just the most notable ones.

From the linguistic point of view, it enables: more authentic exercising of the acquired knowledge; direct communication with real users; practising of “live”, on-line language; widening of knowledge of newly emerging structures and vocabulary; actual inclusion of all students, even of usually not very active ones; overcoming of language problems, especially with not so skilled students; natural, uninhibited use of language; much greater (intrinsic) motivation for work.

From the business and career point of view, it enables the preparation of texts intended for personalized business and career presentation and promotion; allows
tracking of job and business opportunities and offers; allows understanding of business processes and concepts; encourages business imagination and entrepreneurial mindset.

The work is undeniably demanding, constantly changing, but it also brings a great deal of intriguing and stimulating challenge and satisfaction to the lecturer; therefore, it will certainly be continued and enriched with even more innovative ideas.

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https://www.academia.edu/2322216/Practical_approaches_to_the_teaching_of_business_English
Tanya Bikova conducted a short interview with Elka Todeva, a plenary speaker at the forthcoming 1st FIPLV East European Region Congress and 26th BETA Bulgaria Conference, Varna, 22nd-25th June 2017.

Elka Todeva is a language educator and teacher trainer with a doctorate in Applied Linguistics. Her courses encourage teachers to become public intellectuals who initiate or participate in discussions around language planning, language and power, multilingualism, and the role of English in the era of globalization.

Tanya:
Elka, thank you for agreeing to this interview. How do you feel as a linguist, a speaker of English, and a speaker of several other languages in a multicultural country like the USA?
Elka Todeva:

My thanks go to you for doing this interview, Tanya. It is exciting to be engaged in a conversation with colleagues from one’s home country, where I started my professional career following my calling. As I wrote in one of the chapters of a book my colleague from the Basque Country, Jasone Cenoz, and I put together called *The Multiple Realities of Multilingualism: Personal Narratives and Researchers’ Perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2009:

All my life I have loved watching multilinguals in action. I have seen many, minors and venerables, in collars blue and white. In a more detached way, the linguist in me has always been intrigued by polyglots like Cardinal Giuseppe Mezzofanti, the Oxford English Dictionary editor James Murray, writer Anthony Burgess, and the enigmatic hyperpolyglots, Uku Masing and Ziad Fazah, with their alleged mastery of more than 60 languages.

Having moved to a country with an incredible richness of languages, yet amazingly monolingual ideologically, I am thrilled when, in the streets of New York, I hear English drowned in a sea of other languages. In this linguistic mecca, and in other places within earshot of people engaged in multiple language conversations, I eavesdrop shamelessly. Hearing fluid code-switching fills me with awe, a touch of *envie noble*, and curiosity about how the speaker got there.

This is the reason why Jasone and I decided to invite 12 multilinguals from around the world to share their stories and see to what extent their experiences confirmed or disconfirmed what the research on language acquisition and learning had been telling us. These days, translanguaging and hybrid, fluid identities are widely embraced by young people, which raises interesting questions for all of us in the language teaching profession: what norms are we operating under and what targets are we shooting at? Do we encourage language accommodation on the part of both the native and the non-native speakers of the language or are we still taking a prescriptivist stance, putting certain varieties of the language in a privileged position and thus maintaining detrimental hierarchical structures and types of attitudes that stand in the way of egalitarian and inclusive relationships?
Tanya:
You obviously love traveling, having taught and supervised in different countries on 5 continents, collecting coins and banknotes, as you shared during your keynote in India and more recently in Uruguay. How have these experiences influenced and enriched you as a person and could you share some interesting stories connected with culture shock or misunderstanding due to cultural differences?

Elka Todeva:
Yes, I do consider myself blessed to have had the opportunity to work with colleagues and students from many countries around the world and experience the beauty and richness of various cultures, always leaving enriched and with a heightened awareness that we all see the world in our own unique way through the lens of our cultures and languages and through the filter of our life circumstances and particular academic socialization. Because of this, I am an advocate of linguistic diversity, as important for our survival as biodiversity. I teach a course called Politics of English: TESOL problematized where, among many other things, we explore the dangers of making English the exclusive language of science and education. Many have written and offered substantial evidence that limiting most publications to English not only marginalizes some voices, but more importantly still, it deprives us of interesting angles of looking at things, which, as poignantly argued by David Graddol and David Crystal among others, long term will be a veritable intellectual disaster.

You mentioned my interest in coins from around the world. I need to clarify for our readers that we are talking about a predominantly virtual, not a real collection. When doing workshops in various countries, I often ask people to tell me about their various banknotes and coins, asking them about the symbols shown on the coins, the scripts used, the political figures depicted, etc. As the real knowers in this conversation, people gladly share where their coins are minted and what they are made of; they
offer information on how the things shown on the coins are chosen and whether some editions have already been discontinued. In this way, I engage them in a process my colleague Diane Larsen-Freeman called grammaring, i.e. engaging students in a genuine exchange where one naturally witnesses an input flooding of a particular grammatical structure in a typical context, in this particular case input flooding of the passive voice. For a detailed description of grammaring as an approach to teaching and learning a language see Todeva (2016).

You also asked me to share any instances of culture bumps during my travels. These invariably occur, some funny, others more serious. One that I love in particular as a linguist and as a cross-cultural human being is from my Japanese period. I joined a Kyudo (Japanese archery) Club while I worked and lived in Japan in the 1990s. One day, I had to miss my appointment with my instructor and I asked two of my Japanese colleagues to help me write an I-am-sorry-for-skipping-class note. What to me seemed a pretty simple request, turned out to be a rather complicated task. The problem was that as far as teaching hierarchy was concerned, I was superior to my instructor as I was a full professor while she was “just an assistant”. As far as kyudo was concerned, however, I was the rookie and she was my sempai (senior), which made it very difficult for my colleagues to choose the appropriate honorific markers. I love this example as to me it beautifully reflects the intricate nexus between language and culture. The lack of hedging in the speech of Bulgarians speaking English, which rubs Americans the wrong way, and the abundant use of softeners by Americans, which causes the rest of the world to perceive them as fence sitters, middle of the roaders and even wishy-washy, is another area that we need to raise awareness around if we want to avoid unnecessary frictions and unhelpful stereotyping.
Tanya:

In several of your publications you refer to the book Complex Systems and Applied Linguistics by Diane Larsen-Freeman and Lynne Cameron. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. What other books would you recommend or what other writers do you admire most?

Elka Todeva:

For you, as you say in your 2015 TEC keynote in Hyderabad, India, professional development is primarily about breaking one’s own rules through constant experimentation, innovation, thinking and tinkering. How does your belief apply to your own thinking and practice? Also, what are your professional plans for the future?

Elka Todeva:
I do love tinkering and what the Japanese call kaizen (continuous incremental improvement). It was in fact Alan Turing who said, “Thinking and tinkering – this is an adventure of the highest order”. I always play with both new formats and new concepts and approaches to teaching. I just finished an online course called Language Analysis for Lesson Planning /LALP/. Even though I had taught this subject matter for over 20 years, I designed my low residency LALP almost from scratch, trying to take full advantage of some of the new media at our disposal these days like vocaroo, PowerPoint with voiceover, Prezi and youtube postings. Sometimes just reversing the order of our explorations makes a huge difference. As the great Indian educator Prabhu wrote quite a few years ago, through small changes in the classroom and through thoughtful and active experimentation, we develop a feel for the phenomenon of learning and an ability to judge what is best for our students (Prabhu 1990).

Plans for the future – continue doing what I am doing, reaching out to as many colleagues as possible and giving all I have to offer in the quest for faster, easier, more meaningful and joyful learning.

Tanya:
What is your opinion on the role of new technologies in ELT?
Elka Todeva:

I believe technology offers infinite possibilities for the type of meaningful, joyful, creative, socially embedded language explorations I just mentioned. It is a true gift for both teachers and students. It makes visual support and multimodal input readily available as long as one has access to the Internet in the classroom. A number of studies have indicated that multimodal input drastically increases recall and retention. Instead of assigning unexciting do-the-exercises-on-page-twenty-one type of homework, we can engage students in languaging that they enjoy doing anyway like Facebook postings and exchanges with their peers, blogging or taking pictures on their cell phones to share with peers, finding, for instance, examples of a particular grammar item, e.g. taking pictures of modal verbs they see in signs, on T-shirts or bumper stickers like “all visitors must sign in here”, “all pets must be on a leash”, “employees must wash hands before leaving restroom”, “you should see me in HD”, “if you think I am cute, you should see my girlfriend” (these are all examples some students of mine brought to class when we worked on modality in English). The students went wild with this assignment, bringing many pictures to share, which not only helped with the exploration of modality but also resulted in a very rich and varied vocabulary building. Of course, ultimately it is human agency that counts the most. I can refer the readers to a wonderful site created and maintained by Jim Scrivener and Adrian Underhill, where they make the case for Demand High Teaching, which goes beyond flashy technology https://demandhighelt.wordpress.com/what-is-demand-high/

Tanya:

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

Yes, I do and all of them have enriched both my views and practice as a language educator. I love the fine arts and interior design. I embrace the concept of gasamtkunstwerk, initially associated with the writings of Richard Wagner but brought to education by Vygotsky and his circle of collaborators that included educators, psychologists, painters, sculptors, composers, and writers. They believed that we should integrate all the arts and make them part of any learning and teaching as the more stimulation we offer for our brains, the greater their activation and thus the better and deeper our learning. Georgi Lozanov and his Suggestopedia embraced the very same principle with his music séances and esthetically pleasing peripherals. I also love taichi and have done it for close to ten years now. I often have mini taichi breaks in my language and graduate classes. Movement has been shown to be critical for optimal learning (from moving manipulatives like Cuisenaire rods or index cards, to stretching, to doing human sentences and asking the students to mill around and talk). Embodied cognition, as indicated earlier, is a concept that is generating a lot of interest and many quite intriguing publications.

Tanya:

You mention at a talk at a conference in South Korea that you are a proud American but you also seem never to try to hide your Bulgarian origin. What feelings are you coming back with as a plenary speaker to the 1st FiPLV East European Regional Congress and 26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference - 22nd – 25th June, 2017 in Varna?

Elka Todeva:

Actually, the only reason I mentioned the fact that I am an American citizen was to point to the absurdity of a policy they have in the country, according to which they hire only native speakers as ESL instructors. I drew attention to the fact that it was...
the same old me, with the same old accent I had always had, but because of my passport I could now teach in S. Korea while others were deprived of this opportunity. Just last week at the TESOL / IATEFL Summit in Athens, Greece people raised again the issue of the native – non-native speakers counterproductive dichotomy. The emphasis needs to be on professional qualifications alone and if anything, bi- and multilingualism are and should be seen as a significant asset rather than a liability. Like millions of people these days, I have a hybrid identity, feeling close to both my roots and all the countries I have had the good fortune to live and work in, including my home for the last 25 years, the USA. It will be both exciting and humbling to be speaking to “one’s own crowd” in June. It will be great to re-connect with colleagues, some of whom I have not seen in years. Varna is a wonderful venue for such a reunion.

Доскоро!

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Poetry Corner

FEBRUARY

Sour winds in Burgas
Sky a grey circus tent
Lit by the craning lamps
the snow clown swings
hurling showering cold sparks
in the faces
hurrying faces
pressed inn the mighty spaces
as here where the pendulum
swings heavy at the traffic lights
tearing minutes of life
from the faces
hardened faces
walled in the mighty spaces.
Grey dressed circus master
walks heavy among machines
towards the stranded child
down the faces
white lined faces
lost in forbidden spaces.

Written by Christopher Buxton
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DEAR COLLEAGUE,

The International Federation of Language Teacher Associations (FIPLV), Bulgarian English Teachers’ Association (BETA-IATEFL) and “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen, are pleased to invite you to the 1st FIPLV East European Regional Congress and the 26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference, which will take place from 22nd to 25th June 2017 in Varna, European Youth Capital 2017.

The Congress aims to inspire and motivate teachers to exchange experience and ideas about interesting and innovative ways of teaching and creating bridges to a future learning environment where students feel confident and inspired to explore and create. We would like to offer you the opportunity to share your professional experience, expertise and insights into the fascinating world of language teaching and research. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to Teaching Young Learners and Teenagers; Teaching LSP; Teacher Education and Development; Bilingual Education; Literature, Media & Cultural Studies in LT; Global Issues; Content and Language Integrated Learning; Blended Learning; Applied linguistics; Research; Testing, Evaluation and Assessment, First/Second Language Acquisition, Foreign/Second Language Teaching, Language Education Policy, Quality in Language Education, and Multilingualism.
## PLENARY AND FEATURED SPEAKERS

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<th>Penny Ur</th>
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<td>(Oranim Academic College of Education)</td>
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<td>(SIT Graduate Institute)</td>
<td>(University of Westminster, London, UK; FIPLV Secretary-General)</td>
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<th>Birsen Tütünis</th>
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<th>Zuzana Tomaš</th>
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<td>(Eastern Michigan University)</td>
<td>Australia, FIPLV Honorary Counsellor</td>
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A book exhibition of major publishers and service providers in the field of language teaching and learning accompany the conference.

A programme of social events will offer the opportunity to combine professional growth with delightful experiences.
For application forms, fees and accommodation check [http://www.beta-iatefl.org/annual-conference/conference-call/](http://www.beta-iatefl.org/annual-conference/conference-call/). For further queries, contact beta.iateflbg@gmail.com.

We very much look forward to seeing you in Varna.

Best regards,
The Conference Organizing Team

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SIG Webinars

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

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

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

What exactly do you have to do?

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

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

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

- Your article must have not been previously published and should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere.
- The length of your article may vary - short contributions of 300 – 800 words are as good as long ones.
- Electronic submission of your article is preferred to the following e-mail address: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com
- Text of the article: Calibri, 14 points, with 1.5 spacing.
- Headings and subheading: Calibri, 24 points, bold, centred; first letter capitalised.
- Author names and title as well as contact details should be submitted in a separate file accompanying the article.
- About 50 words of biographical data should be included.
- New paragraphs – to be indicated with one separate line.
- Referencing should follow the APA referencing style.
- References in the text should be ordered alphabetically and contain the name of the author and the year of publication, e.g. (Benson, 1993; Hudson, 2008).
- Quotations have to include the relevant page number(s), e.g. (Peters, 2006, p. 76).
- Tables, figures or diagrams should be numbered accordingly and included in the relevant part of the text. Each should have an explanatory caption.
- The editors will not return any material submitted, but they reserve the right to make editorial changes.
Established 1991 in Sofia, BETA seeks to build a network of ELT professionals on a national and regional (Southeast Europe) level and establish the association as a recognized mediator between educators and state bodies, public and other organizations.

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

We are on the web:

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